

## **Lessons from the Storm: “Crisis and Collaboration”**

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## **Faculty**

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## **Objectives**

- Describe the leadership skill set most useful in a major crisis.
- Identify the benefits of practical information sharing and use of data before and after a major crisis.
- Identify people and groups within a region or national scene that are most effective at managing resources and information and serving clients.

## **Objectives**

- Describe the major types of communication that fail and succeed within an interagency and provider network during a crisis.
- Identify future critical roles for public health practice in a major crisis.
- Identify several post-crisis factors that affect the health of citizens within and surrounding an impacted area, with an emphasis on mental health implications.

## **Impact of Katrina Included:**

- 1,836 people killed, 1,577 from LA
- 705 people still missing May, 2006
- Multiple breaches in the levees
- 80% of New Orleans was flooded
- 300,000 homes and apartments destroyed

## **Impact of Katrina Included:**

- Population impact: 462,269 to 200,000
- 150 billion dollar economic impact
- 80 thousand businesses destroyed
- 240 thousand unemployed
- 4,000 calls to Louisiana Governor's office in 4 days

### **Crisis as Context**

*"As weather shapes mountains, so problems make leaders."*

Warren Bennis

- Adversity and failure are laboratories for learning.

### **Objective 1:**

**Describe the leadership skill set most useful in a major crisis.**

### **Leadership Skills**

- Communication
- Value of team work
- Visibility

### **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children NCMEC**

- The NCMEC website handles one million hits per day.
- That number grew to 20 million per day during the Katrina effort and stayed at that level for weeks.

### **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children NCMEC**

- 32,716 calls were handled by the Katrina Missing Persons Hotline, with 4,909 reports of children missing or dislocated as a result of Hurricane Katrina and 102 children missing as a result of Hurricane Rita (5,011 total).
- NCMEC was able to identify and reunite every unaccompanied child in the shelters.

### **Objective 2:**

**Identify the benefits of practical information sharing and use of data before and after a major crisis.**

### **Benefits: Information Sharing and Use of Data**

- Internal command center
- Shared data bases, public and private
- 211
- Remove legal barriers – Example: child abuse in shelters
- External – media good and bad
- IRC
- BRAF
- Red Cross and FEMA

### **Above All Else - Communication**

- ... pediatricians, child-focused organizations in region, others were reminded that knowing who to call and how to get hold of them is not a luxury but a necessity.
- The lack of communication and mutual support between disaster-planning agencies and hospitals.

### **Caring for the Children of Public Health Caretakers During a Disaster**

- Essential personnel must have a safe place for their children or they cannot come to work.
- Initiate formal meeting to include in disaster plan an emergency child care center for employees.

**Objective 3:  
Identify people and groups within a region or national scene that are most effective at managing resources and information and serving clients.**

### **Most Effective at Managing Resources, Information, and Serving Clients**

- First responders, officials and citizens
- Churches and not for profits (BRAFF)
- IMPERT - Texas
- 211, United Way Network
- Private hospitals, Woman's B R and Children's NO
- IRC
- Coast Guard
- UN – OCHA – Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)
- Red Cross

### **Lessons Learned**

- State, local government, health care, community-based agencies should develop lists of qualified individuals who will be available to help in case of an emergency.
- Lists should include clinicians who specialize in disaster and trauma.
- Professionals familiar with community resources, and those who are able to provide short-term treatment and recognize long-term needs in children.

**Objective 4:  
Describe the major types  
of communication that  
fail and succeed  
within an interagency and  
provider network  
during a crisis.**

### **Communications Failed**

- Cell phones – Did not work, few were prepared for this failure.
- Cell towers down
- Satellite phones – generally yes
- E-mail – no
- Text messaging – generally yes

### **Louisiana Lessons Learned**

- Interoperability centers – improved, now have mobile towers for communication
- Post Katrina – emergency response fund \$150 million – political realities
- Communication bigger issue than "command"

### **Louisiana Lessons Learned**

- Media – superdome stories "dead bodies, rape, violence" - looting vs. babies saved
- 1.3 million were evacuated safely
- Challenge of political jurisdiction – federal - state - local

### **Lessons Learned and Future Actions Planned - Communication**

- External: Evaluate the use of satellite phones
- Internal: SpectraLink phones, assigned by function, not by person
- Command Center: Establish a command center for preparing a list of functions and scheduling

### **Communication – Lessons Learned**

- Update staff phone lists with emergency, and "big" emergency contacts
- Phone list of other important contacts
- Alternate plan of communication – Call in number at a distant location – Yahoo group, website, etc.
- Conference call capability for dispersed staff

**Objective 5:  
Identify future critical roles  
for public health practice  
in a major crisis.**

### **Children and Families**

- Even months after Katrina there was still not availability of emergency Medicaid - remains a problem for children and families
- Mental Health Services have been inadequate for the needs

### **Protecting Public Health Data**

- Client level-backed up daily
- Store back ups at secure location
- Less paper records, use electronic records
- Identify records you'll need without access to your office (i.e. contracts, invoices, files)
- Is data safe if someone has access to your office and your computers?

**Objective 6:  
Identify several post-crisis  
factors that affect the health  
of citizens within and  
surrounding an impacted  
area – emphasis on  
mental health implications.**

### **Public Concerns**

- Is the water safe to drink in our community?
- Is the air safe to breathe in our community?
- Will mold in my home negatively impact my health?
- Where in our community can we get childhood immunization shots, family planning, TB testing, HIV testing, Women, Infants, Children (WIC vouchers)?

### **Public Concerns**

- What precautions should be taken when returning to clean up a flood damaged home?
- Where in our community can I obtain vital records such as birth certificates, marriage licenses and death certificates?

### **Post Crisis Factors That Effect Health of Citizens**

- **Mental health screening and access**
  - Incidence of serious mental illness doubled in strike zone
  - Medical records / critical data depository
- **Patient and crisis management information must be organized before any disaster and be in place when needed – electronically or at least in paper form.**

### **Five Positive Lessons Learned**

- **Red Cross – “Access to Care”**
  - Program allows survivors of hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma to receive outpatient mental health and substance-abuse treatment from licensed professionals across the nation.
  - Survivors can enroll at [www.a2care.org](http://www.a2care.org) or (866) 794-4673
  - Benefits based on pre-disaster address

*"Some children who evacuated and returned now do not want to go back to the place to which they were evacuated, because they fear another hurricane will strike.*

*It just confirms that we are truly concrete thinkers until about the age of seven".*

Mitchell Gruich, Jr.  
Pediatrics Journal

### **Lessons Learned**

- There should be several people in each state capable of serving as the overall coordinator in a crisis
- A regional plan that determines which coordinator is in charge should be established during crisis planning

### **Lessons Learned**

- During a disaster, daily calls to participating center to assess census and capabilities should be made
- These calls should originate from the overall coordinator

### **Lessons Learned**

- Alternative communications, satellite phones, HEAR radio, NORAC system must be in place.
- This type of disaster planning should not be left to elected officials to do alone.
- Dissemination of information during a disaster for the news media as well as family members and governmental officials is important.

## Lessons Learned

*"Accurate information  
is paramount  
to dispelling rumors  
during a crisis".*

Steven B. Spedale  
Chief of Neonatology  
Women's Hospital BR

## The Children of Katrina/Rita

Dr. Gershanik  
bagging a very low  
birth weight infant  
on a helicopter.



Taking an isolate up  
to the landing pad.

## Develop a "Disaster Plan"

- Do it by committee
- Include key staff
- Set time lines: when action to take place
- Think it through in terms of an emergency that you have notice of and one that you have no warning

**Objective 1:  
Describe the leadership  
skill set most useful in  
a major crisis.**

## Leadership Skills Most Useful in a Major Crisis

- Promoting some degree of control
- Promoting calm, empowerment and normalcy
- Providing ready access to basic human needs
- Treating individuals with respect and dignity

## Measures of Success: In Collaborative Leadership

- Communication
- Assessment
- Conflict management
- Development of trust
- Decision-making
- Addressing safety concerns

### **Leadership Issues**

- Be ready to make decisions in the absence of leadership.
- Identify back up chain of command.
- Have all staff identify critical functions and empower them to take action.

### **Leadership Issues**

- Prepare for staff being reassigned or assigned to tasks that they may not like.
- Request a single point of contact from Federal Government and other funders.

### **Too Late**

*"The history of failure can almost be summed up in two words: Too Late. Too late in realizing mortal danger. Too late in preparedness. Too late uniting all possible forces for resistance. Too late in standing with one's friends".*

General Douglas MacArthur

### **MacArthur's Leadership Principles**

- Unify command – establish a clear chain of command
- Be a role model – actions more than words communicate values
- Visibility matters – presence enhances morale and accountability
- Refuse to hide – shows confidence in the team/staff

### **MacArthur's Principles of Management**

- Develop management depth – an efficient and sufficient corps of officers means the difference between victory and defeat.
- Manage people positively – the more closely people worked with MacArthur, the more they admired and respected him.

### **MacArthur's Principles of Management**

- Invest in training – leaders often treat training as an ancillary activity:  
MacArthur was relentless in pursuit of training.

### **Leadership In Crisis Katrina Lessons**

- Analytical
  - Data - sharing via internet
  - Technology-communication
  - Rapid analysis
  - Resource allocation priorities

### **Leadership In Crisis Katrina Lessons**

- Future/Conceptual
  - Post-trauma issues: 3-5 years
  - Lessons learned
  - New systems
  - New resources

### **Leadership In Crisis Katrina Lessons**

- Structural
  - Protocols
  - Chain of command
  - Stability/basics food and shelter
  - Supply and support
  - Infrastructure/safety

### **Leadership In Crisis Katrina Lessons**

- Social
  - Trained and prepared
  - Diversity honored empathy
  - Family of caregivers taken care of
  - Families intact – sites
  - Communication

### **Best Practices Personal Observation**

- Neonatology - 125 children from three hospitals were all rescued and lived
- 5,192 missing, dislocated children were reunited with families NCMEC
- Coast Guard no rules, innovation, saved lives

### **Best Practices Personal Observation**

- New Louisiana state data sharing, the W3 <http://w3.recoverycorps.org>, and state-wide information portal [www.LouisianaRebuilds.info](http://www.LouisianaRebuilds.info) changed way non-profits, 211 system gathers and makes data available
- Evacuation - 1.3 million evacuated safely

### **“Still Here”**

*"I've been scarred and  
battered. My hopes the  
wind done scattered. Snow  
has friz me, sun has baked  
me. Looks like between 'em  
they done tried to make  
me . . . stop laughin, stop  
lovin, stop livin . . . but I  
don't care . . . I'm still here."*



**Langston Hughes**