

Preventing the responder-induced Disaster

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“I have seen the enemy...
and he is I.”
- Pogo

Simple v. Easy

Mission:

prevent

prepare

protect

What is the responder-induced disaster?

- Failure to accomplish hour mission due to:
 - Vision
 - Goals
 - Preparation
 - Communications
 - Teamwork
 - Leadership

Failures that are linked to stakeholders:

- Fire
- EMS
- Law Enforcement
- Public Health
- Emergency Management
- School officials
- Business Community
- Military
- Private Security
- Tribal leaders
- Elected officials

We're talking about the "other"
responders, not us.
So I'll say "they"... because we're
much more comfortable throwing
our stones at other people.

Can't everyone just get along?

No.

Why?

Priorities – Agendas - Personalities

The last stakeholder...
is the victims:

Every disaster is a “personal
emergency” for someone... and
oftentimes... many someones.

Vision

Imagination: The ability to envision
in their mind what they cannot
presently see with their eyes.

All things created with a plan are
created twice:

Mental creation
Physical creation

To achieve the physical creation
requires the sharing of the mental
creation.

Problem: The mental creations of stakeholder groups can vary.

Priorities

Agendas

Some stakeholder groups operate in silos.

How can they create a common vision?

Understand and respect variations in priorities and agendas.

Seek to find the common ground based on the mission (prevent, prepare, protect).

JFK Vision: Put a man on the moon.

Visit to Cape Canaveral
(now the Kennedy Space Center)

Common Goals

Stakeholder agencies have different goals day in and day out.

Disaster responders are often
type-A, aggressive, can-do,
results-oriented personalities.

Competitive nature is to WIN!

Then, disaster strikes and they have to find a way to meld their goals to a common purpose and play well in the sandbox.

They can do this IF they have developed relationships and mutual understanding in advance of the catastrophe.

Where goals are not
commonly shared...

the event outcome is
likely to reflect it.

Disasters do not forge working relationships.

Disasters expose the relationships that already exist for what they really are – good and bad.

Rotary Motto: Service above self.

Do all responders share that motto?

Really? I've seen a few that don't.

While we should put service above self, we **MUST** ensure our goals include taking care of our responders **AND** their families.

California Earthquake: January 17, 1994: Los Angeles earthquake resulted in 8,700 injuries, 1,600 hospitalizations and caused an estimated \$20 billion in damage.

Callbacks... didn't work.

Preparation

Buildings are prepared for fire based on codes and engineering features, like the sprinklers.

I like sprinklers.
They're my best firefighters.
They work for free.
They're always on-duty.
They always get along with each other.
They never get into trouble.
And they never try to mate with each
other.

It is easy for stakeholders to get
consumed in their day-to-day
operations.

Being proactive in disaster preparation helps ensure they will be response-able.

Stakeholders choose their successes
and failures in advance based on
how they prepare and how they set
their priorities.

Training is often focused on
technical skills of disaster response,
not the people skills.

Responders prepare for the types of emergencies they are going to see most often.

– nothing wrong with that

Some think their preparation for the
daily emergencies will serve them
well for large-scale events

A disaster is a completely different animal and they are often under prepared or improperly prepared.

Lack of preparation increases stress.

Stress causes performance
to mirror training.
(cognitive and muscle memory).

This can cause responders to do
things that appear to be irrational...
maybe even bizarre, yet it's behavior
completely predicable based on
training.

Ever held a full scale disaster drill?

How did it turn out?

What did you learn?

Were the responders set-up for
success or failure?

What did you change?

St. Clairsville Disaster Drill outcome.

“F-Word used as a Noun, Verb,
Adverb and Adjective...
all in one sentence.

Teamwork

Some people base their self-worth based on winning. They compare themselves to others and they compete for the “prize.”

Some believe that in order to win, someone has to lose.

This leads to an unhealthy selfish
win-lose mindset.

In the movie Miracle... Herb Brooks told his players he wanted to get to know them... to do some introductions:

- Rob McClanahan: Rob McClanahan. St. Paul Minnesota.
- **Herb Brooks:** Who do you play for?
Rob McClanahan: I play for you. Here at the U.
- **Herb Brooks:** Jack?
Jack O'Callahan: Jack O'Callahan. Charlestown, Mass. Boston University.
- **Herb Brooks: "Again."**
- Eventually, there came a cry from the ice: "Michael Ruzioni, Windsor, Massachusetts.
- **Brooks:** Who do you play for?
- **Ruzioni:** I play for the United States of America.

Disasters require collaboration and cooperation, not competition and selfishness among the players who share a common mission.

Success is based the mutually benefit from
working together.

This requires:

Integrity – strong values and beliefs

Maturity – Concern for others above concern
for self.

(Growing old is mandatory).

The best way to foster teamwork is to have a
relationship among team members who
understand each other's role.

EXAMPLE: The police sergeant who constantly complained about the job that dispatchers did.

No relationship.

No trust.

No respect.

Police chief asked for my advice about how to handle the discipline:

Ride-along

Communications

Humans have an ability not held by
any other species on this earth.

Humans have the ability to engage
in complex communications.

While this may be one of our species
greatest allies, it is also one of our
species greatest enemies.

For it gives humans the ability to
also have complex
miscommunications.

Dual representation

Steven Covey: Seek first to
understand, then to be understood.

Squint with the ears.

Communications are processed
through filters:
Public safety position
Goals
Agendas
Personal filters
(religion, politics, ethics, morals)

Disagree v. Disagreeable (Talking Parrot)

Communications is the concrete that
paves the road to quality
relationships, true understanding
and trust.

As I have evaluated casualty incidents, I have found a common thread among many of them...
poor communications or
miscommunications.

SWAT Drill – No Radios (Ties to preparation)

Leadership

Leadership is the common thread
among all of these attributes:

Vision – Goals – Preparation –
Teamwork – Communications

Some leaders... are...
within their own right...
weapons of mass destruction.

What leadership traits are most needed in disaster mitigation, planning, training and response?

- Values relationships.
- People buy into the leader first, then the vision.
- Appreciates and invites disagreement.
- Understand the big picture.
- Visionary - pursues an aggressive agenda boldly, but not blindly.
- Lead by example.
- Napoleon's General: Bring me my red coat.
- Servant leader.
- Surround themselves with great people and then stays out of their way.
- Freely gives credit to others and are generous with praise. (Richuiti note)
- Understands how to use influence to inspire change.

Please join me in thanking our reservists, soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines for protecting our freedoms around the world.

I'll close by asking you to...
within your mind...
take this solemn oath:

I swear to fulfill,
to the best of my ability and
judgment, this covenant:

I will respect the hard-won gains of those disaster providers in whose steps I walk, and I will freely share my knowledge with those who are to follow.

I will apply, for the benefit of disaster victims, all measures required to secure their safety and avoid negativity and skepticism.

I will remember that disaster response is both an art as well as a science, and that my warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh any other asset I might use.

I will not be ashamed to say "I do not know," nor will I fail to call on my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a disaster victim.

I will respect the privacy of disaster victims, for their problems were not disclosed to me so that the world may know. Most especially I must use all regard on matters pertaining to life and death. If it is given to me to save a life, I will be thankful. But it may also be under my control that lives are lost. I will face this awesome responsibility with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty.

Above all, I must not play at God.

I will remember that I am not caring for a flooded farm or the burned out house, but for the human beings who are devastated by these losses and that such losses may also impact their families and their economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the disaster victim.

I will prevent disasters whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to a response.

I will remember that I remain a member of our community, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, including those inflicted and those who are not.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of helping those who seek my help.

This is an adaptation of a famous, yet little referenced oath from the 5th Century BC. It is believed to have been originally written by a Greek physician. It is used in modern day to ceremonies for swearing doctors into the practice of medicine and is known as the Hippocratic Oath.

Thank you:
South Dakota Department
of Public Safety.

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Executive Director

Center for the advancement of situational
awareness and decision making.

If you would like additional information or
if you are interested in hosting a program, please contact me.