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MOOC 2 – Unit 6 Management in Emergency

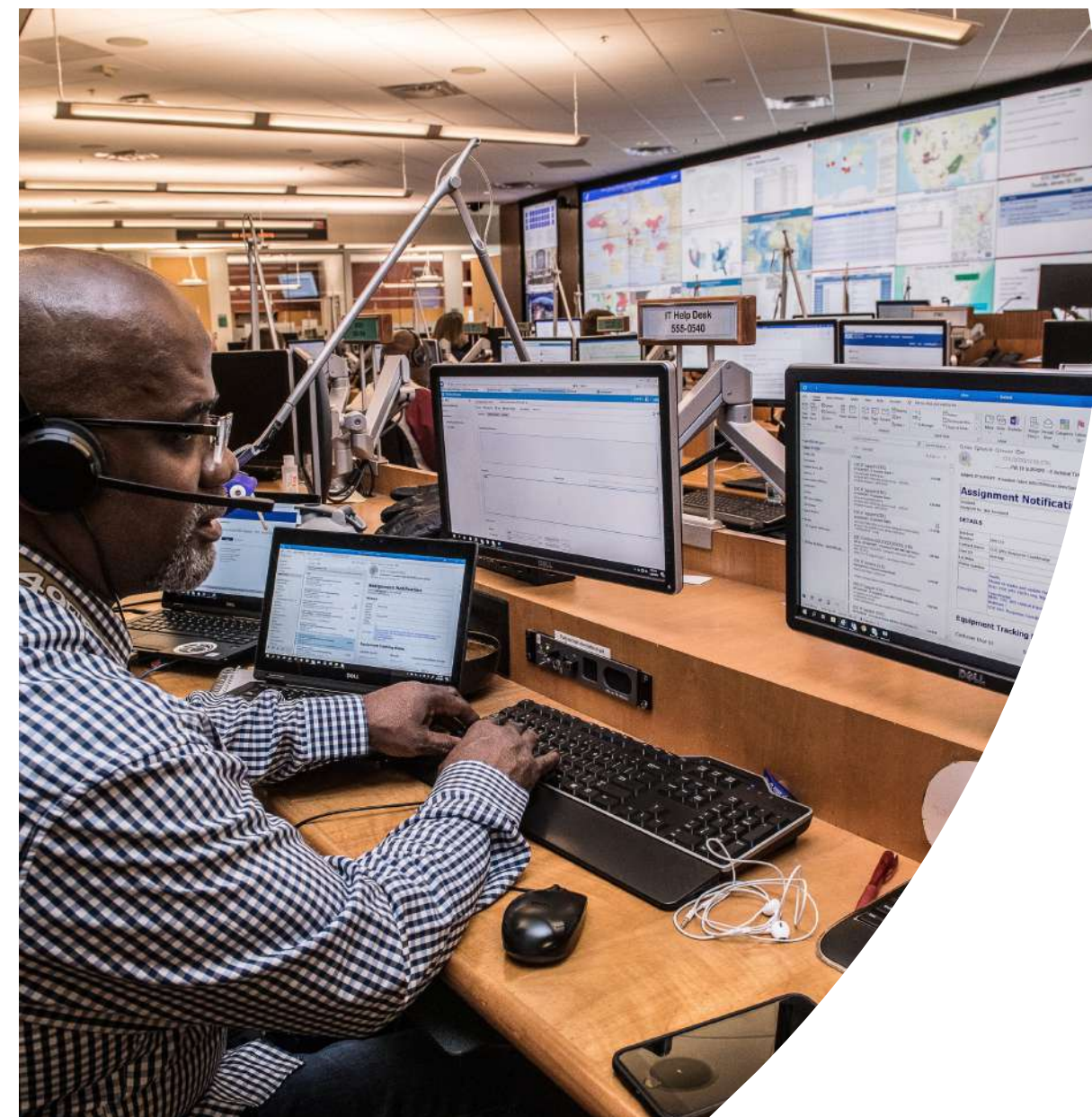
Chapter 1 Teaching Emergency Management Competences

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Historically, emergency management was focused on the response to a disaster in the acute phase. Preparation and recovery were not really contemplated in the practice of crisis management.

Recently, as a result of the experience gathered in the last decades, emergency management has been structured in three phases and five stages:

Pre-phase

1. **Prevention/preparedness:** developing a response plan based upon risk assessment, training of first responders, arrangement of necessary resources, arrangements with other jurisdictions for sharing resources, clarification of jurisdictional responsibilities.
2. **Protection**

Acute phase

3. **Mitigation:** assessing the risk posed by a hazard or potential disaster and attempting to reduce the risk.
4. **Response:** implementing the plan, reducing the potential for secondary damage, and preparing for the recovery phase.

Post-phase

5. **Recovery:** securing basic needs (electricity, temporary housing, food, and clothing) and psychosocial needs (social network, psycho-physical well-being). Recovery is assumed to stop right before reconstruction.
6. **Reconstruction:** to restore continuity with the elements present before the critical event.

Source: Waugh WL. Regionalizing Emergency Management: Counties as State and Local Government. Public Administration Review 1994; 54(3), 253-258. FEMA 2019



Introduction

- The three phases are the starting point for all programmes and policies designed to address all kinds of risks: attacks and man-made or natural disasters.
- An historical review recognizes the failures of a top-down emergency management approach, especially in assessing community needs and addressing vulnerable targets.
- Recently, the bottom-up approach has received wide acceptance because it is focused on community and individual responsibility. It considers communities as the main actors of their own resilience. **Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDM)** strategy is the most appropriate approach to directly involve vulnerable people in the planning and implementation of all the phases of the emergency, starting by the prevention phase.
- The aim of CBDM is to reduce vulnerabilities and to strengthen people's capacity to deal with hazards and cope with disasters.



Introduction - Knowledge

In this chapter, you will have an overview of the main features of emergency management, assuming that, as an emergency trainer, you are already familiar with the topic; you will be provided with a list of useful references in case you would like to study the topic more in detail.

Knowledge in Emergency Management can be structured in the following 7 aspects:

- 1 - Coordination**
- 2 - Communication**
- 3 - Problem solving**
- 4 - Decision making**
- 5 - Leadership**
- 6 - Team building**
- 7 - Team caring**



1.1 Coordination

Coordination establishes the level of operational capacity and overall readiness during emergency response.

- In pre-crisis stage, coordination allows to organize the actions at different levels:
 - interorganizational coordination**: all the rescuers inside the agency/emergency team
 - multijurisdictional coordination**: all the agencies involved
- In the acute crisis stage, rescuers activate fast interventions on-site and remotely, coordinating with all the other agencies. In the crisis stage, interventions can be classified according to:
 - Setting**: On-site/Remote
 - Timing**: Reflective interventions/Proactive interventions
- The post-crisis stage is also named “follow-up phase”. 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 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.



1.1 For more information, see “Coordination in emergency” references



1.2 Communication

Communication in emergency is characterized by fast response, efficacy processes and reliable contents.

- Specifically, in the pre-crisis stage, communication focuses on locating and reducing risk. Pre-crisis stage is the time to design a **crisis communication formalized plan**, to reduce the likelihood of a crisis and mitigate its harm if it occurs. It prepares the community to the event and defines roles, time and modality to communicate:
 - whom to speak to,
 - what to say (or not to say),
 - how to say it best,
 - which channel to choose (you can use a mix of high-tech and low-tech tools to support your message).
- Crisis responses are highly visible to stakeholders and they are very important for the effectiveness of the crisis management effort. For instance, improper crisis responses make the situation worse, but also inappropriate communication about the crisis response can have a negative impact.
- 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 say when a crisis is over, post-crisis communication is largely an extension of crisis response communication coupled with learning from the follow-up lessons.



1.2 For more information, see “Communication in emergency” references



1. 3 Problem Solving

Pre-crisis problem solving is a set of activities designed in order to systematically analyze critical situations and generate **solutions** to prevent damages and to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

- In the pre-crisis stage, problem solving is essential in order to **verify the quality of information**. It is impossible to react effectively to a crisis if the intervention is based on faulty or inadequate information. To make good decisions, the problem-solving process must be accurate and reliable. Failing to verify information could lead to poor decisions and serious consequences.
- An acute crisis situation is related to managing the short- and long-term impacts on the organization and the environment. Therefore, the problem-solving process is characterised by **great uncertainty and limited time**.
- The post-crisis stage is the evaluation phase of the outcomes of processes, actions and interventions, to allow adequate debriefing, to support **recovery**, and to enable the **return to normality** for the population affected by the crisis.



1.3 For more information, see “Problem solving in emergency” references



1. 4 Decision Making

An emergency decision-maker **generates, evaluates, and compares potential options** in order to develop a **well-defined course of action** for decision making, **collaborating** with all the other actors involved. Decision making is a bottom-up process.

- Pre-crisis decision making can be defined as the process of choosing an action to achieve a goal in an uncertain environment. This stage typically concerns **preparedness** and **prevention** in order to achieve a more accurate **risk assessment**.
- In the acute phase, the main issue about decision making is to manage time effectively in order to implement a rapid intervention, to solve problems, and to prevent further damages. At this stage, decisions have to be characterized by: **timeliness** and **quality**.
- 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.



1.4 For more information, see “Decision making in emergency” references



1. 5 Leadership

Leadership is described as a process of influencing social interactions. All the members of the group could exercise their leadership to impact a purposeful effect on an individual or a group of people with the aim of achieving a specific result or goal.

- In the pre-crisis stage, leaders are expected to be vision-oriented, to predict the possible risks and to prevent the damages; they have to be aware of the public needs in order to guide the population to safety during the critical event.
- In the acute crisis stage, important decisions must be made quickly, despite uncertainty and time pressure. There is often ambiguity in terms of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as urgency to resolve the situation as quickly as possible. Leaders can play an essential role in minimizing harm and restoring calm, but leading during a crisis may require a different approach than under normal conditions.
- The “follow-up” is the time to capitalize output and results and to overcome limits. It is the time to evaluate processes, outputs, and outcomes. It is the moment for assessing the impact of the crisis event on the recovery capability of the community/individuals.



1.5 For more information, see “Leadership in emergency” references



1. 6 Team building

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

Team building is the process of reinforcing the sense of participation, affiliation, and belonging to the organization. To become a team, members have to go through different stages of the team building process.

1. **sense of cohesion:** getting to know each other and building trust
 2. **interaction:** sharing values, thoughts, emotions, goals, and resources as a sum of individuals without a real sense of belonging and group identity. The result of the interaction is still the sum of single members.
 3. **integration:** the team acquires its own identity, effectiveness and force. Members feel the added value of the integration: the results of the team work are different and exponentially greater than the sum of the individual members' contributions.
- During the pre-crisis stage, team building helps members to get to know each others, share values, vision, mission, and procedures.
 - During the crisis, a supportive team is a protective factor for rescuers' mental health.
 - Follow-up is the phase to capitalize all the efforts, the successes and the errors of the previous intervention to improve future actions.



1.6 For more information, see “Team building in emergency” references



1. 7 Team caring

Team caring increases resilience in rescuers. Resilient people are able to keep functioning throughout a crisis, so they not only experience less distress personally, but they also can continue to help others that are having trouble coping. It is useful to learn what are the preparation and mitigation strategies that can be used before, during, and after a crises to maximize resilience among staff members.

- In pre-crisis stage, you can train rescuers in coping with stress; this way, the team members learn and practice the necessary skills in advance, before a crisis occurs.
- During a crisis, team caring means providing psycho-educational information, fostering group cohesion and social support, fostering positive cognitions, and building self-efficacy and hardiness.
- In post-crisis stage, team caring focuses on giving rescuers time to stop and reflect on what happened and on how the experience might have changed them, to elaborate the impact and to capitalize on experiences.



1.7 For more information, see “Team caring in emergency” references

Conclusion

Emergency management



- Emergency interventions need multidisciplinary approaches and support between different organisations.
- Training in Emergency Management is important in any role you play during an emergency intervention:
 - Crisis Manager
 - Coordinator Manager
 - Facilitator
 - Emergency Manager Trainer
- Knowledge in Emergency Management can be structured in the following 7 areas:
 - 1 - Coordination
 - 2 - Communication
 - 3 – Problem Solving
 - 4 - Decision making
 - 5 – Leadership
 - 6 - Team building
 - 7 - Team caring

References

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