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MOOC 1 – Unit 6

Management in Emergency

Chapter 3

Post-Crisis Stage

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Chapter 3

Post-Crisis Stage - Introduction

- The Post-Crisis Stage is the crucial phase to maintain a sense of continuity after the critical event. Individual and community recovery is the key to improve economy, health and mental health.
- Recovery focuses on the return of the impacted community to normal life.
- It is also named “follow-up phase”: it is crucial for debriefing and for learning from experience, in order to deal better with future crises.



1.1 Coordination in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

The Post-Crisis stage is also named “follow-up phase”. It is the time to evaluate processes, outputs, and outcomes. It is the moment for assessing the impact of the critical event on the recovery capability of the community and of the single individuals. Coordination is the management competence needed to integrate different evaluations, to summarize them in a coherent report, to solve conflicts of interest, and to base future emergency plan on a rational perspective.

Coordination in the Post-Crisis Stage consists of:

1. mapping and organizing the remaining **resources**
2. defining recovery **objects** to improve resilience
3. reviewing **methods/protocols** of intervention and improving recovery strategic plans
4. expressing **leadership**



1.3 Coordination in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

Inner coordination: inside the organisation/team work

Specific tasks to train the organization are focused on:

1) resources:

- Local resource management

2) objects:

- Achievement of overarching recovery objectives

3) methods:

- Agency debriefing and evaluation, addressing first and second responders' long-term issues
- Strategic decision (short- and long-term) in terms of outcome

4) leadership:

- Boosting relationships and free discussion inside the agency and the team

External coordination: between organizations/agencies

Specific tasks to train the organization are focused on:

1) resources:

- Local and external resource management
- Efficient acquisition and distribution of resources

2) objects:

- Integration of local and external activities
- Reduce public fear and build confidence, build community spirit, using consistent information content (timely distribution of public information and education...)

3) methods:

- Agency debriefing and evaluation, addressing first and second responders' long-term issues
- Strategic decision (short- and long-term) in terms of outcome
- Response and recovery planning to return region to normalcy as soon as possible
- Publication of information that has been collected about recovery

4) leadership:

- Boosting relationship and free discussion between agencies and inside the community
- Boosting identity, sense of community



2.1 Communication in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

1. In the post-crisis stage, the focus on managing the crisis is over, but managing the effects of the crisis continues. Given that it can be difficult to precisely locate when a crisis is over, post-crisis communication is largely an extension of crisis response communication coupled with learning from the follow-up lessons.
2. The post-crisis stage gives the opportunity for follow-up communication
 - scrutinizing the crisis response,
 - helping to learn from experience,
 - reducing recurrence,
 - working to understand the options available for effective post-crisis response.
3. The post-crisis stage is the time for the community/agency to renew itself, not simply seeking to return to the situation before the crisis hit, but becoming different and better. Effective crisis learning reflects the crisis knowledge management aspect of crisis communication.

Source: Coombs W.T. (2010). Parameters for Crisis Communication. *Handbook of crisis communication*, 17-53.



2.3 Communication in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

Inner communication

- Evaluate communication plan impact and performance.
- Document your evaluation.
- Improve the communication plan.
- Assess the inner needs for change.
- Manage crisis communication to contain business continuity messages.
- Implement post-crisis communication strategy:
 - Denial strategy: attack the accuser, deny the crisis
 - Diminishing strategy: provide justifications
 - Rebuilding strategy: compensate victims, offer apologies
 - Bolstering strategy: Ingratiation, claim victim status

External communication

- It is important to establish credible and productive working relationships with representatives of the media.
- Participate to the recovery plan, providing documented information about impact and results of the interventions.
- Encourage sense of participation and recovery.
- Organize memorials and commemoration to celebrate victims, anniversary to create a more consciousness community awareness of the crisis and to rebuild sense of continuity after crisis.



2.4 Summary Communication Competence

Pre-crisis

- Be prepared
- Foster alliances
- Develop consensus recommendations.
- Test messages.

Initial

- Acknowledge the event with empathy.
- Explain and inform the public, in simplest forms, about the risk.
- Establish agency/spokesperson credibility.
- Provide emergency courses of action (including how/where to get more information).
- Commit to stakeholders and the public to continue communication.

Maintenance

- Help the public more accurately understand its own risks.
- Provide background and encompassing information to those who need it.
- Gain understanding and support for response and recovery plans.
- Listen to stakeholder and audience feedback, and correct misinformation.
- Explain emergency recommendations.
- Empower risk/benefit decision-making.

Resolution

- Improve appropriate public response in future similar emergencies through education.
- Honestly examine problems and mishaps, and then reinforce what worked in the recovery and response efforts.
- Persuade the public to support public policy and resource allocation to the problem
- Promote the activities and capabilities of the agency (corporate identity reinforced— internally, too).

Evaluation

- Evaluate communication plan performance.
- Document lessons learned.
- Determine specific actions to improve crisis systems or the crisis plan.

Source: Reynolds, B., Galdo, J. H., Sokler, L., & Freimuth, V. S. (2002). Crisis and emergency risk communication.



3.1 Problem solving in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

The post-crisis stage is the evaluation phase of processes, actions and intervention's outcomes.

This process is crucial for understanding what worked adequately during previous stages and what did not, and for learning from experience to better manage future crises.

Despite the end of the crisis, as a psychological emergency facilitator, your efforts must continue in order to allow adequate debriefing, support **recovery** and enable the **return to normality** for the population affected by the crisis.

Moreover, you will have to manage the transition of returning to the working mode; this will require a clear situational awareness to **reprioritize actions** and problem solving tools that proved beneficial in times of crisis.



3.3 Problem solving in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

The specific tasks you have as a psychological emergency facilitator in post-crisis problem solving are focused on:

- **Checking if information sources** used are **reliable and authentic**.
- Evaluating **integrated interventions** with stakeholders for multiagency approach.
- Ensuring that **transmission** takes place through official and trusted channels (spokesperson, responsive systems).
- Building on **lessons learned** and find out if others have tried to solve the same problem or a related problem.
- Identifying actions taken and options, and discuss the **pros and cons** of each alternative.
- Presenting all scientific or technical information about the **alternatives**.
- Considering if **stakeholders' needs and values** and those of your organization have been met.
- Considering and evaluate all applied **ethical perspectives**.



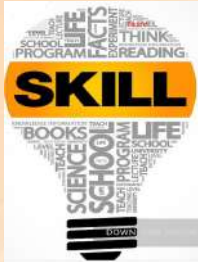
4.1 Decision making in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

Post-crisis decision making can be defined as the process of evaluating the actions taken and the decisions made, in order to improve future actions and better manage future crises. It is in the interest of organizations to define or reinforce a functional way of working and making decisions for future crises.

This stage is no longer characterized by great uncertainty and a lack of time, but in the role of psychological emergency facilitator you will be required a great deal of effort to **evaluate** what has been achieved, integrate learning and skills into the way of working and overcome the difficulties that still remain.

You will have to manage the **transition** of returning to the working mode (e.g. return of employees to their core functions). During the **recovery** phase, good quality of information from inside and outside the organization and a complete and compatible view of the situation will remain extremely important.

Source: <https://www2.deloitte.com/de/de/pages/strategy/articles/decision-making-in-the-covid19-crisis.html>



4.2 Decision making in Post-Crisis Stage Skills

As a psychological emergency facilitator, your decision-making **skills** are focused on:

- Assessing the decisions made using **Process Factors**:
 - Were decisions implemented?
 - Were decisions timely?
 - Did they address the target?
- Assessing the decisions made using **Impact Factors**:
 - Were decisions effective and successful?
 - Did they achieve the expected outcomes?
 - What were the costs and benefits?
- Critically analyzing and evaluate each **alternative** according to decision criteria previously chosen.
- Considering the **strengths and weaknesses** of each alternative that become evident as they are compared with the criteria.
- Evaluating not only the risks and damages, but also the **resources**. Based on the available resources, generating and evaluating the decisions made.
- Identifying if the situation has changed, if more or fewer resources are required, or if a different **alternative solution** is required.



4.2 – Checklist to review your decision making in post-crisis phase



4.3 Decision making in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

In order to improve decision making process in post-crisis stage, as a psychological emergency decision maker you can:

- **Assess the situation** and the decisions made.
- Organise **debriefing and evaluation**, addressing first and second responders' long-term issues.
- Re-plan the work schedule.
- **Create meetings** among stakeholders.
- Give **operational tools** to stakeholders to better manage the recovery phase.
- Verify whether the tools and strategies used were effective.
- Verify the **quality of the information** gained.
- **Conduct a process assessment** to re-plan and verify results and processes.



5.1 Leadership in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

Leadership is the capability to influence work process. The “follow-up” is the time to capitalize output and results and to overcome limits and borders. It is the time to evaluate processes, outputs, outcomes. It is the moment for assessing the impact of the crisis event on the recovery capability of the community/individuals.

Post-Crisis Stage leadership deals with:

1. Declaring the situation under control.
2. Ensuring return to normality.
3. Directing follow-up actions.
4. Thanking those who helped.
5. Learning from experience.



5.3 Leadership in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

Internal actions

Ending: declare the end of the emergency.

Learning: think about you and your staff responsibility.

Group-Level assessment: regularly evaluate the characteristics of the recovery environment, including whether your staff's needs are being adequately addressed.

Maintain post-crisis resilience with defusing when staff needed.

External actions

- As part of preparing to respond to an emergency, you should know where and how to make a referral for **follow-up** mental health care, in accordance with other leaders.
- Organize celebrations/awards.

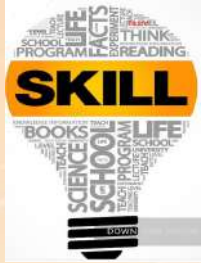


6.1 Team building in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

The field experience helps the team to reinforce the identity and sense of belonging.

Follow-up is the phase to capitalize all the efforts, the successes and the errors of the previous intervention to ameliorate future actions.

Peers could be an important resource for team: peers could be traumatized rescuers, injured colleagues that, after recovery and rehabilitation, share their experience with the team, raising awareness and transferring knowledge inside the team/agency.



6.2 Team building in Post-Crisis Stage Skills

As a team builder in the follow-up phase:

- Check all the actors of the previous action.
- Interview them: check their needs and expectations.
- Help your agency be thankful and grateful towards them.
- Celebrate and organize acknowledgements.
- Train the peer.
- Create psycho-educational meetings with the population.
- Disseminate a new culture of prevention.



6.2 Improving team building in post-crisis stage



6.3 Team building in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

Team builder as member of the group

- Support members with psycho-educational information to help them recover.
- Train the members in stress management during the follow-up phase.
- Train the peer.
- Organize celebrations inside the agency.

Team builder as consultant of the group

- Support community with psycho-educational information to facilitate recovery.
- Bolster preventive culture inside the community.
- Organize celebrations and acknowledgements inside the community.



7.1 Team caring in Post-Crisis Stage Knowledge

A third debriefing is recommended **3 months after the crisis**.

In the post-crisis stage, it is not uncommon that rescuers go through an adjustment period of a week or two experiencing mild depression and a physical let-down. It is important to monitor it and in case it continues for more than two weeks, we suggest talking with your supervisor about it.

Barriers to seeking help: despite a general awareness of the importance of self-care, rescuers could be resistant to asking for help and recognizing psychological distress. First responders often believe that not showing psychological distress is a sign of strength, but this attitude may actually interfere with self-care. As an emergency psychologist, you could help the team work on strengthening their ability to acknowledge emotions and thoughts instead of denying them, increasing their sense of effectiveness.

Source: McCabe, L., & Everly, G. (2007). An Evidence-Informed Model of Human Resistance, Resilience, and Recovery: The Johns Hopkins' Outcome-Driven Paradigm for Disaster Mental Health Services.

Zara, A. (2020). Leadership in times of crisis Psychologists' research and expertise can help leaders communicate clearly and support their communities through the pandemic.



7.3 Team caring in Post-Crisis Stage Competence

- Allow time off for workers who have experienced personal trauma or loss. Transition them back into the organization by initially assigning them to less demanding jobs.
- Develop protocols to provide workers with stigma-free counseling so that they can address the emotional aspects of their experience.
- Institute interviews and/or seminars to help workers put their experiences in perspective and to validate what they have seen, done, thought and felt.
- Provide educational in-services or workshops around stress management and self-care.
- Offer group self-care activities and acknowledgments.

Sources: DeWolfe, D. J. (2000). *Training manual for mental health and human service workers in major disasters*. US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

Bradford, R., & John, A. M. (1991). The psychological effects of disaster work: implications for disaster planning. *Journal of the royal society of health, 111*(3), 107-110.



Conclusion

Post-Crisis Stage/Follow-up

- The post-acute crisis stage is the time to capitalize the lessons learned in the emergency intervention for future policy.
- The post-acute crisis stage allows community to raise awareness towards preventive culture.
- The post-acute crisis is the phase of planning to build the recovery plan.
- Focusing on shared common values and principles is the first step to prevent interest conflict between different stakeholders.

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