



Psyc.E.In. MOOC 2

Unit 6

Chapter 3

Case study/Good practice

3. 4 Decision Making

Scenario Description

In the following case study, you will be provided with a scenario to be used in your classroom for an exercise that will last 60 minutes:

- 10 minutes to read the instructions and the information about the scenario individually.
- 30 minutes for subgroup discussion.
- 20 minutes for plenary discussion and comments.

Setting:

It is September 2019; after heavy rainfalls, a town in the northwest of Italy is hit by flash floods. The town has almost 100.000 residents and stands well away from the river, so flooding did not used to be a concern. In addition, the employee at the county's dam reports that a lot of water is pouring down the spillway.

The local emergency manager is now meeting with the county engineer, the public works director, the fire chief, the police chief, and with other authorities to discuss the situation.

After the meeting, it is decided to request external help.

You are a psychological emergency facilitator, member of a voluntary association that operates in civil protection. Your team includes three volunteer rescuers, two physicians, and two psychologists. Local authorities request the intervention of your team to help and coordinate local rescue teams. You are invited by the crisis manager to attend the meeting in the role of psychological emergency facilitator.

Objective:

As psychological emergency facilitator, your role will be to facilitate the decision-making process, helping identify risks, hazards, resources and safety procedures. In a lack of time and information, you'll be expected to support the group making the necessary decisions including:

- Should residents be evacuated?
- If the decision is to evacuate, when should the evacuation take place?
- Who will notify the citizens of the evacuation, and how?
- What additional resources will be necessary to accomplish the evacuation and provide any shelter needed?
- What is the most effective way to keep the dam from collapsing, and what resources will be needed to accomplish that?

Moreover, you are expected to support community members at critical times and to re-evaluate the needs of the community after the rainstorm that devastated the area.

Methods and resources:

Your team includes three volunteer rescuers, two physicians, and two psychologists. You have few available resources to support your team; the main concerns are about the lack of time and information. In order to better define potential risks and hazards, you can attend the meeting organised between local emergency agencies and authorities. At the meeting, you could gather further information, discuss options and select a solution that is the most reasonable, workable and rapid.

Before the start of the meeting, you contact the coordinator, introduce yourself and discuss with him/her the role and functions you will assume during the meeting. At the beginning of the

meeting, you introduce yourself to the others and clarify your role right away. At that meeting, you could facilitate gathering the information required, discussing options, and selecting a solution that is the most reasonable, workable and rapid for all the people involved.

Instructions: Working in groups, review the details of the case study and answer the questions to complete the activity. It is not necessary to describe the full process in detail. The aim of this activity is to test your decision making in a crisis situation. At the end of activity, you have 15 minutes to select a spokesperson and share your answers with the class.

Time Limit: 30 minutes.

Questions

Risk Assessment

1. What is the objective of the assessment? Which are the target groups?

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2. What hazards might you encounter as you explore the area?

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3. What are the probable dangers and their magnitude?

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4. What are the elements at risk? What is their significance?

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5. What additional resources will be necessary?

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6. Is there any missing information? How would you gather more information?

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7. What kind of information would you share with your team?

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8. Are there any available protocols to support you and your team?

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Decision-making strategies

9. Which stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process?

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10. How should the decision process be made? What is your rationale for selecting this decision-making process?

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11. What are the key decision points?

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12. What factors must you consider when selecting an alternative?

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13. What resources are potentially available for you to implement the decision?

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14. How will you communicate the alternative selected?

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15. What would you say to citizens? And who will notify communications to the citizens?

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16. What is the most effective way to keep the dam from collapsing, and what resources will be needed to accomplish that goal?

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Observe - monitor results

17. How will you monitor and evaluate the situation?

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18. How might the situation have changed as a result of the decisions made?

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19. Is it necessary to modify the decisions made?

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20. What decision would you recommend concerning the background scenario?

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Source

FEMA. Decision Making and Problem Solving. IS 241, 2002. <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is241.asp>