Crisis Leadership: Preparations, Relations, Perceptions

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Managing Crises:

Responses to Large Scale Emergencies

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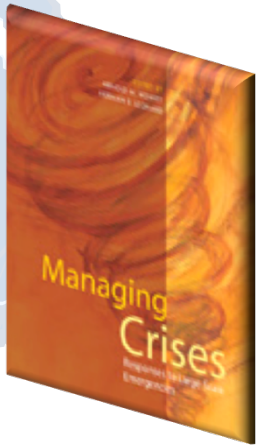


Disasters: More Pronounced, or More Aware?

- More Pronounced?
  - Scale
  - Density
  - Interconnectedness
- More Aware?
  - The Media: Traditional and Social
  - Immediacy of Impact in Living Color
  - Affinity---Empathy

Emergency Management

- Readiness- as Instantaneous as Possible
- Plans, Training, Exercise; Plans, Training, Exercise; Plans, Training, Exercise;Execution
- Routine Emergencies
- Crises Emergencies

Routine Emergencies

- Still Emergencies- no intent to understate severity
- "Predictable Disasters"
- Extensive Contingency Planning
  - Known Family of Stakeholders
  - Familiarity from Training to Execution
- Characterized by the "known unknowns"

Universal Expectation of Competency

Crises Emergencies

- Significant elements of Novelty
- Containing elements heretofore unknown, unprecedented, or unanticipated…*but*
- Subjective
  - Unknown or unanticipated by whom?
- Still, characterized by the "unknown unknowns"

And as if that's not hard enough– Emergent Crises

- Begun…or perceived…as Routine Emergencies
- Evolving to Crises Emergencies
- Unnoticed, or unheeded, through the Evolution

- Danger in following a path that may be
  - Inefficient, or
  - Ineffective, or
  - Counterproductive

Situational Awareness: The Key to Avoiding the Emergent Crises Shortfall

- Gathering and assimilating key facts in the midst of a Disaster Response
  - Understand
  - Anticipate
  - Project
  - Mitigate

…The eye cannot see what the mind does not understand.

Situational Awareness in Routine Emergencies

- Understanding the facts that need to be assimilated
  - The "Known Unknowns"
- More a matter of Reaction than Analysis in the "design phase*" of Emergency Response

**Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*, Gary Klein

Recognition Primed Decision Making

Operational Leaders organize and deploy based on "Pattern Recognition"

Situational Awareness in Crises Emergency

- Recognizing Novelty
  - Discerning the "Breaks in the Pattern"
- Missing the Breaks negates Situational Awareness
- "Staying the Course" could result in Disaster Response becoming Disaster Reinforcement

The First Challenge in Response to Crises Emergency: Recognition

- Overcoming Cognitive Bias
  - Overestimating Our Estimate of the Situation
  - Cognitive Arrogance?
- Discovering the "Unknown Unknowns"
  - Attaining new information
  - Adopting new information
  - Applying new information

Realigning Situational Awareness

- Trusted Routine Templates adjusted following analysis
- May be resisted by Operational Managers
  - *And they may be right…*
- Establishing a Role for a new Tier of Analysts
  - Familiar with the Routine…Attuned to the Emergent

The New Tier of Analysis: Compensating for Cognitive Bias

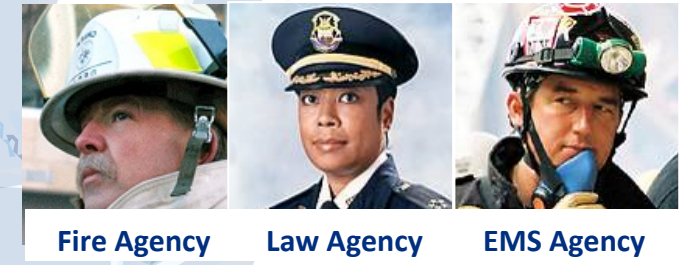
- Focusing on the Novelties
- Applying Experience, Historical Models… ***but***
- Always asking Two Essential Questions:

What is the Same?

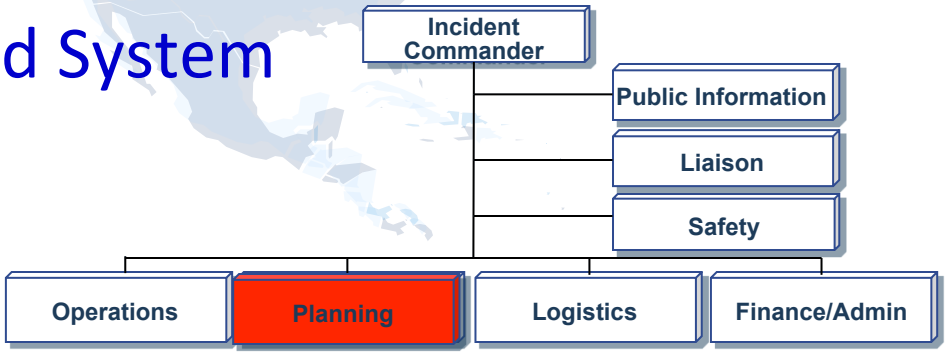
What is Different?

The Essential Requirement: Diversity of Perspectives

- Drawing from the Strength of the Incident Management System
  - The Diversity of Disciplines in the Unified Command



  - The Division of Duties and Responsibilities of the Incident Command System



Preserve Dissension.

Protect Dissenters.

Demand One or More "Best Alternatives"

- Postulate that the Primary Diagnosis is Wrong
- Explicitly ask what information would validate solutions or conclusions

Premature Closure is less likely if more than one hypothesis is kept alive

Demand One or More "Best Alternatives"

- Determine what Course of Action is required for the alternate path
- Is the Course of Action different from that chosen to meet the original diagnosis?
- Worse… is it in conflict?

Gauging Progress?

- Set Operational Expectations for the newly chosen direction
- Monitor, Confirm, Disprove, Continue, Adjust

"I was just wondering if you could help me find my way."
"Well that depends on where you want to get to."
"Oh, it really doesn't matter, as long as... "
"Then it really doesn't matter which way you go." Alice and the Cheshire Cat

"We won't know if we're on track if we haven't specified what the track should look like..." Leonard and Howitt

RELATIONSHIPS

Preserving the Trust and Confidence

Political

Burden of Prioritization

↕

Providing Political Buffer

Analytical

Conveying Intent; Discerning Veracity

↕

Operational

Employing Pattern Recognition

Avoiding Cognitive Bias

RELATIONSHIPS

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Questions?

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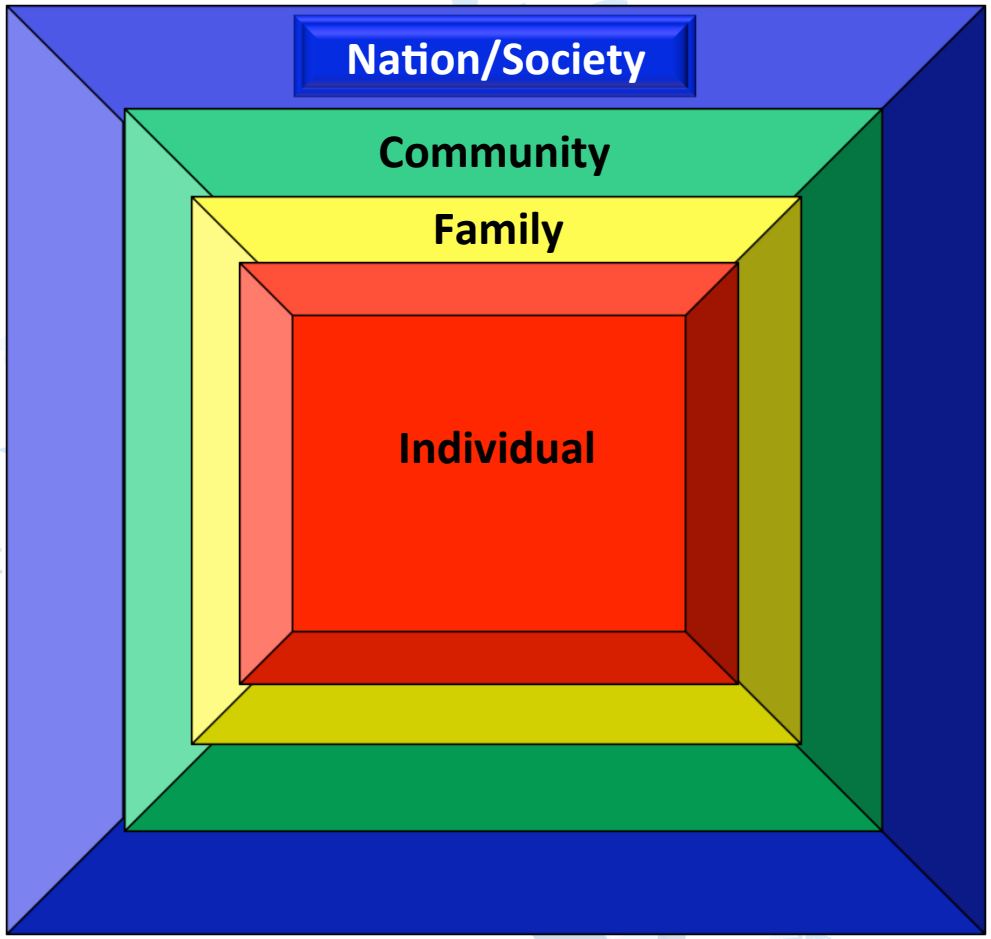
Families and Individuals
State, Local, Tribal, Territorial Governments
Homeland Security Enterprise
Communities/ Faith Based Organizations
Private Sector
International Partners
Non-Governmental Organizations


Nation/Society
Community
Family
Individual