

## **Extra Credit That Can Save Your Life: Creating an Emergency Preparedness Kit**

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Type of Strategy: (i.e. in-class active learning, on-line active learning, assignment, assessment, ice-breaker, on-line tools, simulation, case-study, etc.) This is an extra-credit activity that students are encouraged to complete with their families (however they would like to define "family"). This activity has been offered to students in NRS 221 Informatics in Nursing, and NRS 452 Research Basis of Nursing Practice.

Purpose of Strategy:

1. To provide students who are passing the course with an opportunity to enhance their grades.
2. To apply knowledge from informatics and research classes to the development of a disaster communication plan
3. To personalize student learning in development of a project unique to their own family.
4. To promote safety for students and their families in event of a disaster.

Type of Course: Undergraduate courses

- NRS 221 Informatics in Nursing (35-50 students)
- NRS 452 Research Basis of Nursing Practice (90 students)

This strategy is very easy to modify and apply to other courses. This activity can dovetail with learning objectives in many courses and several majors.

### Brief Overview of Strategy

Students who are performing at 75% or above in the course may participate in the optional assignment of researching how to devise a communication plan for their family and to create a family emergency kit. It is recommended that students visit the ready.gov or Red Cross websites, and create their communication plans and kit according to the recommendations of these agencies. It is essential that families have input into the communication plan and are encouraged to participate in preparing the kit. Students upload their communication plan and photos of the disaster kit to faculty. It is not expected that the kits be complete since the cost involved with the project is a concern to students. The goal is to collect as many items as possible, and add to the kit over time. The family discussions about the plan and the kit offer an opportunity for the student to teach family about basic disaster management concepts such as communication, evacuation, sheltering in place, etc.

## Step-by-Step Instructions of Strategy

These are the instructions posted on Moodle for students:

Hello Scholars,

The *optional* extra credit assignment can earn you up to 3 points added to your final grade: 1.5 points for the communication plan, and 1.5 for the disaster kit. You are eligible to participate if your grade is above 75%. You can choose to participate in one part or both parts of this assignment, depending on how many points you would like to attempt

**Purpose:** To complete a practical project that will benefit you and your family. ("Family" can include your apartment-mates, the people you live with, family of origin, or however you would like to define it). If you live alone, make the kit for yourself. Faculty will assign points based on how thorough the product is. Only *you* know if the content in the communication plan is accurate. I encourage you to include your family in creation of the plan and kit since they need to "buy in" to the plan and contribute personal items to the kit.

**Background:** We all know that there have been several government warnings lately. There have been natural disasters that are fresh in our memories. In times of emergency and crisis, it is important for you and your family to have an emergency communication plan. It is also important that you have an emergency preparedness kit. I did not want extra credit to be "busy work" for you or for me, but something that is valuable.

### **Instructions:**

#### Part A: Create a Communication Plan for Your Family

Go on the link **[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)**. You will see links for the communication plan, and actually some templates. Determine how you will contact each other in an emergency. You will need to get your family or roommates involved to make these decisions.



You can earn anywhere from 0 to 1.5 points for this section of the assignment. I am looking for a thorough and complete plan that aligns with the recommendations of governmental agencies. I don't need to see anything that is private, but I do need to see proof that you completed this assignment (scanned documents or photos). The information you provide will be totally confidential and I will delete your work after I have reviewed it. Keep copies of your plan in numerous places and distribute copies to your family members!

## Part B: Emergency Kit



Again, go to Ready.gov or the Red Cross website and review how to build an emergency kit. Get a plastic bin, box, duffle bag, or whatever works for your family, and fill it with the required items. It is great to get the family involved, and they will need to include some of their personal items in the kit. I do NOT expect you to spend money on this. Gather what you have now, and add items to your kit as you can.

Grading will be essentially the same as part A.. You will need to take a photograph of your kit and upload it. If you can't get the entire kit together, take a picture of what you have. There is value in getting this started for you and your family.

### Additional Comments

About 10% of the students participated in the assignment, which is better than the typical 3% participation rate cited in the literature (Harrison, Meister, & LeFevre, 2011). The feedback from students was very positive. One student actually had his family practice and time the evacuation from their home to their meeting place. This particular student had immigrated to the U.S. to flee a war, and said that this assignment should have been required. Many students said they enjoy working with their families on this project because of the “bonding” and “beginning to feel like the nurse in family.” As a nurse, it is personally satisfying to know that these students and families are prepared for a disaster.

It is a goal of the School of Nursing (SON) to incorporate more content on Disaster Management in the curriculum, so this strategy meets that goal. It is my personal goal to encourage others to be “ready.” Students in NRS 221 are either new sophomores or new to the RN-BSN program or the Accelerated Second Degree programs. Many of them have been out of school for a long time, do not score as high on classwork as they would like, and would benefit from an extra-credit opportunity. I wanted an activity that would not be “busy work”, that had practical benefits, and that would not be an extra burden to my work load. This assignment is a win-win for everyone.

### Resources

Harrison, M., Mesiter, D. LeFevre, A. (2011). Which students complete extra credit work? *College Student Journal*, 45.3. 550-554.

Lei, S. (2013). Revisiting extra credit assignments: Perspectives of college instructors. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 40(1), 14-18.

[www.ready.gov/](http://www.ready.gov/)

[www.redcross.org/prepare](http://www.redcross.org/prepare)