

Module 1 - Four Phases of Emergency Management

Introduce –
4 Phases of Emergency
Management

Definition: Prevention

Questions: What other
preventive activities can
be conducted?

Definition:
Mitigation

Questions: What other
mitigation activities can
be conducted?

Definition:
Preparedness

Four Phases of Emergency Management

Mitigation & Prevention

Where school officials conduct an assessment to identify potential hazards and develop procedures designated to prevent or mitigate the damage that these hazards might cause.

The positioning of those measures and activities that will lessen the possibility or the impact of an adverse incident in an organization. The primary goals and objectives of prevention are to protect an organization's assets and to manage risk.

Prevention activities

- Review traffic patterns for dangerous conditions.
- Examine existing landscaping looking for tripping hazards, hiding spots and other unsafe conditions.
- CPTED – Crime prevention through environmental design.
- Use security equipment such as cameras (CCTV – Closed Circuit Television), access control systems, and metal detectors.
- Conduct searches of isolated areas.
- Develop student codes of conduct.
- Encourage staff to provide input and feedback into the crisis planning process.
- Review incident data and UVIR's.
- Review the last safety audit.
- Determine the major problems in your school with regard to student crime and violence.
- Assess how the school addresses these problems.
- Conduct an assessment to determine how these problems—as well as others—may impact your vulnerability to certain crises.

Mitigation is any action of a long-term, permanent nature that reduces the actual or potential risk of loss of life or property from a hazardous event.

Mitigation activities

- Assess site selections for schools, annexes and athletic venues.
- Acquire automatic external defibrillators (AED's.)
- Properly secure bookcases and lighting fixtures.
- Correct conditions identified under the prevention activities.
- Ensure televisions are strapped down on movable carts.
- Limit combustible wall and ceiling hangings.
- Connect with community emergency responders to identify local hazards.
- Determine who is responsible for overseeing violence prevention strategies in your school.

Preparedness

Where school officials develop plans and protocols to prepare for the possibility that the hazards previously identified in the mitigation/prevention phase will in fact occur.

Those activities, programs, and systems that exist prior to an emergency that are used to support and enhance response to an emergency or disaster.

Questions: What other preparedness activities can be conducted?

Preparedness activities

- Conduct orientation seminars with students, parents, and staff.
- Establish response teams.
- Conduct fire drills and shelter-in-place drills.
- Determine what crisis plans exist in the district, school, and community.
- Document plans for responding to emergencies.
- Establish MOU's (Memorandum of Understandings)
- Learn ICS (Incident Command System) and NIMS (National Incident Management System.)
- Identify all stakeholders involved in crisis planning.
- Develop procedures for communicating with staff, students, families, and the media.
- Establish procedures to account for students during a crisis.
- Gather information that exists about the school facility, such as maps and the location of utility shutoffs.
- Identify the necessary equipment that needs to be assembled to assist staff in a crisis.

Response

Where school officials implement the plans and protocols developed in the preparedness phase to respond to an emergency or disaster in or around a school.

Definition: Response

The efforts to minimize the risks created in an emergency by protecting the people, the environment, and property, and the efforts to return the scene to normal pre-emergency conditions; the reaction to an incident or emergency to assess the damage or impact and to ascertain the level of containment and control activity required.

Questions: What other response activities can be conducted?

Response activities

- Determine if a crisis is occurring.
- Identify the type of crisis that is occurring and determine the appropriate response.
- Activate response teams.
- Activate the incident management system.
- Activate and follow established response plans.
- Ascertain whether an evacuation; reverse evacuation; lockdown; or shelter-in-place needs to be implemented.
- Maintain communication among all relevant staff at officially designated locations.
- Establish what information needs to be communicated to staff, students, families, and the community.
- Monitor how emergency first aid is being administered to the injured.
- Decide if more equipment and supplies are needed.

Definition:
Recovery

Recovery

Where school officials work closely with community and government stakeholders to help the affected school(s) recover and return to a sense of normalcy as quickly as possible.

Recovery refers to those non-emergency measures following a disaster whose purpose is to return all systems, both formal and informal, to as normal as possible.

Recovery activities

- Strive to return to learning as quickly as possible.
- Restore the physical plant, as well as the school community.
- Monitor how staff are assessing students for the emotional impact of the crisis.
- Identify what follow up interventions are available to students, staff, and first responders.
- Conduct debriefings with staff and first responders.
- Assess curricular activities that address the crisis.
- Allocate appropriate time for recovery.
- Capture “lessons learned” and incorporate them into revisions and trainings.

Questions: What other recovery activities may be conducted?

Module 2 – Communications Planning

Introduce – Communications Planning

Question: Who has been identified to be part of this team in your school?

Communications Planning

A comprehensive school safety plan includes planning a system of communication before, during and after a crisis. Having a communications plan in place can reduce a number of potential problems and speed the restoration of a safe and secure learning environment.

Identifying a communications team

- At the school site, the Principal is the most appropriate spokesperson for the school.
- However, at least one additional staff member, designated by the principal, should be prepared to take on the role of spokesperson in the absence of the principal.
- If an incident reaches high levels of media attention, the communications team at the school level may not be sufficient to handle all inquiries. In that case, a district level public information officer (PIO) should be brought in to serve as a consultant and advisor on media relations.

Attributes of effective communications team members

Effective communications team members share common personal attributes that serve them well. Under crisis conditions, good communications team members:

- Actively listen and sort through incomplete information to identify facts.
- Think clearly and have a strong tolerance for emotionally charged situations.
- Develop messages that are factual, useful and reassuring for students, staff, parents and the community at large.
- Work independently with the members of the incident command staff to gather a range of information that will be needed to get the school back on track.

Communications Policy

Every effective communications policy should follow the following principles:

- Protect the privacy of students and staff especially if there are victims whose families must be notified.
- If the incident is a crime, ensure information to be released does not jeopardize the investigation.
- Provide only information that you know is factual and do not speculate about how or why an incident occurred.
- Reassure and provide instructions to parents.
- Provide information about additional school crisis services, changes in class schedules, and dates when community information meetings will be held at the school.
- Even when the situation feels adversarial, don't treat media representatives as adversaries.
- Direct the media to a designated room in the school or a safe area outside the school for briefings and updates.
- Don't provide unrestricted media access to students or permit media representatives to disrupt classes, nutrition or lunch breaks.
- Inform students and staff that they should refer all media inquiries to the principal or designated communications spokesperson.
- Explain to students and parents that it isn't appropriate for them to give interviews during a stressful time. They may say something they might regret or that is inaccurate.

Questions: Does your school have these numbers readily available? Do they include the work, cell and home numbers?

Develop contact checklists

District Level

- Superintendent
- Regional Administrator
- School Resource Officer
- District public information officer

School Level

- Teachers
- Office staff
- Custodial staff
- School crisis intervention team members, including school counselors, psychologists and social workers.
- Students
- Parents

Media

- Local television station(s)
- Local radio station(s)
- Local newspaper(s)
- National affiliates of the above

Determine review and approval process

- Information gathered from the incident command center is the most reliable source for any communication to the three constituent groups identified above.
- To ensure information is cleared before release, write brief press releases that can be sent directly to the media.
- These updates can also be used as the basis for subsequent television or radio interviews.
- The press release should be reviewed and approved by the crisis communications team prior to distribution.
- In addition, the crisis communications team may ask a district administrator or law enforcement officer to provide further review when the incident involves criminal activity.
- No one should feel pressured to make a decision about media information without consulting another team member.

Designate a crisis center

The identification of an incident command center is usually done in advance of a crisis event.

- Often the command center is in the main office of a school where office and secretarial staff, multiple phones, fax machines and hand-held radios are available.

Question: What location(s) at your facility have been designated as a primary and secondary incident command center?

Question: What location(s) at your facility have been designated as an internal and external media staging area?

- The incident command center should be protected from intrusion by the media.
 - There will often be activities and conversations between emergency responders, school officials and possibly victims/witnesses that should be kept confidential.

Designate a media staging area

The school crisis team should think ahead about the most appropriate place for the media personnel to congregate during and/or after a school incident.

- This is to protect the integrity of the incident command center during an incident and prevent disruption of normal school activities afterward.
- A “media room” inside of school grounds may be selected.
 - This area may be compromised if the building has not yet been cleared by emergency services.
- Outside designated media staging areas in the vicinity of the school should also be identified.
 - Accommodating the national press and television networks outdoors requires the assistance of local law enforcement.
- The location utilized is where the crisis communications team will provide briefings, press releases and opportunities for the media to ask the spokesperson questions at the specific times during the day. When possible, the briefing and question sessions should be scheduled to confirm to the media’s deadlines.

Communications response guidelines

In preparation for speaking with media representatives, the following steps are recommended:

- Assess the emotional environment into which you are distributing information.
- Determine which audiences you are addressing – parents, community, students, teachers and/or media. Tailor your remarks accordingly.

When addressing the emotional environment consider the following:

- Are the parents angry and in need of calming?
- Are teachers worried about safety and in need of reassurance about the steps being taken to secure the school?
- Are students fearful that there will be a recurrence of the traumatic incident?
- Are media outlets or any other constituent group reporting speculation or unconfirmed information?

Media communication after a crisis

Information provided to the public should focus on the nature of the crisis, its impact on students and staff and recovery efforts, including:

- Steps taken by the school, district, law enforcement and other emergency personnel to respond promptly to student needs.
- Steps taken to secure the school.
- Current safety status of students to ease the concern of parents and laying out appropriate steps parents can take to assist and support their children.
- Changes to the school schedule for the remaining days of the week.

- Additional services available to students, staff and parents from such groups as crisis counselors, victim's assistance organization and faith based organizations.
- Apprehension and sympathy for the reactions of students, staff, parents or the public during the crisis.

Media ground rules

Educational facilities need to establish ground rules with the media via a press release to reporters, editors and producers to ensure the physical and emotional healthy of children during and after the incident.

- **Interviews**
 - Do not interview children; even if they approach reporters.
 - Discourage students from offering or accepting interviews with the media.
- **Copy-cat coverage**
 - Avoid offering step-by-step details of the incident, to preclude students from committing 'copy cat' acts.
 - Avoid glorifying the perpetrator.
- **Media pools**
 - Designate media videographers and photographers to obtain visuals for use by participating media organizations.
- **Visual rotation**
 - Avoid repeatedly airing the same tragic visuals, so that students can start the healing process.

Communications with key stakeholders

The media/community is but one of three important constituent groups who need information after a crisis. The other key stakeholders are district administrators and members of the school family.

- It is vital that the communications leader at the school site – usually the Principal – maintain constant communication with the Superintendent's office.
- Within the school family, key stakeholders include teachers and other supportive adults who also need accurate and timely information.
- Communication to this important group should include:
 - Facts about the incident.
 - Impact on students and staff, including injury or death
 - Steps taken to secure the school.
 - Emphasis on adults as role models for students, especially during a crisis.
 - Acknowledgement and support of the emotional challenge they face.
 - Anticipation of student's questions and reactions.
 - Suggested teacher responses.
 - Information about additional services available to students.
 - Information about additional services for teachers.
 - Time of next update / staff meeting.

Note: The following checklists are presented to clarify individual roles and responsibilities during a crisis.

Principal's Roles and Responsibilities

- Make sure local police and fire are aware of the incident by calling 911.
- Alert all building occupants of the emergency.
- Prepare occupants for evacuation, lockdown or sheltering in place.
- Remember 'Special Needs' employees.
- Ensure occupants reach the assembly area.
- Contact the district PIO.
- Act as the Incident Commander for the school.
- Form a Unified Incident Command Structure with local public safety agencies and work together to stabilize and terminate the emergency.

Initial call from the Media

- The principal of the school will act as the media liaison and is empowered by the school district to act as the voice of the school.
- Life safety is the number one priority and the safety and welfare of school occupants is paramount.
- If contacted by the media discuss with them the basic information they need to know to ensure the community is aware of the situation and that the school district is working diligently to return to normal school operations
or
- Refer all media inquires to the school district PIO.
- Remember your main goal is the safety and well-being of the building occupants. If you cannot speak with the media refer them to the school district's PIO.

Working with the Media

- Remember that the Media can act as a positive communications resource and they should be used as an ally before, during and after an event.
- Only discuss confirmed information. Never assume or speculate.
- Deliver a message that is honest, illustrates empathy, concern and a dedicated effort to handle the situation with in the utmost professional manner.
- Utilize facts and figures to reinforce the message. Cite outside subject matter experts and reports.
- Never use the words "no comment" as it appears as the district is hiding something or admitting guilt. Instead explain that, "the district is investigating the matter and we will share any confirmed information as soon as we receive it."
- Direct the stakeholders/community to take specific actions if necessary. (I.e. pick up children at a certain location, school is closed, etc.)
- Keep the stakeholders informed. If something changes or an update is needed, please make every attempt to inform the stakeholders as quickly as possible.

Proactive Messages

- Illustrate care and concern for the building occupants, stakeholders and the community.
- Show that the school district is committed to resolving the problem as quickly as possible.
- Notify the victim's family as quickly as possible and do not share any information until there are notified.

- Establish organization and credibility. Accurate information should be presented in the best possible manner.
- Get the information out to the stakeholders as quickly as possible, but remain organized.
- Work with public safety agencies to ensure the same, proper message is being sent out to all stakeholders.
- Communicate clearly and concisely. Use 12-word sound bites and visual aids if needed.
- Stay positive and reassure stakeholder that every possible means is being taken to resolve the issue.

PIO Roles and Responsibilities

- The PIO acts as the voice for the school district.
- Develop and lead the district's crisis communications team.
- Delegate roles and responsibilities to the district's crisis communications team.
- Work with district-wide and building-level school safety teams to communicate effective messages to all stakeholders.
- Work with the media to send the correct messages out to the community and keep the school's image in mind at all times.
- Staff the District's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and/or the County's Joint Information Center (JIC) if needed.
- Update the superintendent and executive staff on a timely basis.
- Participant in a post-incident critique with emergency response teams. Take corrective actions to ensure the improper procedure or act will not happen in the future.
- Update the crisis communications plan on a yearly basis.

PIO's Crisis Communications Checklist

- Call 911 if needed.
- Contact the principal or building manager.
- Notify the Superintendent's Office.
- Work with the school safety teams and the IC.
- Collect all relevant facts.
- Identify all stakeholders.
- Establish contact with the media.
- Staff the school's EOC if necessary.
- Establish a Joint Information Center if necessary.
- Develop a communication strategy.
- Write the press release or communicate.
- Conduct a joint press conference and deliver the press release or communicate.
- Answer all questions with confirmed facts. Do not assume or speculate.
- Continue to update the Superintendent.
- After the event, follow up with all personnel to close the incident.
- Participate in a post incident critique.
- Take corrective action if needed.

Effective Crisis Communications

To ensure a proactive crisis communication strategy will be implemented these 8 steps should be taken.

1. Contact the Public Information Officer (PIO) and assemble the Crisis Communications Team (CCT).
 - CCT should include the PIO, Legal, Risk Management, Public Safety, Administration and others with critical roles in crisis communications.
 - PIO should implement an action plan to gather the information and return it back as quickly as possible.
 - PIO should assign roles and responsibilities.
2. CCT should collect and verify all information.
 - Collect all pertinent information and verify its truthfulness. If information cannot be verified it must be clearly stated that the information has not been verified or it should not be used at all.
 - CCT should monitor all media channels (radio, television, Internet, print, etc.)
3. Assess the severity of the crisis.
 - How will this affect the school and district?
 - What damage has been caused so far?
 - Can schools continue to operate during the event?
 - Will this event affect others in the community or is it isolated to just the school district?
4. Identify key stakeholders.
 - Who is affected by this event? Students, parents, faculty, staff, visitors, the community?
5. Implement a proactive communications strategy.
 - The strategy should portray the main goal of the school district is they strive to build a safe and secure environment that creates a positive educational environment.
 - All CCT members should have a voice in the communications strategy.
6. Develop communications materials.
 - The PIO and the CCT should work to design the correct message(s).
7. Inform partners, stakeholders and the media.
 - Inform the stakeholders, partners and media the facts of the case and the school district's response to the crisis.
 - Answer questions from these groups and keep a positive attitude when addressing the public.
8. Participate in a Post Incident Critique.
 - Members of the CCT should participate with other emergency responders and school administrators to discuss specific actions taken during the event.
 - Errors, best practices and policies and procedures should be identified, reviewed and discussed during the critique.

Module 3 – CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Introduce – Crisis Communications

Instructor Note:
REVIEW THE CRISIS READINESS CHECKLIST. Discuss answers and insights.

ARE YOU READY?

- Have you reworked your plan in light of 9/11 and the new media realities?
- Do you have a crisis bag/kit in your office, home and car?
- Can you reach everyone you need to in 30 minutes or less?
- Do you know the PIOs for the emergency responders in your area?
- Do you have a rapid response team?

CRISIS READINESS CHECKLIST

Crisis Prevention/Early Warning System

- We have an early warning system at the school, department and district levels to identify smoldering issues and to intervene before they turn into crisis situations
- We are tracking internal problems or other vulnerabilities that could be damaging to our students, staff, operations or reputation if they went public
 - What would be the public reaction if one of these issues was disclosed by a disgruntled parent, student, employee or board member?
 - What would be the public reaction if one of these issues was disclosed by a lawsuit or an investigative report?
 - How would we explain or justify the situation so it would have minimum impact on our school or district?
 - What is being done to minimize the chances of this problem occurring or this issue escalating into something larger and more difficult to manage?
 - What crisis situations have other school districts or similar organizations had in the past year that went “public?” How well would we have handled those?
 - How much management time has it taken?
 - How much as it cost them in expenses, community confidence?
 - What are the prospects for lawsuits, government investigations?
 - How long will it be before they get the problem behind them?
 - How would we have done if it had happened to us instead of them?
 - What can be learned from their experiences?
 - Have we made any changes in the way we operate as a result of what happened to them?
- Cross-functional team meetings regarding troubled students, staff, parents
- School counselors, nurses, social workers, resource officers and principals and teacher team leaders/departments heads along with community social workers and law enforcement personnel, family court personnel, etc.
- We have a zero tolerance policy in place for bullying; we have trained staff to recognize signs of bullying, especially relational bullying, and how to intervene appropriately

- We have a consistent and fair district-wide discipline policy that clearly outlines infractions and consequences
- We have a district-wide and school-based community and school partnerships regarding character development and education; we recognize students for good citizenship along with academic performance, sports, music, etc.
- Management meets regularly to discuss emerging issues and strategy for dealing with them
- Key communicator program helps identify trouble spots early
- Regular public opinion polls provide ongoing feedback/pulse-taking
- Feedback loops for advisory council meetings
- Executive placement on key community boards and advisory groups with feedback loop to cabinet/managers
- Our crisis and management teams receive regular updates regarding student discipline, personnel issues, legal issues, operational issues, political and community concerns that could impact our operations, reputation, academic performance and/or student/staff safety
- We have an ongoing strategic public relations program in place focused on relationship building and two-way communication that is measured annually for effectiveness

Team Planning and Training

- We have an incident-command model in place so decisions may be made quickly and on-site by the first responders
- We have a crisis team identified, with back-up for each member
- We provide training on our plan annually
- Our crisis team meets regularly to discuss the plan and possible scenarios
- All management and crisis team members have a crisis kit (including contact information) in the trunk of their cars AND at their work stations
- All management and crisis team members carry a wallet size “Reader’s Digest Version” with them at all times that covers the first 1-12 hours of crisis response
- We regularly meet with the emergency response/incident command leaders and public information officers that serve our schools/community
- Our plan has been reviewed by our attorneys
- We have access to additional legal resources if needed
- We recognize that the court of law and the court of public opinion are two different issues and must be managed by professionals with expertise in each area
- Lockdown, evacuation and cancellation procedures are clear
- Evacuation locations have been tested and are realistic, appropriate for major events
- Our plan has short and long term objectives
- Our plan’s short-term objectives address the following time frames:
 - 1st Hour
 - Hours 1-6
 - Hours 6-12
 - Hours 12-24
 - Daily
- A student and staff tracking and parent notification system is in place and has been tested
- A student-parent reunification system has been developed for each school site/facility and has been tested
- Perimeter, access and traffic flow concerns to all buildings and school sites have been addressed
- Off site locations have been identified and equipped for incident and communications command and control, and for restoration of business/central administration operations

- Emergency responders from various local, county and state agencies share a common emergency communications system
- We have a plan in place for quickly accessing additional cell phones, walkie-talkies, rental cars, hotel rooms, security badges, etc.
- We have a budget identified and sourced for crisis command, response and communications
- We have provided media and interpersonal communications training to all crisis team members; we have trained all crisis team members to recognize stress, anxiety and trauma signs and have a referral system in place for team members who may require assistance
- We recognize that if a Level 4 crisis occurs, we will be dealing with the aftermath of the situation from 5-7 years (average); we recognize we are in this for the long haul

Crisis Counseling

- We have addressed the need for crisis counseling and have additional resources on call if needed with the expertise required (National Association of School Psychologists, National Organization for Victim Assistance)
- We have trained school/district school counselors, social workers and psychologists in typical crisis responses and trauma and appropriate research-based practice
- We have planned to meet the short and long-term psychological needs of administrators, staff and crisis responders as well as students and parents
- We have engaged the appropriate community agencies and the faith community in our planning processes so they are equipped and ready to meet the short and long-term needs of a traumatized community

Communications Planning

- 24-7 management notification system is in place
 - We can reach every we need to reach within 30 minutes or less, including key stakeholders such as principals, teachers, parents, elected officials, etc.
 - We have a web-based database that includes multiple points of contact for each person and a back-up person with decision-making authority and training
- We update our plan and key contacts quarterly
- We have a web-based database and multiple channel contact system (web, phone, email, cell, pager) of key contacts for the school board, administration, principals, teachers, support staff, the media, parents and community opinion leaders
- We can easily update our website throughout the day, night as needed as new information becomes available; our website can serve as the primary and most credible source for timely news and braking information
- We have a system set-up to deal with tributes, volunteers, gifts, donations
- We have a cabinet member and PIO assigned and a strategy for managing political issues
- We have a corporate communications/public information SWOT team in place
- We have a staffing plan in place with a staggered schedule; we have identified additional resources for staffing
- We have a plan for scheduling regular briefings for the media
- We have a plan for issuing regular press releases/information updates to the media as well as to internal/external audiences
- We have a triage system in place to record, prioritize and answer media queries
- We have established communication goals
- We have established draft statements and releases for the top 3-5 most likely scenarios

- We have identified and provided media training for all possible spokespeople
- All school personnel understand the communication procedures during a crisis
- We will send a PIO staff member, outsource resource or trained volunteer immediately to the crisis site to assist with communications and media relations
- We have a system for pooling central office secretaries/personnel to assist in the crisis communications center
- We have identified a location to house the media and have a person assigned to staff that function/stay with reporters
- We know how to set up pool coverage and reporter pools
- We have a team in place to design, manage and execute tributes and memorials
- We have a school foundation in place or we have identified a highly credible local non-profit (501c-3) to handle donations

Communications Center

- We can quickly set up an emergency communications center that includes:
 - o 10-25 volunteers with PR experience
 - o 10-25 phone lines
 - o 10-25 cell phones
 - o 10-25 networked computers with Internet access and shared file capacity and access to district email addresses, student databases and files
 - o Printers, fax machines, photocopiers, sign makers
 - o Media query forms (hard copy and online)
 - o Communication templates (hard copy and online: formats for news releases, media advisories, memos, briefing sheets, action plans, fax cover sheets, etc.)
 - o Filing cabinets and appropriate supplies (Folders, hanging files, tabs)
 - o Office supplies (Markers, tape, pens, notepads, pencils, sharpeners, staplers, highlighters, post-it notes, 250-500 telephone message pads)
 - o Presentation folders
 - o District fact sheets and collateral materials, stationery
 - o Chart pads (at least a dozen)
 - o 6-12 TVs for monitoring coverage
 - o Electronic news tracking service with daily delivery
 - o Press conference area with speakers, microphones and mult boxes

BOILS DOWN TO...

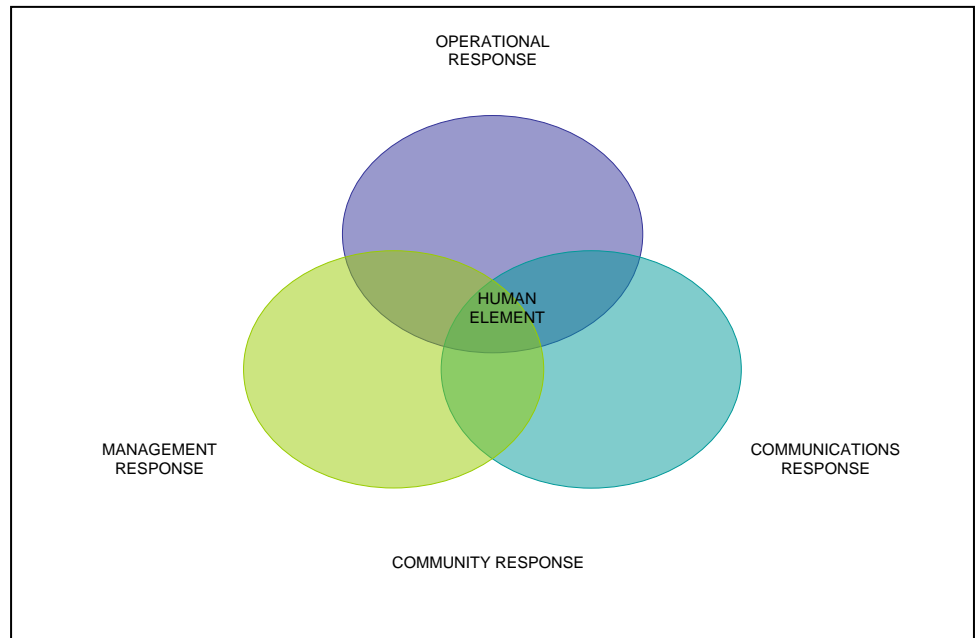
1. Management Decision/Indecision
2. Human Error
3. Mechanical Problems
4. Acts of God

Source: Longitudinal study by the Institute for Crisis Management, 2003

CRISIS TYPES	Sudden	Smoldering
Level 4: Death, extreme violence; severe harm or threat of harm to students, personnel, others; hostage situations; kidnappings; terrorist threats or actions; natural disasters; state takeover of district.		
Level 3: Lockdown due to neighborhood activity; staff; major financial problems/mismanagement; corruption/malfeasance; plant, facility or school closings; death of top management; termination of top management; major litigation; major layoffs or budget cuts, major service outages; sexual assaults; gun at school; state takeover of school; poor district-level test/discipline ratings (district wide); employee arrest (students involved); coalition advocacy; widespread environmental issues/concerns; widespread student safety and discipline issues, academic issues.		
Level 2: Bomb threats; bus wrecks (minimal or no injuries); drug sales/busts; political skirmishes; employee arrest (students not involved); interest group advocacy; isolated mold, bat, HVAC, asbestos and other environment issues; growing student safety and discipline issues; isolated academic issues.		
Level 1: Individual employee, parent and school board member complaints, agitations and threats; bus delays, scheduling issues, routine school, maintenance, bus, telecom and cafeteria complaints; routine discipline issues.		

PLAN COMPONENTS

- Overview
- Board Policy(ies)
- Crisis Team Members & Contact Info
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Notification Tree/Procedure
- Crisis Definitions (Type & Level)
- Crisis Procedure
- Level I, II, III & IV Response
- On Site/Off Site Command & Communication Center Plans
- Management Guidelines & Procedures
- Communication Guidelines & Procedures
- Counseling Guidelines & Procedures
- Disaster/Operations Recovery & Procedures
- Staffing/Schedules/Budgets
- Sample Communications
- Record Keeping
- Evaluation



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- School Board
- Superintendent
- Deputy/Regional Superintendents
- PIO
- Department Heads
- Legal
- Principals
- Teachers & Support Staff

COMMUNICATION ISSUES

- Spokesperson
- Media Strategy & Goals
- Media Location
- Media Triage & Briefing Schedule
- Communications Center
- Approval Process/Legal Review
- Response Infrastructure
- Internal Communications
- Parent Communications
- Community Relations/Politics

MESSAGE TIPS

- Use the KISS principle
- Active voice
- No jargon
- Never repeat negatives
- Do not guess
- Less is more
- Repeat, repeat, repeat – repeat!

COMMUNICATIONS HIERARCHY

- Face-to-face
- Small group discussion
- Large group presentation
- Phone conversation
- Interactive email
- Handwritten personal note
- Signed personal letter
- Mass-produced direct mail letter
- Brochure or pamphlet sent out as a direct mail piece
- Article in organizational publication
- Affinity group newsletters
- Websites
- News outlets
- Trade publications
- Advertising
- Other (posters, banners, skywriters, buttons, giveaways, gizmos)

Employees

- Counseling
- Overnight voicemail message to all staff
- Morning briefings
- Continuous Intranet postings and email alerts
- Telephone tree messages to employees' homes
- Faculty, staff meetings
- School announcements
- Red Rocks Memorial
- Media channels

Parents/Community

- Voice mail broadcast
- Daily letters/updates
- Frequent Internet updates
- Teacher telephone trees
- Parent meetings
- Family counseling
- Parent hotline
- Community hotline
- Tribute fund
- Media channels

TRAINING OPTIONS

- Shared reading and discussion groups
- Workshops, seminars, teleconferences
- Departmental
- Cross-functional
 - Table top
 - Mocks
- Other

EVALUATION

Prevention/Intervention

- Identify and monitor smoldering issues and measure success in preventing escalation
- Set up early warning and response system
- Proactive, 2-way public relations at all levels

Before/During a crisis

- Set-up feedback loops and adjust as needed throughout crisis
- Monitor media coverage for message delivery, accuracy
- Monitor execution of plan and adjust as needed
- Set-up daily debriefing session with crisis team

Post Crisis

- Internal/external surveys, polls
- Enrollment
- School Board elections/changes in administration
- Public policy initiatives

Module 4 – Media Training Guide

Introduce: Media
Training Guide

Working with the Media: Your Rights

You have the right to...

- Know the interview topic(s) in advance.
- Know the identity and affiliation of the reporter.
- State your key points and, if appropriate, re-state them.
- Have some control over the interview environment.
- Bring up relevant topics and points not specifically asked for in questioning.
- Know how the interview material will be used and whether others are being interviewed for the story.
- Respond to accusations.
- Correct misstatements and misinformation during the interview.
- Restate obscure or lengthy questions.
- Finish responses without interruption as long as your answer is concise and relevant.

Reporters have the right to...

- Reasonable access to legitimate news sources.
- Have the reporter's deadlines and logistical needs considered.
- Receive a timely response to an inquiry.
- Receive a concise and direct answer to a relevant question.
- Request and receive, if available, printed or pictorial material to flesh out the interview information.
- Conduct follow-up inquiries, where necessary, for clarification.
- Receive corrected information if incorrect information is inadvertently given.
- Redirect the discussion to the subject under investigation.
- Evaluate and report the story as the reporter sees it.
- The same kind of courtesy and respect that you desire.

Top Ten Ways to Develop Productive Relationship with the News Media

10. Make yourself **accessible**.
9. **Prepare simple, direct responses** to all likely questions and map out an agenda of key points to stress.
8. **Avoid** speaking "**off the record**" or "on background" unless truly necessary.
7. **Don't say "no comment,"** which is curt and indicates you have something to hide. Say, "I don't have an answer to that question," or "I don't want to comment on that."
6. When contacted by reporters, **ask about their deadlines**—and make every effort to get back to them on time. Even if you don't have the information they want, they will appreciate the courtesy.
5. It's OK to **ask a reporter about the story "angle"** he or she plans to pursue. Reporters will usually tell you, which helps you prepare and formulate answers.
4. **Decline** to answer questions **outside your areas of expertise** or responsibility.
3. **Offer**—but don't demand—to **review material** before publication.
2. **Be polite and considerate**—even if a reporter asks questions you prefer not to answer.
1. **Be honest.** Credibility is slowly built but can be destroyed instantaneously.

Mapping the Strategy

- **Set Communication Objectives.** Your objectives are the action(s) you want your target audience to take.
- **Develop Your Message.** What do you want your audience to remember?
- **Provide Proof Points.** Distinguish and add credibility to your message.
 - **Facts.** Simple statements that describe the way things are.
 - **Statistics** (use sparingly). Most effective when easy to understand.
 - **Authorities or Experts.** Quoting a third-party expert adds credibility.
 - **Analogy or Comparison.** They make statements more memorable.
 - **Personal Experience.** Use it to illustrate points.

Message Development Worksheet

Target Audience: _____

Key Message: _____

Proof Point: _____

Key Message: _____

Proof Point: _____

Key Message: _____

Proof Point: _____

Statement of Benefit

1. Create a Statement of Benefit: a concise statement that tells the reporter the single most compelling advantage they can focus on for a story on your company. It is what is unique and sets your company apart from the competition.
2. Remember what news medium you are talking to. Be specific to that medium. If you are generic with your comments, you will end up with poor results.
3. Substantiate your statement. Regardless of whether you are using a percentage, dollar figure, or statistical data, make sure that it's the truth and make sure it's specific. Platitudes and generalities are garbage. If prices average 22.4% less than the competition, use that number instead of rounding off. It's more believable.

Addressing Your Audience

- Talk from the viewpoint of your target audience's interest.
- Know your audience.
- Don't use jargon.
- Don't mistake the reporter as your audience.
- The reporter is the conduit to get your message to the audience—the reporter's readers, viewers, or listeners.
- Speak in personal terms whenever possible to enhance credibility.
 - Use "we" or "[Company Name]."
 - By taking personal responsibility, you become more believable.
- Keep it tight
 - Whether making a speech or answering questions, make short, simple and specific statements.
 - Speak in HEADLINES!

Polishing Your Speaking

Start with the conclusion...then explain

- Tell 'em.
- Tell 'em what you told 'em.
- Then tell 'em again!

Accentuate the positive. Do not bring up the negative

- If damaging issues surface, concede only what you must and in the briefest way. Then describe what positive steps are now underway to handle the problem.

Simplicity communicates best

- This is desirable even to the most sophisticated audience, especially when familiar illustrations and comparisons are used.
- You may or may not be speaking to knowledgeable people.

Do not argue with the reporter or lose your cool

- You'll never win the argument.
- Audiences and reporters will sense hostility.
- Reporters sometimes deliberately argue to elicit a response.

If a question contains negative words, don't repeat them

- You risk having the reporter's words attributed to you.
- State the answer in a positive way.

A reporter's direct question deserves a direct answer

- Answer the question, then bridge to a key message.

If you don't know an answer, say so

- Don't speculate.
- Refer the reporter to someone who can answer the question or tell the reporter you will get back to him/her later – and do so.
- Always respect the reporter's deadline.

If you can't answer a question, don't say "no comment"

- Always give a valid reason for not being able to answer; for example, a legal case is pending or the information requested is proprietary in nature.

Listen to the question

- Be sensitive to the reporter's intent.
- If you don't address the question, you appear to be evasive.

- If you are unsure of the question, ask the reporter to rephrase it before answering.

Always answer questions honestly

- Tell the truth, even if it hurts.
- Avoid any temptation to exaggerate the positive.

Delivering Your Message

- Your Audience Must Hear and Remember You
- If you want your message to be heard and retained by your target audience you must repeat your KEY MESSAGES several times. Use different kinds of support to give your messages variety.
- The questions you are asked may not lead you directly to your prepared messages, however.
- Use "bridging" to deal with questions and direct the focus of your answers to successfully communicate your messages. Bridging can also influence the follow-up questions that are asked in an interview.

Bridging

Bridging is a technique used to move from one aspect of an issue to another. It involves dealing with the question briefly and honestly, and then promptly following that response with your message.

Some simple examples of bridging tools are:

- "Yes..." (the answer), "and in addition to that..." (the bridge)
- "No..." (the answer), "let me explain..." (the bridge)
- "I don't know..." (the answer), "but what I do know is..." (the bridge)
- "That's the way it used to be..." (the answer), "here's what we do now..." (the bridge)

Key Tips per Communications Medium

Print

- A newspaper/magazine interview is longer than for TV/radio. Allow for time to communicate fully developed messages
- Provide more detailed examples
- Required in-depth knowledge of the topic/subject at hand
- Expect the interview to be recorded -- don't be unnerved
- Give the reporter your contact information so he/she can reach you following the interview
- Don't ask to read the copy before it is published
- Don't complain about minor mistakes/ inaccuracies
- If called for an extra quote, don't feel pressured to answer immediately
- Ask what the reporter's deadline is and promise to get back to him/her with a response
- Return the call -- prior to the deadline -- when you are confident of your position and facts
- If the reporter asks a question that is beyond your knowledge, refer him/her to the appropriate source

Television

- Speak at a personal level with viewers.
- Appearance and voice are vital tools for TV interviews
- "Spot News" interview is most common TV interview and can be live or taped
- Taped interviews will be edited and the reporter will pick the best sound bite
- During taped interviews, no one is watching. You can stop and start again if you make a mistake.
- Emphasize the key messages so they don't fall to the editing room floor (deliver them concisely, with energy)
- Pause before you deliver each answer. Take time to collect your thought and deliver an energetic response
- Live interviews require on-the-spot energy to make the message more memorable
- High energy level, natural gestures/ expressions/voice
- If topic is serious, temper your body language
- No sudden body movements—move deliberately and slowly
- Sit straight in your chair, lean forward slightly to show you are alert and in control of the interview
- Avoid swiveling in your chair, moving your feet or gripping any objects. These distractions show the audience you are nervous
- Stay in character until you are sure the cameras is off (many interviewees get caught making comments or gesturing wildly in relief when the camera is still rolling)

Radio

- Speak at a personal level with listeners.
- Audience depends on your voice to develop a perception of you and your message
- Maintain a high level of energy
- Convince listeners that you're an expert and happy to talk to them
- Vary your pitch and volume appropriately, be conversational
- You can concentrate entirely on what you say rather than how you look
- Use your voice effectively
- Exaggerate your inflection/tone as needed for emphasis
- Speak directly into the microphone -- good sound quality is vital
- If interviewing by telephone, speak directly into the mouthpiece
- Be clear, don't mumble - speak above your normal volume
- Find a quiet setting - no distractions - where you can hear and be heard
- Don't ramble on with answers, be succinct. Most radio news stories include sound bites of 10 seconds or less
- Avoid jargon. Technical terms can stump the reporter and audience
- If you must use technical terms, define them for the reporter
- Know when the reporter's deadline is and try to accommodate it
- If you can't answer questions when the reporter calls, ask when the deadline is and tell them if you can get back to them in time, or not—don't wait until two minutes before the deadline
- Be friendly with reporters, even if you don't like them
- Don't relax until the interview is over and you are "off air"

