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## MOOC 2 – Unit 6 Management in Emergency

### Chapter 3 Teaching Emergency Management Competences

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## Chapter 3

# Introduction - Competences

**Competences:** “competence” means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills, and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work/study situations and in professional and personal development.

In emergency management, competences could be used:

- inside the agency or the team
- outside the agency (between agencies/organizations/different teams)

In emergency management, competences could be used in different settings of intervention:

- Health care settings like hospitals, nursing homes, clinics
- Scholastic settings (from kindergarten to high school)
- Community settings like residential or touristic areas
- Evacuation camps
- Refugee camps

# Introduction

- An emergency management system is structured on different levels:
  - **Inner level:** organizational and operation system management inside the agency.
  - **Local level:** referred to territory; regional, state or national level.
  - **International level:** referred to humanitarian international cooperation.
- **Multi-level interventions** require a rational assessment of risk, hazard, and vulnerability before the planning
- The real challenge in the complexity of an emergency is the creation of a more integrated culture of risk and safety between governmental and non governmental stakeholders. Training is the key tool to promote **literacy and awareness on safety** at any level, including the community.
- Training in emergency management needs to **be scalable**; therefore, applicable to incidents that vary widely in terms of type of hazard, geography, demographics, climate, cultural and organizational authorities. Incident management deals with:
  - Single and “ordinary” accidents (e.g. car accident, domestic accident, workplace fires, premature death for accidental reasons...)
  - Single “extraordinary” accidents (e.g. fights, sexual abuse, any kind of murder...)
  - Humanitarian accidents (e.g.: natural disaster or man-made disaster)



## 3.1 Coordination

Coordination courses in emergency intervention can be designed in accordance with the principles of flexibility, standardization, and unity of effort:

- **Flexibility:** providing methods and tools adaptable to any situation (inner/external, individual/humanitarian, as previously described). Emergency needs at any level: multi-agency, multijurisdictional, and/or multidisciplinary coordination.
- **Standardization:** standardization is essential to interoperability among multiple organizations in incident response. Coordination is the competence to guarantee integration and connectivity among jurisdictions and organizations, standard practices that allow first responders to work together effectively, cohesion among the various organizations involved, and common terminology.
- **Unity of Effort:** unity of effort means coordinating activities among various organizations to achieve common objectives. Unity of effort enables organizations with specific jurisdictional responsibilities to support each other while maintaining their own authorities.

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



## 3.1 Coordination

The following characteristics are the foundation of incident command and coordination under NIMS (2017) and contribute to the strength and efficiency of the overall system:

- **Common terminology**, sharing name and frame
- **Modular organization**, modular fashion based on an incident's size, complexity, and hazard environment
- **Management by objectives**, establishing specific, measurable objectives
- **Incident action planning**, providing coordinated incident action planning to guide incident management activities
- **Manageable span of control**, maintaining an appropriate span of control helps ensure an effective and efficient incident management operation.
- **Incident facilities and locations** to support variety of purposes and targets
- **Comprehensive resource management**, personnel, equipment, teams, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment or allocation
- **Integrated communications**, using a common communications plan and interoperable communications processes
- **Establishment and transfer of command**, clearly establishing the command function
- **Establishment of Unified Command**, when no one jurisdiction, agency or organization has primary authority and/or the resources to manage an incident on its own.
- **Chain of command and unity of command**, each individual only reports to one person.
- **Accountability** means that incident personnel should adhere to principles of accountability
- **Dispatch/Deployment**, resources should deploy only when appropriate authorities request and dispatch them
- **Information and intelligence management**, includes identifying essential elements of information

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



## 3.1 Coordination

### Internal coordination competences

- Coordinate any levels of your agency (e.g.: direction, departments, logistic and technical service...).
- Promote common terminology and protocol (e.g.: training, meetings, inner conferences...).
- Map recourses and fragile targets.
- Define roles and competences.
- Socialize preventive plan and update protocols.
- Work together.
- Use participative methods.
- Valorise diversity and listen to contradictory.

### External coordination competences

- Coordinate your agency with all the stakeholders involved in the emergency intervention.
- Promote multi-agency, multijurisdictional, and/or multidisciplinary coordination.
- Share object, methods, roles and competences.
- Define roles.
- Be inclusive.
- Use participative methods also in the debriefing stage of the intervention and in the follow-up phase.



3.1 Tip/Good practice Coordination



## 3.2 Communication

As a communication trainer in emergency, it is important to provide your students with ethical advice and best practices:

- Discuss with your students the ‘everyone can be a journalist’ culture, encouraged by popular media requesting photographs and video footage from individuals currently caught in an unexpected chain of events. Today, words like ‘crisis’ and ‘disaster’ are featured in everyday vocabulary to grab attention, creating, as a consequence, an atmosphere hungry for crisis.
- Do not use local advice’ if it is not double checked and validated. Public opinion has got short memory and seems not to pay much attention a rectification that comes the day after.
- To manage crisis communication is important to practice competences in:
  - **being prepared** for crisis situations;
  - **managing costs** during crisis;
  - **making full use of local advice**;
  - **maintaining good communication** with targets;
  - **using technology to enhance security**.

Source: Niininen, O. (2013). Five Star Crisis Management—Examples of Best Practice from the Hotel Industry. In *Approaches to Disaster Management-Examining the Implications of Hazards, Emergencies and Disasters*. IntechOpen.



## 3.2 Communication

Your aim in designing a communication course in emergency is to improve tailored abilities that match targets, settings and communication goals.

Communication competences consist of:

- Choosing methods that reach your identified target audience most quickly and effectively.
  - ✓ Who is the audience?
- Matching the speed and frequency of dissemination to how quickly and how long your audience needs to be informed.
  - ✓ How quickly do they need to receive this information?
- Ensuring that your choice of media is reliable during the emergency.
  - ✓ During *this emergency situation*, which media are functional?
- Choosing appropriate media to enhance comprehension.
  - ✓ Which medium is the best fit for my message?
- Considering your resources in your media choice.
  - ✓ What may be required when you choose each communication tool?
- Delivering the message reliably.
  - ✓ How do you verify your sources?
- Enhancing comprehension of the message content.
  - ✓ How do you check your language?
- Providing communication even if it can be accessed within resource limitations.
  - ✓ Is your communication plan coordinated with security plans?

Source: FEMA (2005), Effective Communication, Independent Study





## 3.2 Communication

### Internal communication competences

- Prepare an inner emergency communication plan, including a dissemination plan
- Strengthen the dialogue between all levels of your agency (e.g.: direction, departments, logistic and technical service...)
- Define a communication officer for your agency who is responsible for inner and external communication
- Design timely, verified and clear messages targeted to your audience.
- Follow ethical principles of communication

### External communication competences

- Prepare a communication plan that includes targets, stakeholders, resources, channels of communication
- Strengthen the dialogue between different groups of experts in vulnerability/risk assessment during natural hazards through exchange of views about definitions, concepts and underlying worldviews and values
- Recognize a communication officer for each agency and for the consortium
- Coordinate timing
- Ensure congruence of communication with the local authorities
- Verify accuracy of communication and provide reliable messages



3.2 Tip/Good practice Communication



## 3.3 Problem Solving

- The students for whom you are creating your course might not have epidemiological competences that could be the central issue of problem solving in emergency. It could be important to provide them with a definition of risk:
- **RISK = HAZARD X VULNERABILITY**
  - «**Risk**» is defined as the combination of the probability of an event and its negative consequences.
  - A «**hazard**» is a dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.
  - «**Vulnerability**» defines the potential for loss to the elements at risk caused by the occurrence of a hazards and depends on multiple factors like poor design and construction of buildings, inadequate protection of assets, lack of public information and awareness, limited official recognition of risks and preparedness measures, and disregard for wise environmental management.

Sources: Tiefenbacher, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Approaches to Disaster Management: Examining the Implications of Hazards, Emergencies and Disasters*. BoD–Books on Demand.



## 3.3 Problem Solving

- As a trainer, your aim in emergency problem-solving process is to improve competences focused on:
- Danger Identification
  - ✓ What are the probable dangers and their magnitude?
- Hazard Assessment
  - ✓ How often do the dangers of a given magnitude occur?
- Identification of Elements at Risk
  - ✓ What are the elements at risk?
- Vulnerability Assessment
  - ✓ What is the possible damage to the elements at risk?
- Risk Estimation
  - ✓ What is the probability of damage?
- Risk Evaluation
  - ✓ What is the significance of the estimated risk?
- Risk Management
  - ✓ What should be done?

Sources: Tiefenbacher, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Approaches to Disaster Management: Examining the Implications of Hazards, Emergencies and Disasters*. BoD–Books on Demand.



## 3.3 Problem Solving

- Possible scenarios for psychological emergency responders with regards to problem solving can concern:
  - Lack of resources: personnel, information, time, competences...
  - Responsibilities and roles: misunderstanding, conflicts of interests...
  - Providing needs analysis to guarantee appropriate intervention
  - Time and resources for training personnel
  - Individuals' overexposure to stressful situations
  - Prejudice and resistance to ask for and receive help
  - Competition and lack of collaboration inside and outside the team/agency
  - Miscommunication and misunderstandings



3.3 Tip/Good practice Problem Solving



## 3.4 Decision Making

- Decision-making processes in emergency are focused on competences of measuring vulnerability in natural hazards risk reduction strategies, defining:
  - the objective of the assessment,
  - what is the target group of any particular approach,
  - who is using the results,
  - what is their understanding of the outcome.
- Decision-making processes have got a wide range of approaches that can be applied in natural hazards disaster risk management. However, based on these, a number of observations may be formulated to improve the decision-making through participative and open process.
- The role of decision-makers as 'speaking truth to power' supports the community to face future natural hazards, risk, and global change.



## 3.4 Decision Making

As a trainer, your aim in emergency decision-making process is to improve competences related to resources, roles, safety procedures and post-crisis actions:

- Resources:
  - ✓ Understanding the realistic impacts of an incident and the timing of its cascading events is critical for both preparedness and operations.
  - ✓ Balance overestimated and underestimated impacts to develop capabilities and plans, for effective decision making. Evaluate the potential danger to humans, the environment or the equipment when working on the real system (risky situations or situations difficult to reproduce);
- Roles:
  - ✓ Available staff
  - ✓ Staff position at the outset



## 3.4 Decision Making

Safety procedures:

- ✓ Evaluate lockdown, evacuation, road rehabilitation (sidewalks, public lighting and «out of order» traffic lights), installation of proper warning signs (in collaboration with the field safety team), closure of (water/gas) networks in communal establishments open to the public (EOPs)

• Post-crisis actions:

- ✓ Revamping of water, electricity networks

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



3.4 Tip/Good practice Decision Making



## 3.5 Leadership

- Your students have to recognize the roles that leaders assume in emergencies
- Leadership at the incident level means:
  - Defining resources and roles
  - Approving objectives
  - Focusing on setting clear priorities and objectives for the incident
  - Coordinating processes and protocols
  - Facilitating communication through the development and use of a common communications plan
  - Setting aside issues such as overlapping and competing authorities, jurisdictional boundaries, resource ownership
  - Supervising ethics





## 3.5 Leadership

- Being honest and transparent
  - ✓ Leaders should deliver disappointing news in a clear, straightforward way and avoid giving a false perception that everything is OK.
- Providing regular communications
  - ✓ Good leaders establish a communication routine that people can rely on.
- Providing a forum for feedback
  - ✓ While leaders cannot collect and respond to everyone's feedback, they can provide reasonable, appropriate channels for questions and suggestions, such as how to support local businesses.
- Being a role model
  - ✓ Leaders must behave consistently with what they are asking others to do.



## 3.5 Leadership

As a trainer, your aim in emergency leadership is to improve competences focused on:

- Managing stress
  - ✓ Even when facing the demands of a high-profile crisis, leaders take breaks to reset and refocus.
- Sharing information with empathy and optimism
  - ✓ Leaders are able to give followers hope and a sense of control.
- Using credibility to build trust
  - ✓ Credibility is a combination of expertise and dependability. Leaders gain credibility when they demonstrate that they understand the risks and ramifications of a situation.

Source: American Psychological Association. (2020). How leaders can maximise trust and minimize stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.



3.5 Tip/Good practice Leadership



## 3.6 Team building

Even if emergency organizations are hierarchical organizations, crisis managers increase teamwork based on cooperation and collaboration.

Team building is a process-oriented competence that psychologists can implement in formal and non formal training with crisis team members.

Specific tasks are:

- Sharing values, goals, roles and responsibilities
- Defining methods and protocols
- Monitoring inner high quality communication
- Focusing on the future
- Setting focused tasks
- Inspiring creative talents
- Providing rapid responses

Source: Young, B. H., Ford, J. D., Ruzek, J. I., Friedman, M. J., & Gusman, F. D. (1998). *Disaster mental health services: A guidebook for clinicians and administrators*. National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.



## 3.6 Team building

- As a trainer, your aim in emergency team building process is to improve your students' competences focused on:
- Introducing members
  - ✓ What do members know about each others?
  - ✓ What could you organize to help them introduce themselves and their competence?
- Sharing values, vision and mission
  - ✓ Are values, vision and mission of the agency/jurisdiction explicitly shared?
  - ✓ If not, what could you organize to share them?
- Objects and goals identification
  - ✓ Are objects and goals known?
  - ✓ If not, what could you organize to share them?



## 3.6 Team building

- Relationship assessment
  - ✓ How do you assess group climate/relationship?
  - ✓ How do you monitor group climate/relationship?
- Leadership assessment
  - ✓ Are leaders inspiring team members?
  - ✓ Are team members inspired to improve their competences?
- Timing estimation
  - ✓ What is the timing in answering to members?
- Supportive team practices
  - ✓ Do you offer, receive feedback?
  - ✓ Do you provide statements for members' acknowledgement/awareness of the situation?



3.6 Tip/Good practice Team building



## 3.7 Team caring

- In every phase of the crisis (pre-, acute, and post-crisis phase), you could provide psychoeducational information to your students; they can transfer this information to emergency staff or they can use it for themselves as rescuers.
- During a work shift, rescuers are supposed to:
  - Work in couples or in team, avoiding intervening alone
  - Limit the length of the work shifts
  - Use stress management techniques
  - Use a personal diary to write down key information like ICE (In Case of Emergency), other important numbers, health care information...
  - Have daily defusing activities with the colleagues
  - Keep in touch with family and important people
- When working in an emergency, rescuers could see as ordinary tasks that are performed in a stressful situation (i.e., accidents, injuries, etc.). Rescuers could manifest prejudice towards psychological support and resistance to asking for help. Evidence from literature indicates that regular debriefing, stress management techniques, and psychological support could decrease mental health and behavioral problems in emergency staff.

Source: Young, B. H., Ford, J. D., Ruzek, J. I., Friedman, M. J., & Gusman, F. D. (1998). *Disaster mental health services: A guidebook for clinicians and administrators*. National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.



## 3.7 Team caring

- As a trainer, your aim in emergency team caring is to improve your students' competences focused on:
- Improving psychoeducational information
  - ✓ Do you have competence in stress management?
  - ✓ Do you have competence in CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) intervention?
- Dealing with reluctance and prejudice against psychological support to rescuers
  - ✓ Do you have competence in dealing with organizational resistance?
  - ✓ What could support you?
- Advocacy and lobbying
  - ✓ Are you involving all levels of the organization? Including chief crisis manager and key stakeholders?
- Facilities and work shifts
  - ✓ Psychological support includes monitoring work shifts and guaranteeing regular free time and time with the family, also during the acute phase. Do you include them in your interventions?
- Family support
  - ✓ Psychological support includes also offering a family supportive/information programme. Do you include this in your interventions?



3.7 Tip/Good practice Team Caring

# Conclusion

## Emergency Management Competences



- Successful disaster management is based on specific knowledge, skills and competences for each phase of the crisis: prevention, acute phase, and follow-up. As a trainer of future psychological rescuers or crisis facilitator managers or emergency trainers, you teach methods and contents about emergency management.
- While disaster management was initially based on simplified notions in engineering of the natural environments that generate risk, now, crisis management is the multifaceted ecological response of people, nature and our management systems, and it is based on the capability of the system of coordinating effective interventions.
- Psychological variables must be considered to support victims at any levels.



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# Conclusion Emergency Management Competences

Competence  
taxonomy:  
From skills to  
actions

In the following table, you can find further management skills to support tasks in emergency, following a comparable taxonomy.

Skills	Set of tasks	Expected actions
(1) anticipation, (2) communication, (3) cooperation, (4) stress management,  (5) decision-making (6) strategic steering.	(1) management of the crisis consequences, (2) tactical and operational response, (3) crisis unit management, (4) crisis communication (5) overall view in the short, medium and long terms.	(1) human management, (2) resource management, (3) hazard assessment, (4) identification of issues involved, (5) strategies for returning to the normal state, (6) protection of threatened high-stake elements, (7) reinforcement management, (8) analysis of the situation, (9) management strategic options, (10) arbitration of strategic options, (11) communication with the crisis unit, (12) communication with media, (13) communication with authorities, (14) communication with the public, (15) monitoring and forecasting scenario changes, (16) identifying the possible scenario changes.

Source: Tena-Chollet, F. (2012). *Elaboration d'un environnement semi-virtuel de formation à la gestion stratégique de crise, basé sur la simulation multi-agents* (Doctoral dissertation, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Saint-Etienne).

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