



Project Number: 2020-1-PL-KA202-082075

MOOC 2 – Unit 6 Management in Emergency

Chapter 2 Teaching Emergency Management Competences

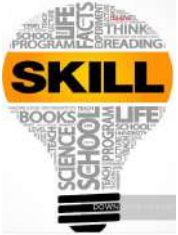
Developed by
Associazione Associazione per l'EMDR in Italia (IT)



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Chapter 2

Introduction - Skills

Skills can be defined as technical and non-technical personal abilities. They are the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive or practical.

Skills are acquired through experience.

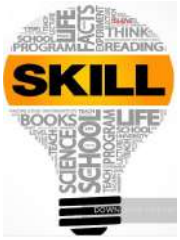
Examples in emergency, depending on the specific role of the psychological rescuers are related to: psychological first aid, psychosocial support, trauma focused interventions, emergency management or training other rescuers.

There is a distinction, however, to be made between **hard skills** and **soft skills**. Whereas a hard skill is a technical and quantifiable skill that a professional may demonstrate through their specific qualifications and professional experiences, a soft skill is a non-technical skill that is less rooted in specific vocations. An example of a clinical hard skill in emergency is the ability to perform stabilization, grounding or a trauma-focused intervention; a hard management skill, on the other hand, is being able to manage emergencies through coordination, oral communication, decision making, problem solving, leadership, team building and team caring.

Introduction - skills

Objectives, methods, tools

- As a trainer, in order to create a crisis management course that matches the educational needs of your targets, it is important that you:
 - **Conduct an educational needs analysis**, adapting the training to trainees, in order to improve the quality of the learning experience.
 - In this chapter, you will find a self-assessment questionnaire to use as pre-/post-assessment test and
 - instructions about how to describe the programme you are offering in your course.
 - **Organize consistent training activities**, that is, according to the educational goals and the predetermined training scenario; you should create an immersive experience based on real events, which truthfully reflects the discussion on causes, consequences, prevention, and management of crises;
 - In chapter 3, you will find case studies supported by reflection activities and videos of key testimonials
 - You can also create your own case studies and invite/record your own key testimonials.
 - **Consider the different formats** you could give to your courses.
 - In chapter 4, you will find good practices about Early Psychological Intervention courses in formal and non formal settings.



2.1 Coordination

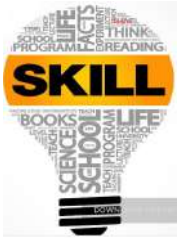
Coordination is carried out inside the agency and between jurisdictions/agencies that work together, cooperating to share resources, and integrate tactics. Coordination output is measured in terms of the capacity of managing incidents through common objectives, interoperable approaches to sharing resources, and information in coordinating.

Emergency coordination skills focus on:

1. assessing shortage of **resources** (including information);
2. sharing common **objectives**: establishing specific, measurable objectives;
3. providing integrated **methods/protocols** following common guidelines: identifying strategies, tactics, tasks, and activities to achieve the objectives. Developing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols for various functional elements of incident management in order to accomplish the identified tasks. Documenting results against the objectives to measure performance, facilitate corrective actions, and develop incident objectives for the subsequent operational period;
4. expressing **leadership**.



2.1 Test the coordination skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



2.1 Coordination

To assess the shortage of resources (including information) during the crisis, the **pre-phase emergency plan** is crucial.

Skills to design of an emergency plan are:

- 1) mapping and creating a database with emergency plan resources;
- 2) summarizing data to create a county-wide profile of responsibilities and capabilities, and returning this report to policy makers/decision makers for their review;
- 3) conducting drills and exercises that bring multiple organizations together;
- 4) evaluating the performance of the cities in these drills;
- 5) improving preparedness at country level through scheduling, monitoring and evaluating preparedness activities;
- 6) submitting, presenting and disseminating an annual report of these activities to the community.

Source: Comfort, Integrating organizational actions in Emergency management. Strategies for Change. Public Administration Review 1985; Special Issue, 155-164.



2.1 Coordination

Coordination skills to improve CBDM (Community-Based Approaches to Disaster Management) in acute and post-crisis phase could be summarized in:

1. Guaranteeing the direct participation of the local community in the whole process of disaster risk management.
2. Improving community capacities and strengthening coping strategies.
3. Improving the quality of life and the natural environment.
4. Contributing to people's empowerment.
5. Improving situational analysis, planning, and implementation following a multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach.
6. Learning by doing: the CBDM are an involving and dynamic framework, and, therefore, their implementation must be monitored, evaluated and adapted to incorporate new elements.

Source: Yodmani, S. Disaster Risk Management and Vulnerability Reduction: Protecting the Poor. Paper presented at The Asia and Pacific Forum on Poverty. Bangkok: Asian Disaster Preparedness Center; (2001). p vi, 32.



2.2 Communication

- The communication plan is the output of the communication session of the communication module included in an emergency course.
- The communication plan needs to contain three sections:
 1. **Risk assessment section:** description of the type of location and extent of all natural hazards that can affect the jurisdiction, including previous occurrences and fragile targets. They could be described in terms of:
 - Type and number of resources.
 - An estimation of potential vulnerable structures/fragile targets.
 - For multijurisdictional plans, the risk assessment section must assess each jurisdiction's risks when they differ from the risks that the entire planning area faces.
 2. **Mitigation strategy section** includes:
 - Long-term mitigation goals, description of specific actions for new and existing structures.
 - An action plan for how to implement the above, prioritizing by cost-benefit analysis.
 3. **A plan maintenance process**, including dissemination. Documents should be formally adopted by all participating jurisdictions:
 - A description of maintenance of the plan on a five-year cycle.
 - A process, if possible, to incorporate mitigation efforts into other aspects of local planning.
 - A discussion on continuing public maintenance of the plan.



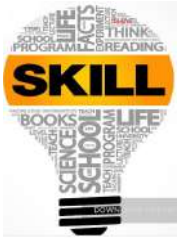
2.2 Test the communication skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



2.2 Communication

- The following principles of communication and information management support incident managers in maintaining a constant flow of information during an incident. The key principles are:
 - **Interoperability:** Interoperable communications systems enable personnel and organizations to communicate within and across jurisdictions through interoperability plans, standard operating procedures (SOP), technology, training and exercises.
 - **Reliability, Scalability, and Portability:** Communications and information systems should be reliable and scalable to function in any type of incident. This means they should be suitable for use within a single jurisdiction or agency, a single jurisdiction with multi-agency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multi-agency involvement. Portable technologies and equipment ensure the effective integration, transport, and deployment of communications systems.
 - **Resilience and Redundancy:** Resilience and redundancy in communications help to ensure the uninterrupted flow of information. Resilience is the ability of systems to withstand and continue to perform after damage or loss of infrastructure. Redundancy is achieved through the duplication of services. It enables the continuity of communication when primary communications capabilities suffer damage through diverse alternative methods.
 - **Security:** Some information communicated from, among, and to incident personnel is sensitive. Incident personnel should work with IT and security experts to incorporate data, network, and systems protection best practices into incident communications and data sharing.
- Skills related to communication principles are develop in the following slide.

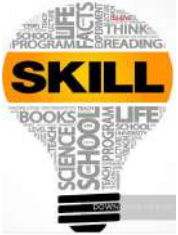
Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2017). *National incident management system*. FEMA.



2.2 Communication

- **Interoperability:**
 - Developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages;
 - Interagency coordination and integration.
- **Reliability and Scalability**
 - Identify key information to be communicated to the public;
 - Developing, recommending, and executing public information plans and strategies;
 - Maintaining flexibility, modularity, and adaptability;
 - Crafting clear messages that all can understand, including individuals with limited proficiency in English and those who are fragile targets;
 - Prioritize messages to ensure timely delivery of information without overwhelming the audience;
 - Verify accuracy of information;
 - Use plain language and clear text, not codes.
- **Resilience and Redundancy:**
 - Gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating consistent messages;
 - Disseminate messages using the most effective means.
- **Security:**
 - Addressing and managing rumours and inaccurate information that could undermine public confidence.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2017). *National incident management system*. FEMA.



2.3 Problem Solving

A crisis is characterized by a loss of control and, thus, a high level of stress for the stakeholders involved due to a “sudden event” (i.e. an unexpected trigger).

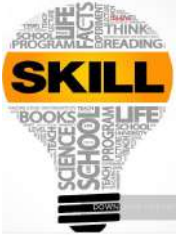
As a trainer, you could train your target to develop a resilient approach to crisis management. The a proactive way to manage the crisis, instead of a passive way:

crises that can be managed versus crises that manage us.

Source: Wester, M. (2011). Fight, flight or freeze: Assumed reactions of the public during a crisis. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 19(4), 207-214.



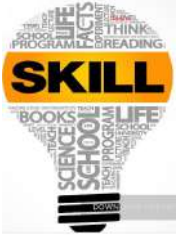
2.3 Test the problem-solving skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



2.3 Problem Solving

To improve your students' skills in emergency problem solving you could focus on:

- **The importance of being fast:** activate emergency procedures as quickly as possible.
- **Clear terms and procedures:** using appropriate language and methods. To ensure the best problem solution in emergency, it is crucial to assess needs and resources, to be aware of the process of work and the impact. **Appropriate settings:** use appropriate tools and channels.
- **The importance of considering the external inference:** ethnicity, religion, cultural variables, specific characteristics of the context could change the frame around your problem.

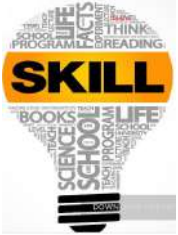


2.3 Problem Solving

Problem-solving facilitator skills concern:

- **1°: Identifying the problem**, socializing the core idea
- **2°: Exploring alternatives**, generating alternatives
- **3°: Planning the solution**, analyzing alternatives, advantages and disadvantages
- **4°: Implementing the solution**, detailing an action plan (who will do what, by when, where, and how, as applicable).
- **5°: Evaluating the impact of solution**, measuring effects and possible extra resources required

Source: Mourtos, N. J., Okamoto, N. D., & Rhee, J. (2004, February). Defining, teaching, and assessing problem solving skills. In *7th UICEE Annual Conference on Engineering Education* (pp. 1-5).



2.4 Decision Making

Decision making in crisis management is often based on incomplete facts. A decision-maker in emergencies has to deal with uncertain conditions and, at the same time, must not underestimate nor overestimate the damage.

In emergency, the decision-making process is complex because the crisis unit is exposed to high levels of stress (highly challenging decisions, hierarchical or media pressure, etc.), as well as possible prejudices, which may have an impact on team members and their decisions.

In case of doubt, it is recommended to **double-check information**.

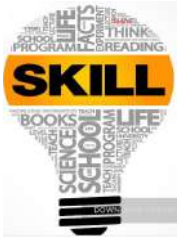
How any of these challenges are managed can determine the magnitude of the impact that a crisis will have on the organisation:

- Dealing promptly and effectively with a crisis situation and those affected by this crisis can open new opportunities for future business success.
- On the other hand, a crisis can be a chain of events that are impossible to control or foresee, thus resulting in fatalities, disruptions in business operations as well as damage to or destruction of company assets.

Source: Sauvagnargues, S. (Ed.). (2018). *Decision-Making in Crisis Situations: Research and Innovation for Optimal Training*. John Wiley & Sons.



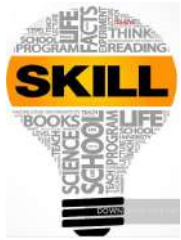
2.4 Test the decision-making skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



2.4 Decision Making

- During the acute phase of a crisis, it seems that policy makers prefer procedural and creative decision making, according to their experience and the increase in the unpredictability of the crisis.
- The skills they use concern:
 - **Time and resource management.**
 - Monitoring **rescuers' health**, including **mental health**.
 - Making **proper decisions** dependent on the global picture and strategic needs.
 - Changing decisions according to the **developing needs**.
 - **Clarity of values and priority criteria.**
 - Pursuing **quality of information**.
 - Pursuing **analytical approach**.

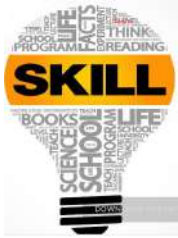
Sources: Adair, J. E. (2007). Decision making & problem solving strategies (Vol. <https://emilms.fema.gov/IS-0241b/curriculum/1.html>)



2.4 Decision Making

Training sessions about decision making in emergency may cover several objectives, in particular:

- testing documentation (e.g. plans, procedures, operational)
 - developing capability of using crisis management tools
 - identifying dysfunctions and areas to be improved
 - supporting members to gain experience
 - testing the efficiency of mobilized staff
 - raising the level of expertise of the actors involved
-
- Source: Sauvagnargues, S. (Ed.). (2018). *Decision-Making in Crisis Situations: Research and Innovation for Optimal Training*. John Wiley & Sons.



2.5 Leadership

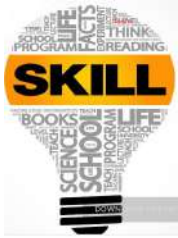
Ronald Riggio, PhD, Professor in Leadership and Organizational Psychology at Claremont McKenna College in California, defines crisis leadership skills as:

- The ability of self-managing **staying grounded and clear** in a situation that is totally disorienting: “What leaders have to realize is that when a crisis hits, you can’t just rest on your laurels and think that everything will move along normally. You need to train, prepare and execute.”
- “When it comes to leadership development, leaders tend to **learn more from their mistakes** than from their successes”.
- Jeremy Hunter, PhD, Associate Professor of Practice and Founding Director of the Executive Mind Leadership Institute adds: “Crises are places where we find our greatness because they **push us in ways that**, in times of normalcy, we don’t get pushed. We find strengths and abilities that are latent inside us,” Hunter says. “As a leader, this kind of crisis is **an opportunity to find your greatness and to activate that in other people around you.**”

Source: Abrams Z. (2000), Leadership in times of crisis’ in APA Vol. 51, No. 5



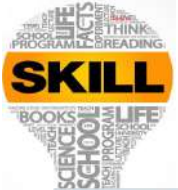
2.5 Test the leadership skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



2.5 Leadership

Most essential skills in crisis leadership are:

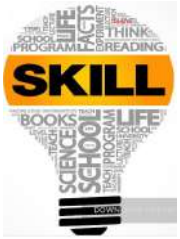
- Ability to communicate clearly
- Transparency and honesty
- Empathy, which includes the ability of acknowledging personal hardship that many can face during a time of crisis
- Ability to assign and delegate work to subordinates or team personnel. “Assigning roles” and “distributing tasks” are two ways to describe tasks delegation
- Ability to work with different jurisdictions like voluntary organizations active in disasters and other volunteer organizations
- Ability to provide guidance, evaluate appropriate referrals, and maintain confidentiality
- Ability to perform case management and training functions
- Understanding of legal, privacy, and ethical issues related to gathering and safeguarding information and evidence acquired during a criminal investigation
- Knowledge of laws, policies, rules, methods, and tools involved in conducting a criminal investigation
- Knowledge of the available local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal criminal investigation databases, systems, and portals



2.5 Leadership

Type of skills	Team process taxonomy and definitions	Examples of leadership behaviors
Transition processes (evaluation and planning)	Mission analysis: <i>Identifying the main tasks by gathering information and determining available resources and expertise</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizes the group Shares knowledge to facilitate understanding Identifies all team members Cross-checks information Assesses limitations of team members Assesses the available information
	Goal specification: <i>Identifying and prioritizing goals; identifying and fulfilling needed roles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lets team know what is expected of them³⁶ Uses uniform guidelines / standards Delegates task
	Strategy formulation: <i>Developing a course of action as well as contingency plans; adjusting plans in response to environmental and task changes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direction Plans work to be done Decides how to accomplish goals Anticipates outcomes and likely contingencies Verbalizes plans or changes in plan
	Reflection: <i>Having team members reflect on performance to identify potential areas of strength and need for improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information about team performance through debriefs
Action processes	Monitoring progress toward goals: <i>Tracking and communicating information related to the team's progress toward goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reevaluates progress continuously Positions self to ensure that he or she can see monitor Monitors the performance of team members Ensures that team performance adheres to algorithm
	Systems monitoring and adaptation: <i>Tracking team resources (personnel and equipment) and environmental conditions to ensure that the team can accomplish its goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages resources available to team members Maintains "big picture" perspective Solves problems
	Coaching/backup: <i>Assisting team members with completing their tasks, whether providing coaching, hands-on assistance, or taking over a task</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backs up team members Provides support to team members when needed Evaluates team members critically and redirects as needed Coaches team members
	Coordination: <i>Orchestrating the sequence and timing of actions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has ability to coordinate team member activities
Interpersonal skills	Conflict management: <i>Managing conflict proactively and reactively</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages disruptive behavior quickly
	Team cohesion: <i>Building commitment of team members to complete the team's task</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks other team members for suggestions
	Effective communication: <i>Using techniques to facilitate clear communication between team members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in closed-loop communication Communicates clearly with all members of the team Makes short, clear statements Uses "out loud" communication

Source: Abrams Z. (2000), Leadership in times of crisis' in APA Vol. 51, No. 5



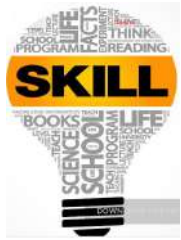
2.6 Team building

- In emergency, the crisis unit is “at the heart of the process”.
 - The crisis unit is an integrated multidisciplinary and multi-roles team
 - Responsibilities are finely structured
 - The members of the crisis unit are mobilized: they share skills, knowledge, a frame of reference, and procedures
 - The crisis unit is trained for fast mobilization
 - The style of cooperation, coordination, and communication is crucial to determinate effective behavioural process inside the team.
 - Effective collaboration allows the unit to cope with high levels of stress like highly challenging decisions, hierarchical or media pressure, different prejudices; it also allows to cope with other complications such as the lack of technical or human resources, incompleteness, the lack of updates and the inadequacy of emergency plans to face the situation.

Source: Sauvagnargues, S. (Ed.). (2018). *Decision-Making in Crisis Situations: Research and Innovation for Optimal Training*. John Wiley & Sons.

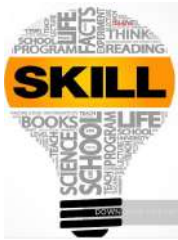


2.6 Test the team building skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



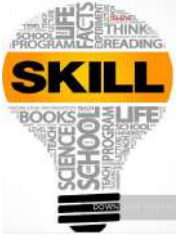
2.6 Team building

- Team building is a process you could lead in post-crisis phase with **your group/team**.
- The skills that should be developed by crisis managers and rescuers are manifold. Being members of crisis units highlights the need to insist on several criteria during courses and training sessions. You could focus on:
 - **Reflection in the middle of an emergency:** an emergency is typical during the acute phase of a crisis; therefore, it must be integrated in training scenarios. It is necessary to generate stressful situations within the frame of exercise scenarios in view of imposing quick thinking to decision-makers while destabilizing their organization.
 - **Group:** training should focus on the reactions and behaviour of the group as a whole, and not on individuals, relying on the fundamental skills of the trained group (decision-making, communication, situational awareness, leadership, coordination).
 - **Objectives:** group learning should be at the heart of the approach. Promoting exercises in strenuous conditions also contributes to the characterization of individual and collective goals throughout the training.



2.6 Team building

- Any kind of emergency is a complex event and requires a multilevel approach of intervention at any stages. Rescuers work in team and support each other in performing their role in the most effective and safe way.
- In emergencies, crisis manager and, in general, rescuers expect a specific support by psychological staff in the team building process. Skills to provide for team building are:
 1. Ability to create a sense of cohesion and belonging.
 2. Ability to manage and provide professional guidance for the team.
 3. Ability to connect with each member, ensuring communication with various individuals in timely and relevant manner.
 4. Ability to train members in emergency interventions, verifying preparation and impact.
 5. Ability to interface with the community, including vulnerable targets and minorities.
 6. Ability to coordinate with public health agencies, jurisdictional emergency support functions, public health authorities, and health care coalitions of other emergency teams.
 7. Knowledge of basic communication to disseminate information in every phase of the crisis.
 8. Cultural and transcultural competency.
 9. Ability to develop and support systems thinking by examining the linkages and interactions between the components of a system.
 10. Ability to support the application of emergency knowledge to the development and analysis of public health policies.



2.7 Team caring

- An emergency team could feel fear, anxiety, anguish and stress, which have an impact on decision making, modifying the group dynamics and the representation of the situation and reality. Skills to protect mental health concern:
 - Being aware of health and mental health issues.
 - Being able to recognize and heed early warning signs of stress reactions.
 - Psychoeducational information: it is key to address mental health in the trainings of crisis manager and rescuers.
 - Rules and work shifts.
 - Time off to rest.
- In addition, in the post-crisis phase, while addressing rescuers' stress, it is also important to consider the respective families. Some strategies to help reduce stress among family members are:
 - Provide family members with as much information as possible about the disaster.
 - As a second possible strategy, assign a specific link from your organization to family members.

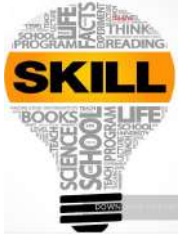


2.7 Test the team caring skills of your students: self-assessment checklist



2.7 Team caring

- You could provide your team with **individual approaches** for stress prevention and management:
 - Manage your workload.
 - Balance your lifestyle.
 - Eat nutritious food, stay hydrated and avoid excessive caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.
 - Get physical exercise.
 - Maintain contact and connection with primary social supports.
 - Use stress reduction strategies.
 - Reduce physical tension by using familiar personal strategies (e.g., take deep breaths, do some gentle stretching, meditate and practice progressive relaxation).
 - Pace yourself between low- and high-stress activities.
 - Use time off to decompress and “recharge batteries” (e.g., get a good meal, watch TV, exercise, read a novel, listen to music, take a bath or talk to family).
- You could provide to your **team approaches** for stress prevention and management:
 - Talk about emotions and reactions with coworkers during appropriate times.
 - Maintain self-awareness: accept that one may not be able to self-assess problematic stress reactions. Your team could help you.
 - Recognize that over-identification with or feeling overwhelmed by victims’ and families’ grief and trauma may signal a need for support and consultation. Your team could help you.
 - Understand the differences between professional helping relationships and friendships to help maintain appropriate roles and boundaries.
 - Examine personal prejudices and cultural stereotypes.
 - Recognize when one’s own experience with trauma or one’s personal history interferes with effectiveness.
 - Be aware of personal vulnerabilities and emotional reactions, and the importance of team and supervisor support.



2.7 Team caring

Proactively encourage them to engage in positive self-care strategies, and create an environment of collective care between teams.

Implement a buddy system and encourage peer support.

Provide information to all staff and volunteers on anonymous mental health counselling and support available to them.

Lead by example, through modelling healthy work behaviours (e.g. not working overtime, being kind to others)

**To support staff
and volunteers
you can**

Be aware of staff and volunteers who may be in vulnerable or marginalized situations, and who may require additional support.

Prepare them by providing regular training for working in the COVID-19 response.

Operate an open-door policy for staff and volunteers to report problems, preferably to someone different from their line manager.

Provide accurate, up-to-date and easy to understand information on staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ensure that they have regular breaks, and time to connect with family and friends.

Have regular meetings to discuss challenges, concerns and solutions.

Work to proactively address conflicts: emphasize the importance of a supportive team environment, and model kindness and compassion towards oneself and other team members.

References

- Devlin, E. S. (2006). Crisis management planning and execution. CRC Press.
- <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/system>
- <https://www.niem.gov>
- Good practices: <https://www.niem.gov/about-niem/success-stories>
- <https://www.fema.gov/training-0>