

Crisis Communication & Response: Reimagining Student Services Post COVID-19

Presenters

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“A crisis is
unpredictable but
not unexpected”
- Timothy Comb

s

Overview

- This presentation on “Crisis Communication and Response” aims to give insight into what is considered a crisis and how effective planning can help managers and practitioners execute their roles effectively
- This is a first of a two in the series, so this presentation will lay the foundation for a substantive discourse in part two on the response aspects (i.e. the way forward)

Example of World Crises

- World hunger
- Poverty
- Global warming
- Terrorism
- COVID-19



Question

- What [campus related issue] keeps you up at nights as a student services practitioners?

<https://higheredlive.com/campus-crisis-management-and-communication/>
1:00 – 9:30 (MINS)

THE SCOPE OF COVID-19-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSURES IS UNPRECEDENTED IN HISTORY

Rebecca Winthrop (March 31, 2020)

Communication, image, reputation, and other aspects of campus life often quickly degrade after a crisis more than they would have if administrators had just invested more in the “before” — because that would greatly help improve the “after.”

Claudine McCarthy (2019)

Major Thoughts to Remember

- . Your company will experience a crisis; overtime several.
- . Planning increases *your chances of managing the crisis* and the communication during and following the episode.
- . Communicating *with stakeholders* improves your ability to manage the episode and recover from it.

Definition and Types of Crises

. . . A significant disruption of an organization's normal activities which stimulates negative stakeholder reaction threatening the organization.

Types of Crisis

sudden

perceptual

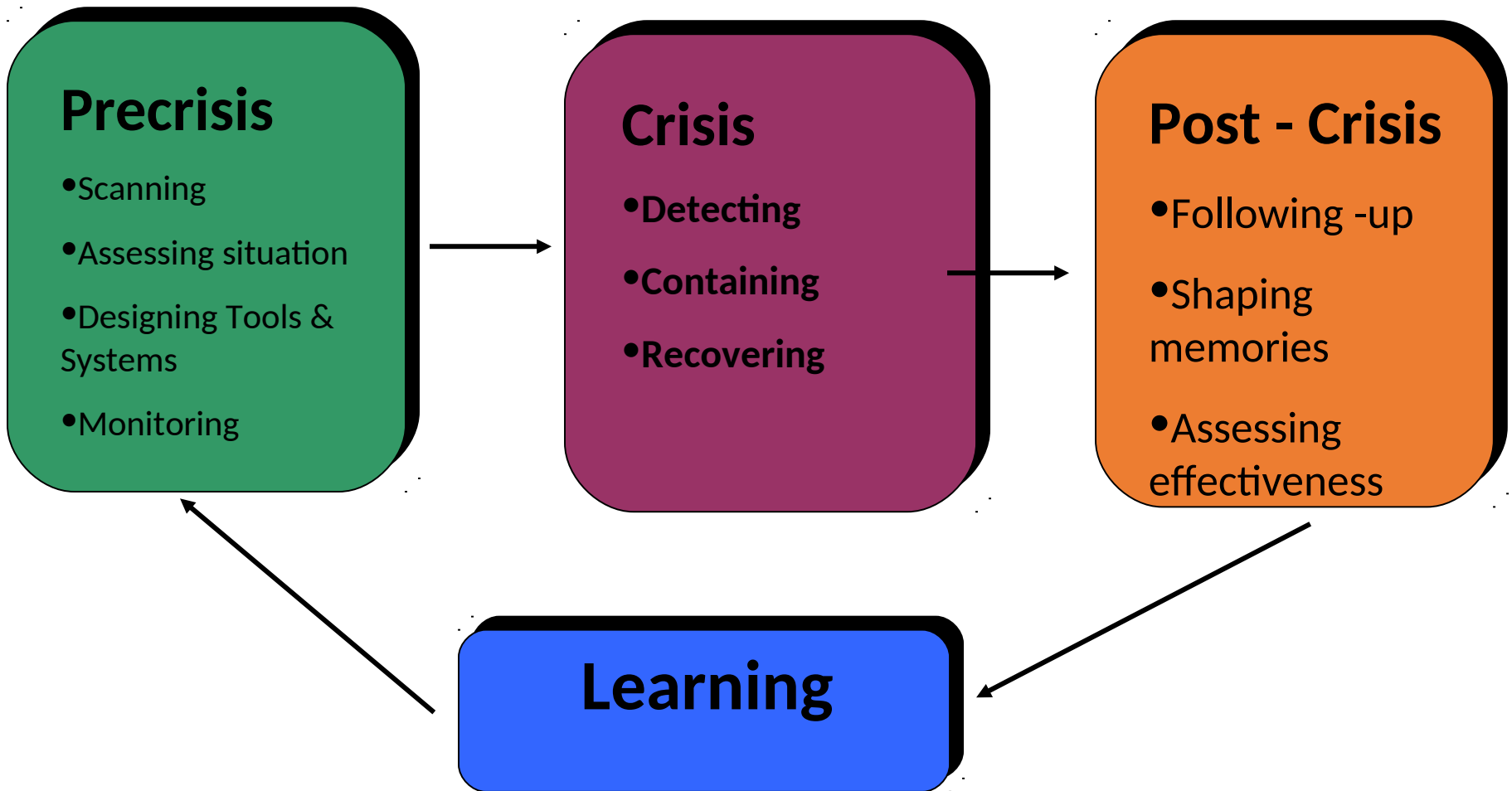
smoldering

bizarre

Crisis Characteristics

- Significant *disruption* of operations
- *Adverse effect* on normal operations
- Resolution *exceeds* the organization's capacity to respond
- Generates substantial *negative stakeholder reaction*
- Generates *extensive public scrutiny*
- Generates *extensive news coverage*
- *Worldwide coverage* via social media

2. Overview



3. Pre-crisis Planning

- Objective - prevent or lessen the negative outcomes of a crisis and thereby protect the organization, stakeholders, and/or industry from damage
 - Financial loss
 - Reputation loss
 - Identity altered

3a. Scanning

- Definition - Looking out for potential sources of crises
- Industry-wide issue analysis
- Organization specific issue analysis
- Risk assessment (“implicit issues”
- Stakeholder relationships

Scanning cont.

- Issue Sources

- Newspapers
- Business Magazines
- TV News
- Trade Journals
- Public Opinion Polls
- Medical/Science Journals
- On-line (web pages, newsgroups, etc.)

- Risk Assessment Sources

- Safety/accident records
- Ethical climate surveys
- Financial audits
- Liability exposure
- Workers Comp.
- Product tampering
- Risk audits (70-80%)
- Sexual harassment exposure

Scanning cont.

- Relationship Sources
 - Shareholder resolutions
 - Stakeholder complaints
 - Rumors/grapevine at conventions
 - Speculative discussions
 - Potential Boycotts
- Principle: Keep in continual contact with key constituents and listen to what they are saying.

3b. Assessing situation

- Evaluate issues in two dimensions
 - likelihood
 - impact
- Evaluate risks with risk mgt. grid
- Evaluate relational threats
 - Power(Leverage)
 - Legitimacy (Value driven)
 - Willingness (Desire for action)

Assessing cont.

- **Historical Types of Crises**

- Natural disasters
- Malevolence (kidnapping, product tampering, terrorism etc.)
- Technical breakdowns
- Human breakdowns

- Challenges (boycotts, strikes, lawsuits, government actions)
- Megadamage (oil spills, radioactivity)
- Organ. Misdeeds
- Workplace violence
- Rumors

3c. Designing Tools & Systems

- Select Crisis Management Team
- Select Spokespersons
- Develop Crisis Management Plan
- Prepare Crisis Communication System

Selecting the CMT

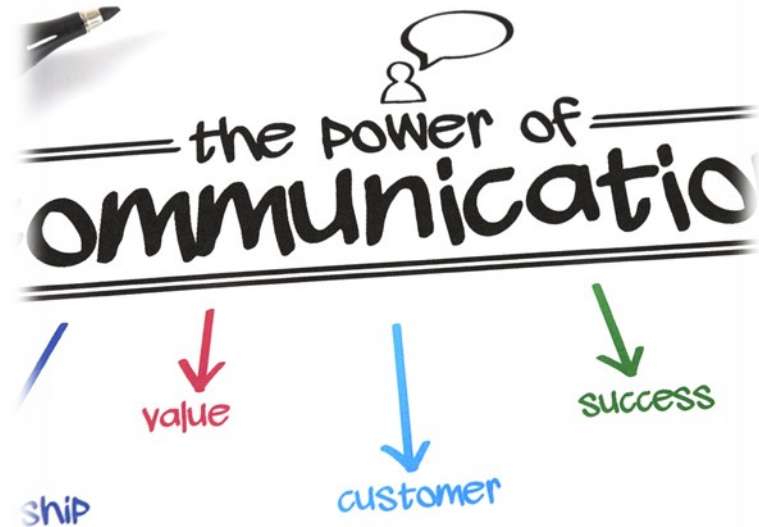
- A cross-functional group who have been designated to handle ANY crisis
- Characteristics of a good CMT
 - Work together (conflict mgt)
 - Apply the CMP (manage stress)
 - Listen to others
 - Make the right decisions
 - Communicate proactively

Selecting the CMT

- Typical roles
 - Legal
 - Security/safety
 - PR
 - Operations
 - Top Management (CEO)
 - Student affairs/services
- Make time for training (63% companies do)

Selecting Spokespersons

- Principle - “One voice is more important than one person”
- Role - Manage the accuracy & consistency of the messages coming from the organization
- Communication should be guided by the 5 C’s:
Concern, clarity, control, confidence, & competence



Selecting the CMT

- Skills of the spokesperson
 - Appear pleasant on camera (visual, nonverbal)
 - Answer questions effectively
 - Don't argue with reporters
 - Avoid "no comment" comment (65% believe "no comment" = "guilty")
 - Challenge incorrect information
 - Assess assumptions of questions
 - Legitimize
 - Present information clearly
 - Avoid jargon
 - Provide structure

Develop Crisis Management Plan

- What is it?
 - A potential action plan
 - Used during the crisis
 - Focuses on “how-to”
- What it is not?
 - Overly detailed
 - Rigid

Components of CMP

- Introduction (usually by CEO)
- Rehearsal dates
- CMT members
- CMT contact sheet
- Crisis Assessment
 - overview piece
 - short
 - likely scenarios
- Incident report form (documents what happened)
- Proprietary info. (list)
- Strategy worksheet
- Stakeholder contact sheet
- Crisis control center (e.g. where, capabilities)
- Postcrisis evaluation

Prepare Crisis Communication System



Physical setup



Prepare tools

Intranet

Internet

Phones

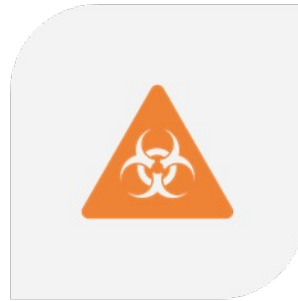


Prepare team

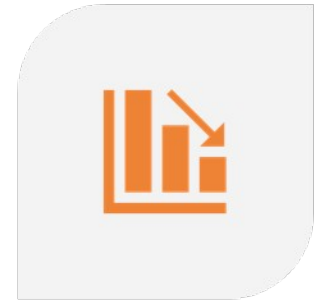
4. Managing the Crisis



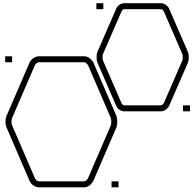
**A. DETECTING
THE CRISIS**



**B. CONTAINING
THE CRISIS**



**C. RECOVERING
FROM THE CRISIS**



4a. Detecting the crisis

Early monitoring

Convince upper management

Assess type & character of crisis

- different crises require different strategies

4b. Containing the crisis



Respond quickly



Acknowledge what you don't know yet



Set fairly rigid information priorities



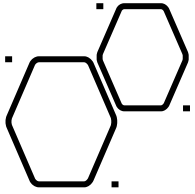
Express sympathy



You can express concern without opening the company to liability issues



Develop a strategy based on type of crisis



4c. Recovering



FOLLOW-UP ON
INFORMATION
REQUESTS



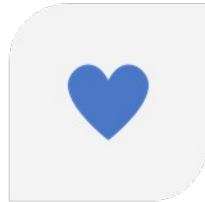
COMMUNICATE
WITH
STAKEHOLDERS



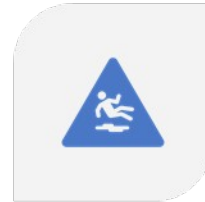
INFORM PEOPLE
ABOUT CORRECTIVE
ACTIONS



TALK ABOUT
FINANCIAL
IMPLICATIONS



CONTINUE
EXPRESSING
COMPASSION



CONTINUE
TRACKING ISSUES,
RISKS, ETC.

5. Managing post-crisis

- Following-up
 - Collect crisis records, stakeholder feedback, & media coverage
 - Conduct interviews with key personnel
- Shaping memories
 - Internal audiences
 - External audiences
 - What did we learn? So what?

Cont. 5 - managing post-crisis



ASSESSING
EFFECTIVENESS



EXAMINE
RECORDS



LOOK AT PHASES
OF CRISIS



DETERMINE
CHANGES

6. Learning

- Changes in CMP
- New training opportunities
- New personnel

**Many education
systems will find that
returning to “normal”
will no longer be an
option ...**

...MORE IN PART TWO ON THE WAY FORWARD !

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