

tial to the entire family's well-being that they receive appropriate, accessible, and continuing mental and physical health care. However, Hurricane Andrew damaged approximately sixty health facilities and hospitals and many remained closed for months, thereby forcing people in South Dade to travel long distances under very difficult traffic circumstances to obtain medical care. One advocate for migrant workers said, "I know women whose babies have been sick with high fever and infection . . . [but] they have no transportation. Let's say there is a car. The husband took it to the fields. He couldn't stop working right after the storm."

A number of community-based health care services were eventually initiated. Planned Parenthood set up temporary field clinics at several sites, including the tent cities, when it became obvious that women were having difficulty getting contraceptives (*Miami Herald* 1992, 8 November). Several agencies brought services directly into isolated communities using mobile vans and equipment. For example, the University of Miami established a clinic at a church in South Miami Heights. The most comprehensive response, however, was the Health and Rehabilitative Services Community Health Teams which, beginning in November 1992, completed a door-to-door canvas of the entire South Dade area, identifying unmet needs and referring victims to appropriate services (Rogers 1993). While most communities eventually received health services, some for the very first time, the need for these services should be anticipated and plans in place to reach victims sooner.

Through first-person and secondary accounts, we learned that women were often the most proactive, outspoken, insistent, and determined of disaster survivors, especially when their families' needs were involved. Her neighbors proudly told the story of how Pat ordered some newcomers to leave when they started drug dealing in Garden Grove. She responded to their praise, "I'd rather die with my shoes on [than let them take over]." We also heard of ways in which Mexican farmworkers, Haitian immigrants, and African-American church women galvanized their neighborhoods into action. Like unpaid community work and family labor, women's social action in the post-disaster period remains a largely unexplored, but very significant, dimension in the analysis of disaster recovery.

Back in Garden Grove, Pat pulls up a chair beside her friends sitting outside to catch the evening breeze and watch the sunset. They swap jokes and make each other laugh as they watch children playing with cardboard boxes amidst twisted trees and crumbling concrete. Though Garden Grove's families still have enormous needs, they have struggled to meet them together and they feel rich in spirit. In Pat's words, "Whatever's been said in the past, we will help each other when there's a crisis . . . and that really made me feel good . . . feel like this was a family. Everybody put everything else aside and just tried to comfort one another. So I think that was one thing we had more than any other community."

Michelle Durant: trailer camp homemaker

We first met Michelle at a storefront Haitian relief agency. She graciously agreed to be interviewed later at home -- a FEMA trailer that her family had been living in for nearly two years. When we arrive, she apologizes for the clutter. Every possible space is doing double duty to accommodate two adults (herself and her step-daughter) and four children. As she described it, "The lack of privacy really gets on my nerves. We can't get undressed. It's hard to close the door and there's no room to hang up clothes. My son's bed is in the living area so he can't go to bed until we do."

In a common scenario, the family spent the first few months living in their partially destroyed apartment in a Haitian neighborhood of Florida City, paying rent in exchange for the landlord's unkept promises of repairs. We heard several similar stories, including the plight of a young mother as related to us by her social worker:

Well, even if you got a [FEMA temporary housing] check, where are you going to go? Now a lot of them, what they did -- they make deals with the landlord. OK, we stay, we pay you rent, if you fix. So the landlords are getting the money, but they're not fixing. [She had] no electricity, no lights, and she had her 14-day-old baby, and she was paying \$260 rent every month.

When her apartment was eventually condemned, Michelle felt fortunate to have been one of the 3,500 families issued a FEMA travel trailer or mobile home (FEMA 1994). But now, twenty-two months later, the isolated trailer park full of hundreds of crowded, hot, and frustrated residents has become an increasingly ugly place to live. Parks of FEMA trailers throughout South Dade were plagued by crime and violence. According to a FEMA spokesman, the combination of poverty, disaster stress, new neighbors, cramped quarters, and densely packed parks can be explosive (Hartman 1993b). Some camp violence is cross-cultural, or seen as such. In one of our focus groups, Mexican mothers complained that the Guatemalan youths stayed home from school and caused trouble in the camp during the daytime. We heard stories of Haitian and African-American teenagers fighting at the basketball court. The police are called when things get bad, but Michelle says they don't seem to be as responsive as they were at first. Michelle and her children are often frightened by the, now common-place, sounds of fighting, including domestic arguments, loud bickering between residents, and even gunfire. The fighting in the trailer next door is getting worse each day.

Many of our informants spoke of family conflict as a by-product of the frustration and uncertainty. Overcrowding is no doubt a contributing factor. For example, the forced proximity of children and grandparents with radically different values and standards is likely to cause tension. One Haitian community center responded by increasing their child care program and adding parenting



Plate 7.3 One year after Hurricane Andrew, hundreds of families remain in one of the trailer parks established as temporary housing
Source: Tim Chapman/Miami Herald

workshops to help families learn to negotiate better intergenerational conflicts. A parent resource center offering respite care and other parenting services noted an increase in calls for help from middle class parents after the storm. In this respect Hurricane Andrew was a leveler, sometimes legitimating the act of asking for help.

As crowded and hot as Michelle's 8 foot by 36 foot trailer is, she keeps her children indoors as much as possible. She fears the camp is unsafe. "Since we are into the camp, every week there are shooting or stabbing, killing, robbing. They rob my trailer. They stole my [license] plate too." She and the children find it hard to sleep because of the crescendo of voices and music coming from the group of men who hang out each night by the camp's only working telephone.

In this culturally mixed camp, the common denominator is poverty. The primary focus is on survival and the displaced families tend to keep to themselves. As she peers out from behind the curtains framing the trailer's window, Michelle spots her neighbor sweeping out her trailer. She wishes again she knew enough Spanish to talk to the woman. But only the young seem to mingle in the camp, and then often not peacefully.

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We have been talking quietly, since Michelle's step-daughter Denise is asleep, tired after a long shift as a waitress. The cafe where she works is doing a booming business serving out-of-state construction workers. Daniel, Michelle's teenage son, spends his days searching for construction work. Though the newspapers are filled with pictures of White men on temporary construction jobs, he has been unsuccessful in finding a job. Michelle lost her housekeeping job when Hurricane Andrew destroyed her employer's home and she has not been able to find another. There is little demand for domestic help since so many households left the area. If she had transportation, Michelle says, she might be able to find work to the north, but the family's vehicle was crushed by a falling tree. After the hurricane, Michelle's husband Yves began to drink heavily and became abusive. He eventually deserted the family, leaving behind three children from his marriage to Michelle and two from a prior marriage. Food stamps and Denise's income have supported the family since he abandoned them and Michelle lost her job.

Yves' response to post-hurricane life was not unique. Though the reasons varied, male desertion was frequently reported among our respondents. Anne, an Anglo woman we interviewed while she was living with her two small children at a battered women's shelter, had this to say about her partner: "He couldn't take the pressure, being used to everything, and then coming down to no eating because we could not find food . . . And then he was beating me up . . . He really went crazy." Anne hopes that her application for FEMA benefits will be processed before her husband's so the check will be issued in her name. She plans to spend it on bus tickets out of Miami, but she's afraid he may get the money instead.

Our interviews with service providers confirmed that the first person from each address to submit an application – most often the man with transportation – was usually the one who received the check. There were many reports of FEMA benefits intended to replace household possessions or to provide temporary housing being misused by men for personal purposes, such as buying cars or supporting relatives in other countries. Even if she got the check, there was no guarantee she could keep it. According to a social worker, "There is conflict, more conflict. The woman gets the money. It's to replace her furniture, but he says, 'No, it's our money. Give it to me.' And he takes it any way he can."

While urban planners and politicians envisioned gracious planned communities rising Phoenix-like from the urban wreckage, rebuilding in South Dade proceeded haltingly. Recovery efforts concentrated on owner-occupied single-family homes – dwellings beyond the reach of many of the area's long-term residents. Although FEMA encouraged those remaining in the government trailers to buy them at low cost, even the pad rental and hookup fees were unaffordable for many. Our work affirms that in the painstaking process of recovery, those with the least resources before the storm – often single mothers and grandmothers – tend to get stuck in the limbo of "temporary" housing. When disaster strikes an area heavily populated by low-income families, their margin of survival

and independence is already very slim. Gender, race, culture, and social class clearly shape women's short-term needs, as well as their long-term prospects for recovery.

Michelle and her family are getting by, although life is hard. She feels isolated at the remote camp, cut off from the services her family needs. With over 300 trailers there, she asks if we know why some of the health and social agencies couldn't have been housed in the park instead of miles away. But it is the uncertainty of the future that worries her most. She wonders how her family will get to the grocery store and the health clinic when the FEMA-funded jitney stops; how long she can keep her teenage son out of trouble in the camp; where she will get the money for school supplies and clothes for the younger children; when the man from FEMA will return to collect rent for the trailer; and if the family will ever find an affordable apartment large enough for the six of them.

As we prepare to leave, Michelle asks for a ride up to Florida City. When she has a chance, she goes there to purchase groceries and to visit friends at the community center where they sort donated food and supplies. Sometimes she pitches in to help and, in exchange, takes home enough to make a good meal for the children. As the sun heats up the tiny trailer, Michelle quickly gathers her family for the unexpected ride out of the camp on yet another sweltering day in Miami.

Elena Moreno: businesswoman

We met Elena in her home office, where crowded stacks of paperwork left an impression of controlled chaos. She is a striking, middle-aged Cuban-American with three adult children, all living in the Miami area. Robert, her husband of 27 years, sells real estate. After many years helping in his business and rearing their children, Elena now owns and manages her own small business. Their suburban home also shelters Elena's elderly parents, who evacuated there the day of the hurricane. Elena took on much of the hurricane-related work to help both her parents and her adult children's households. Because her family considered Elena's time more flexible, and perhaps less valuable, it was she who waited in the long lines for hurricane supplies; she who made contingency plans with each of her adult children's households; she who kept distant kin informed before and after the hurricane. Since the storm, Elena has been at the center of the recovery process of the five households of her extended family.

Because "kin work" falls largely to women across all social classes and cultures, initiating family support networks in time of disaster is usually their responsibility. Some of Andrew's victims sent their children out of Miami to be cared for by grandmothers and aunts until the crisis was over; others took in relatives and foster children. There were numerous accounts of the giving and receiving of material and emotional help among "family" – whether fictive kin, child care providers, collective households, or relatives from other households. The degree to which women in disaster conditions are available to take on these tasks, in addition to their varying combinations of employment and informal sector

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work, clearly impacts on household recovery. Qualitatively different from replacing roof tiles or clearing debris, women's "invisible" domestic work continues unabated or increases in the wake of disaster. In tent cities, in makeshift camps, in trailers, and in homes half destroyed or under construction, we witnessed women cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, changing diapers, and comforting distraught children and elderly parents.

Elena's parents' home was virtually destroyed. When they applied for assistance they found themselves in a *Catch 22* situation. Their FEMA application was denied because they had insurance. Yet, they have not collected. In fact, they haven't even seen an insurance adjustor. It is rumored that their small, local insurance company is one of many on the verge of bankruptcy. Lacking the savings to cover the cost of rebuilding, the elderly couple continue to live with Elena and Robert. Elena's daily obsession was trying to determine the status of her parent's claim. With raw anger in her voice, she describes her innumerable and unsatisfactory phone calls to the insurance company, FEMA, and other agencies on her parents' behalf.

Women's domestic roles typically extend to tasks linking families with agencies, schools, churches, and other organizations. Bureaucratic negotiation and family advocacy became part of their daily routines after Andrew. The difficulties of expediting relief claims through the complex application and qualification procedures were further complicated for non-English speakers, recent or undocumented migrants, mothers of small children, and the elderly. The demands put on relief organizations were unprecedented and it was inevitable that some of those turned away would be disgruntled. However, among the women we spoke with there was a persistent feeling that many decisions were unjust, whether intentional or merely the result of disorganization or short-sighted policies. Not having to fight the battles alone, but drawing on the advocacy and emotional support of other family members, seemed an important factor affecting recovery (see Chapter 8). Dealing with relief organizations was not uniquely a female task, but it seemed that it was primarily women who returned again and again to fight for help for their families. As reported by one long-term caseworker, "It's been the woman that pulled the family through, and it's the woman that continues to hold it together." Social class, racial/ethnic, and cultural patterns no doubt cross-cut this generalization and warrant additional attention as researchers explore gender relations in disaster-stricken households.

Elena's parents are sleeping in the living room so that Elena can use the spare bedroom as her home office. The house was even more crowded during the first few months when Elena kept her three young grandchildren each day while their parents worked to make their own damaged houses inhabitable. The neighbors helped Elena with child care, just as they helped in so many other ways since the storm.

Starkly apparent when normal routines are disrupted by crisis, many ordinarily invisible caregiving networks are critical to family and community

recovery. In our focus group with family daycare providers, we learned how many of them continued to keep children even though their own homes and lives were in disarray. Often these services made the difference between parents keeping or losing their jobs. One provider told of parents dropping children at her door, along with a bag of ice, just days after the hurricane. She had no electricity, running water, or telephone, but the parents needed to get to jobs they could not afford to jeopardize them. Many of these caregivers were very attached to their charges, functioning much like mothers and grandmothers. One elderly African-American told of making her way through blocked city streets and fallen electrical lines to find the three young children of a single father she feared would not cope well after the hurricane. As she had anticipated, the father was unable to provide adequate care. She took the children in to live with her for six months until their mother came to Miami to get them. However, many who formerly provided care to children, the ill, disabled, or elderly were unable to continue their services due to Andrew's impact on their own lives, thereby compounding the problems of those relying on them. Disaster planners must be aware of the effects of the loss of these informal caregiving networks and consider how their services can be supported or replaced during the emergency and recovery periods.

Elena was fortunate to be able to care for her parents and still keep her business operating. She proudly explained that her husband took over virtually all of the tasks of restoring their home while she concentrated on her business. It was important to rebound quickly and keep her six workers employed. After assessing the damage, they decided to disperse various business operations and supplies, using staff members' spare closets and garages. On many days, they all worked directly from Elena's tiny bedroom office, testing their patience and adding further commotion to the household. In her usual fashion, Elena focuses on the positive, "six people working in a space about this big [she points to a small bedroom] for all the time the reconstruction was going on. It was real hard, but then when we were ready to move into our own offices, everyone was all crying because they'll miss each other."

For Elena the support she received from the local chapter of a national organization of professional and small business women was critical. Its monthly meetings, which resumed only a month after Andrew, were opportunities to talk about hurricane experiences and feelings as much as about business recovery. Elena says, "When you have a situation you haven't seen before you know it's not the first time it's happened. Someone else has had it happen to them. So who do you talk to? Other business owners. But, in the context of a business group it turns out to be a support group." Through this network, women were helped by other chapters. When a telephone poll revealed that the South Dade members needed computers and office equipment, but also shoes for their children, they got both. Out of this experience the national association started a revolving cash fund to be used to assist sister chapters in future disasters. When considering women's roles after a disaster, their occupational or professional

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resources are likely to be overlooked, yet these formal and informal networks are an important resource in long-term community recovery.

Like her husband, Elena is also active in her church and in several community organizations. She smiles broadly when asked about her work with Women Will Rebuild. When it seemed that economic redevelopment was taking precedence over the more immediate needs of South Dade families, a coalition of women's groups formed to protest. The emergent coalition, Women Will Rebuild, eventually included women from over forty religious groups, youth organizations, feminist networks, social and professional groups, and service organizations, representing all of the major racial and ethnic groups of Miami's diverse population. These women challenged We Will Rebuild – the powerful group of business and community leaders responsible for distributing millions of donated and public dollars. Women Will Rebuild lobbied for more funds targeting the needs of local women and children. They also developed and publicized a multicultural roster of experienced women leaders appropriate for appointment to We Will Rebuild.

As a representative of her businesswomen's association, Elena began attending meetings three months prior to our interview. Some of her Hispanic friends remain skeptical of the Anglo-dominated group's use of feminist language and a consensus decision making process. And Elena questions how many more precious Saturday mornings she can give up in such a hard year. But she wonders who except Women Will Rebuild speaks for low-income families and for funds for programs to serve women and girls. She also wonders when Miami has ever seen such a multicultural coalition, male or female. Although the coalition evidently dissolved simultaneously with We Will Rebuild, many believe its very existence left a legacy of effective lobbying and coalition work in a divided city, showing that a wide range of ethnically and socially diverse women can galvanize to action over shared concerns.

As a daughter, mother, and partner, Elena has carried a heavy family load throughout this crisis while struggling to keep her business operating. To accomplish all this, she has drawn heavily upon the strength of her family, neighbors, and women friends. When Elena told us of the gains that have come with the struggle, including a new-found assertiveness, new interests, and new friends, she spoke for many women for whom the hardships of Hurricane Andrew afforded opportunities for personal and professional growth.

CONCLUSIONS

These composite profiles document the range and commonalities of women's experiences, illustrating that women are pivotal in the intersection between household and community recovery. While their needs and experiences are in many respects gender specific, as well as deeply influenced by class and ethnicity, they also provide critical insights into neglected, yet central, problems, processes, and mechanisms of household and community recovery. We conclude that a

gendered analysis is crucial to understanding and mitigating against future impacts of disasters on families and communities. Research and theory that more fully account for the experiences and needs of women will generate more complete and accurate knowledge, yielding more effective policies for future disaster management. Toward this end, we conclude with a series of research questions and policy recommendations.

WOMEN, GENDER, AND DISASTER: A RESEARCH AGENDA

We draw on this study of women and Hurricane Andrew to identify key directions for future research on gender relations and disaster. Recognizing how intertwined the issues are in actual experience, here we distinguish analytically between questions raised by first, women's vulnerability to disaster, second, the gendered impacts of disaster, and third, women's capacities and resources for responding to disaster. These questions can and should be addressed at different levels of analysis. Issues raised by gendered disaster impacts, for example, might be investigated at the individual (the vulnerability of elderly women living alone), household (change in the gendered division of labor), organizational (new service demands and responses for organizations serving women), or institutional levels (post-disaster changes in the female labor market). They can and should be addressed in relation to cultural and economic patterns, for example culturally specific disaster impacts on recent immigrant women and economic patterns in women's recovery capacities. Each is also framed by global patterns relevant to hazard and disaster, such as the increased prevalence of female poverty and household headship.

Disaster vulnerability

- How do physical, economic, and social conditions of life place women at special risk from disasters, for example pregnancy and reproductive needs, longevity, caregiving responsibilities, poverty, head-of-household status, nursing home or public housing residence? What specific conditions produce varying levels of vulnerability for women in differing life circumstances?
- What regional or local patterns increase women's vulnerability to disaster, for example farm labor migration patterns, immigration trends, women's formal and informal economic activity, availability of affordable housing, rates of violence against women?

Disaster impact

- What models can be identified in disaster-struck communities for responding to women's needs, for example for personal safety, economic security, and mental health services for caregivers?

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- How are at-risk groups of women most effectively reached with preparation, evacuation, and mitigation information, as well as recovery services? What media effectively deliver information to target groups?
- What patterns of bias (gendered, economic, cultural) can be identified in the practices of responding agencies in the private and public sectors? How are these maintained informally? Under what conditions are they most effectively challenged?
- How are women's particular needs identified by disaster planning and response agencies and emergent groups? What organizational conditions increase the visibility of gender issues?
- What training programs or other mechanisms best sensitize paid and volunteer disaster workers to gender bias? How do disaster management agencies address gender issues in program planning, implementation, and evaluation?
- How distinct are the long-term recovery problems (emotional, material, financial) and coping mechanisms adopted by women and men? What factors sustain these patterns and how?

Disaster response capacity

- How have women in various settings (rural/urban, developing/developed societies) organized to meet household, neighborhood, and community immediate post-disaster needs? What conditions or resources facilitate women's effective mobilization around gender issues in disaster?
- Under what conditions are women's formal and informal networks and community leadership effectively identified and utilized at all stages of community disaster response?
- What cultural patterns make women effective disaster responders at the household and community levels? What patterns erode women's capacity for self-recovery?

WOMEN, GENDER, AND DISASTER: POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

What lessons are there for policymakers in women's experiences related to Hurricane Andrew, as we understood and portrayed them in this chapter? As our composite profiles suggest, women absorb the social costs of being largely excluded from disaster planning, and response and recovery initiatives. We conclude by urging a redirection of disaster planning to account better for the impact of gender relations on social structure and interaction. This is the key, we believe, to disaster planning and response which more effectively meets the needs of women. Again we pose the issues broadly, recognizing the wide range of groups, agencies, and organizations engaged in disaster initiatives.

Organizational practice and culture

Informal practices in disaster organizations contribute to a "gender-blind" approach which, in practice, disadvantages women. Historically male-dominated and grounded in military culture, disaster organizations should evaluate their routine operations for potential sources of gender bias.

Toward this end, we recommend that disaster agencies:

- undertake in-house evaluation of employment practices, i.e. recruitment, hiring, training, assignment, promotion, retention;
- afford opportunities and support for female/male staff and volunteers in non-traditional positions;
- establish gender-sensitive program planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- institutionalize comprehensive and on-going gender-sensitive training to help managers, staff, volunteers, contractors, and others recognize covert and overt patterns of bias.

Preparation and mitigation

Because women are instrumental in preparing households and kin for disaster, they are essential actors in community-based disaster planning and local mitigation initiatives. They must be fully engaged as equal and active partners in order to build democratic disaster-resilient communities.

Disaster planning groups in the public and private sectors should:

- analyze the vulnerabilities of women locally, and proactively include targeted groups of women in community education and other programs designed to mitigate hazards, reduce disaster impacts, and promote community recovery;
- include in planning initiatives key representatives from relevant women's community groups, for example women's health services, women in construction, business and related professional associations, public housing tenant associations, and advocates for homeless, migrant, and battered-women's services;
- plan ways to assist particularly vulnerable groups of women in preparing and/or evacuating their homes, for example public housing residents, single mothers and women living alone, senior and disabled women, low-income women, women whose migration status or language skills may exclude them from traditional networks;
- actively build on existing women's groups and leaders, whether formal or informal, to access women otherwise not likely to be targeted by traditional warning and information media or by neighborhood preparedness campaigns;
- undertake community profiling and assessment which includes gender-specific vulnerability indicators, for example proportion of single-headed households, average female wage and local rent costs, predisaster demand for domestic violence services, migration and immigration patterns.

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Emergency response

Women are symbolically central to disaster relief as the helpless victim tearfully grasping the strong male hand of the rescuer. Yet women's particular needs in the immediate aftermath of disaster are rarely addressed.

Formal disaster agencies, as well as established and emergent groups serving survivors, will better serve women if they:

- broaden their target populations to include those groups of women identified as most vulnerable to particular hazards;
- organize relief centers to ensure that they meet women's needs for child care, translation services, access to public transportation, and have staff sensitive to cultural and economic differences in household structure and power relations;
- examine policies and practices in relief agencies for possible gender bias, for example head-of-household regulations disadvantaging women heading collective or multi-generation households;
- organize emergency housing to ensure that it meets women's needs for personal safety, public transportation and telephone services, accessible child care or respite care, reproductive health care, and gender-sensitive mental health services;
- actively search for ways to ease the burdens of disaster responders, particularly those from the local community, who are typically women with heavy domestic responsibilities, such as providing mental health counseling, flexible work schedules, and child care.

Long-term recovery

Perhaps the greatest challenge to disaster planners is responding to the long-term needs of particularly hard-hit women. Economic redevelopment initiatives, for example, rarely consider women's economic status or needs outside of the family economy. As illustrated throughout this book, predisaster inequalities and vulnerabilities are reflected in long-term recovery problems and, thus, low-income and poor women, particularly among minorities, have a particularly difficult time.

Planners knowledgeable about gender relations in family and community life will design recovery strategies useful to both women and men. To this end, we urge them to:

- fully engage the resources of local women leaders and their informal and formal networks;
- anticipate the need to replace local social services volunteers in heavily impacted areas and to augment services in such areas as domestic violence, reproductive health, child care, and elder care;
- anticipate that low-income women heading households will be particularly slow to recover and have longer needs for housing and other forms of recovery assistance;

- look for ways to support the recovery of multigenerational households and to help extended families with the recovery of their most vulnerable members;
- monitor reconstruction to ensure that women's particular needs are identified and addressed, for example in economic redevelopment plans or the distribution of donated labor and materials;
- plan for the housing and safety needs of relief and reconstruction workers coming into the stricken community.

Throughout the unfolding process of disaster, both the short-term needs and the long-term interests of women must be accommodated if response is to be truly effective – but, first, they must be better understood. Disasters do not impact women and men in uniform ways, nor all women uniformly. Analyzing the specific needs of women in varying life circumstances is a planning task for disaster managers and a practical challenge for responders. Adopting a gendered perspective is the first step toward implementing the kind of disaster response Miami women so clearly needed.