**Franklin MRC – 0106**

**Senior Citizen Resilience Mission Set**

**Mission Set**: A scalable response and recovery capability for MRC units and volunteers that is organized, developed, trained, and exercised prior to an emergency or disaster for local, state, and/or regional deployment purposes.

**Introduction:** Franklin County, Massachusetts is the 12th largest county in Massachusetts. The 724 square miles of Franklin County is the most rural area of the Commonwealth, with an estimated population density of less than 102 people per square mile. 2020 population estimates are over 71,000 with approx. 25% being senior citizens over age 65. Franklin MRC has been supporting the emergency planning and response infrastructure in Western Massachusetts since 2003. Unit leaders have determined that an effective way to foster whole community resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is to support those who are most vulnerable.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mission Set Title: Senior Citizen Resilience** | | |
| **Resource Description**: The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately targets seniors. Not only are seniors more vulnerable to physical effects of the disease, but the mental and emotional challenges they experience from new levels of isolation and loneliness are unparalleled. Isolation/loneliness for seniors is recognized as a public health issue associated with the worst health outcomes. COVID-19 has drastically intensified this issue to crisis proportions. Isolation is associated with increased risk of dementia, heart disease and stroke, while loneliness causes higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.  This Mission Set employs the positive impact of creativity on health and wellbeing. MRC will match volunteers with seniors to guide creative expression-based activities proven to improve quality of life by building a sense of connectedness with self/others, providing a link with the world, and preventing negative physical and mental health consequences of social isolation and loneliness. | | |
| Resource Components: | | |
| **Personnel:** | **Type:** MRC volunteer with ACTIVE status in MAResponds state database of responders. | **Licenses or Certifications Required?** No. |
| Volunteers are matched one-on-one with a Senior Citizen to engage them through one or more program components:   * Storytelling * Reading a story * Helping to write their story * Film (the Unlonely Film Festival) * Access to Cultural (helping to connect to online performances, tours, talks, etc.) | * Criminal background check * Confidentiality agreement |
| **Training Requirements:** | * Orientation to MRC (includes Core Competencies) * Psychological First Aid * HHS/ASPR: Addressing the Needs of Older Adults in Disasters * Public Health Impact of Loneliness and Social Isolation * Creativity and Health / Art and Healing | |
| **Equipment Required:** | Computer, tablet, smart phone or telephone (minimum). In anticipation that this is not the case for some seniors, the mission can be carried out via phone contact and postal service.  One program component provides writing journals to seniors to promote some of the exercises. | |
| **Deployment Timeline:** | 24 hours to one week | |
| **Requirements for Rotation of Personnel:** | Because of a limited attention span in some seniors, sessions will be kept to no more than one hour. Once volunteers are match with a senior, the pair will set their own scheduled time to ‘meet’, minimally, once per week. | |
| **Pre-Planning Considerations:** | **Space Requirements:** Mission set leverages phone and internet contact. No space requirements – however some training and volunteer activities could take place in person in public spaces if safe to do so in the future. In this case amount of space would vary based on activity and size of group gathering.  **Support Requirements:** Telephone connection is a minimum support requirement; internet access is preferred however. | |
| **Limiting Factors:** | Some seniors may not have access to internet or may lack the ability/comfort-level to utilize the resource. Where appropriate volunteers will work with senior to teach access and promote comfort. Success of initiative depends in part on dedicated collaborate relationships with senior-focused service agencies. | |

**Resources:**

* FORMS
  + Agency Referral Form <http://wmmrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RCE-Agency-Referral-Form.pdf>
  + MRC Volunteer Request Form [http://wmmrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Berkshire-Franklin-Volunteer- Request-Form\_012519-2.pdf](http://wmmrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Berkshire-Franklin-Volunteer-%20Request-Form_012519-2.pdf)
  + Confidentiality Agreement <https://wmmrc.org/confidentiality-agreement-2020/>
* TRAINING
  + Addressing the Needs of Older Adults in Disasters (HHS/ASPR) <https://www.train.org/mrc/course/1093802/>
  + MRC Orientation [www.WMMRC.org/training](http://www.WMMRC.org/training)
  + Psychological First Aid [www.WMMRC.org/training](http://www.WMMRC.org/training)
  + Guiding the Storytelling Process
* WEBSITES
  + Foundation for Art and Healing <https://www.ArtandHealing.org>
  + Unlonely Film Festival <https://www.artandhealing.org/best-of-fest/>
* ARTICLES/VIDEOS/TOOLS
  + Social Isolation and Health study <https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/hpb20200622.253235/full/>
  + Social Isolation as a Public Health Risk Factor <https://milkeninstitute.org/videos/loneliness-risk-factor-making-connectionsimprove-health>
  + Life story writing prompts <https://vitalifestory.com/storytime-cards/>
* ASPR TRACIE DEVELOPED RESOURCES
  + Mental/Behavioral Health <https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/dbh-resources\>
  + Population-Specific Resources: Older Adults <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2248769/>