Crisis

Management Strategies

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Elements of a crisis:

A threat to the organization

The aspect of surprise

A short decision/response time

Indicative of needed change

Types of organizational crises

1. External threats:
   - Terrorist attacks/man-made disasters
   - Community infrastructure collapse
   - Natural disaster
   - Market fluctuation
   - Change in legislation
   - Supply chain (transportation/product availability)
   - Pandemic/disease outbreak

Types of organizational crises

2. Internal threats:
   - Technology system failure
   - Infrastructure collapse (fire, HAZMAT spill, equipment)
   - Illegal/criminal actions (fraud, abuse, theft of info.)
   - Organizational misdeeds (lack of safety, sanitation, protocols)
   - Medical error/malpractice
   - Labor dispute
   - Loss/shortage of key staff
   - Confrontation/Workplace violence
   - Rumors

Occurrence of organizational crises

Sudden:
- Unpredictable in nature and timing of occurrence
- Unplanned—element of surprise
- Requires immediate and multi-faceted response

Smoldering:
- Predictable but uncertain as to time
  - Growing employee dissatisfaction
  - Non-compliance with codes/regulations
  - Deferred maintenance
  - The cumulative effect of neglect to known threats

Crisis Management Strategies

1. Crisis preparation/prevention
2. Crisis intervention
3. Crisis communication
4. Crisis management—Legal considerations
5. Crisis recovery
6. Crisis as catalyst for change

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Organizational culture

The symbols, systems, and beliefs that drive the behaviors, skills and engagement of people in the workplace.
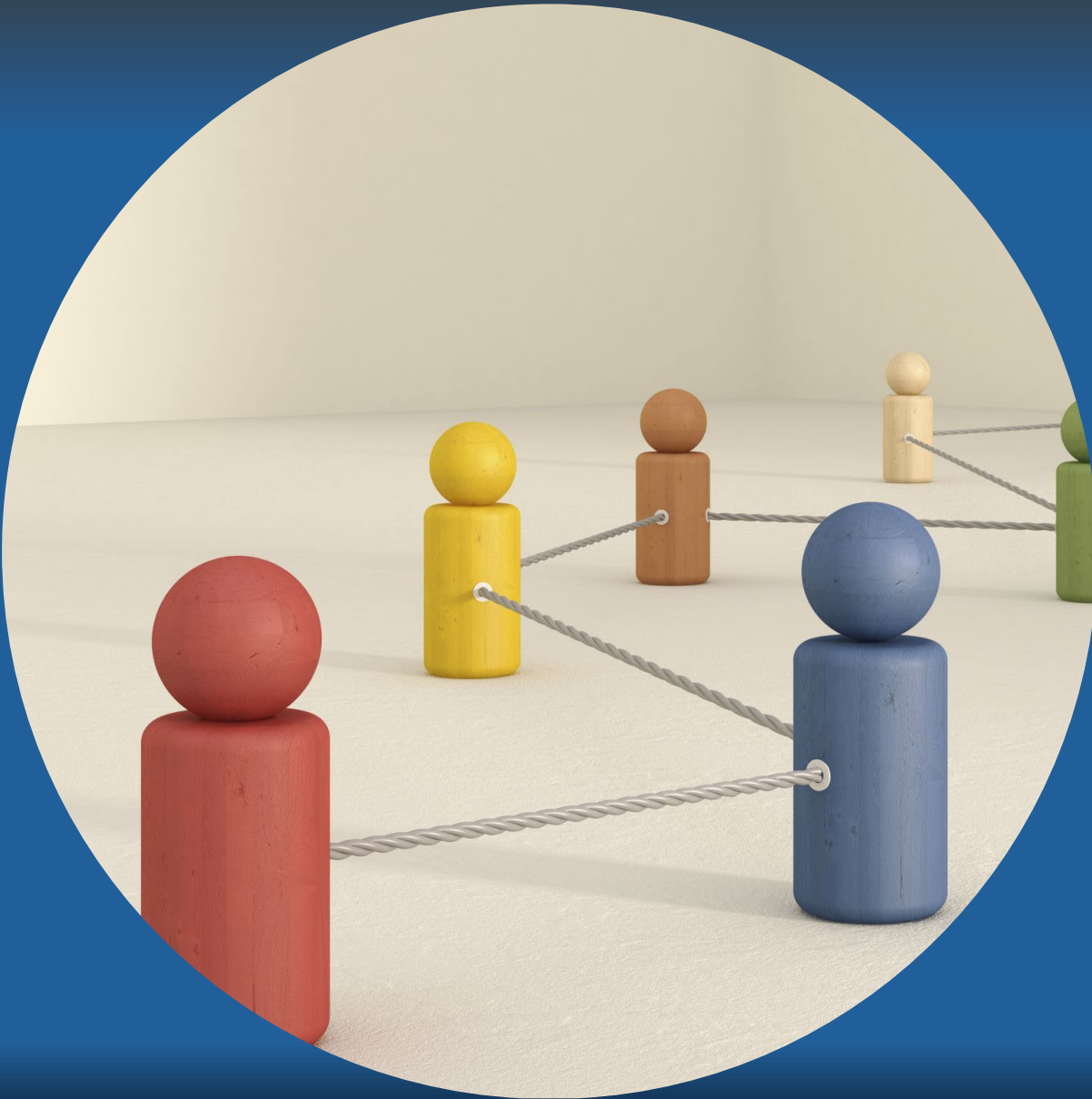
Key elements of organizational culture:

1. Core values
2. Unified purposes
3. Efficient leadership
4. Effective communication
5. Accountability
6. Proper recognition
7. Healthy environment

Crisis preparation/prevention

1. Safety is the top priority
   - Structural integrity and access to premises
   - Maintain medical protocols/evidence-based medicine
   - Employee/patient/visitor identity
   - Verification of patient identity prior to treatment
   - Exit pathways identified
   - Fire extinguishers/fire alarms up-to-date
   - Evacuation plan—routes and drills
   - Staff emergency response codes
   - Public address system
   - Electrical system and electronic information backups
   - Cyber security

Crisis preparation/prevention—cont'd

2. Community connections
   - First responders (fire/ambulance)
   - Police
   - Utilities (water, sewer, power)
   - Government
   - Maintenance/service contractors
   - Supply chain network
   - Legal counsel
   - Media (print, radio, TV, internet, website)
   - Staff families
   - Patient families/relatives

Crisis preparation/prevention—cont'd

3. Crisis management plan
   - Purpose of plan is to preserve operational stability, and to retain trust of stakeholders
   - Awareness of risks/attentiveness to indicators
   - Identification of key crisis-response team members
   - Training of leadership and staff
   - Simulation/practice drills
   - Documentation and accessibility
   - Internal leadership structure defined

Crisis Management Strategies

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2. **Crisis intervention**
3. Crisis communication
4. Legal considerations in crisis management
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Crisis intervention

1. Activate appropriate response team
2. Determine immediate cause and protective measures
3. Stop the crisis-producing activities
4. Minimize the impact (limit damage/protect assets)
5. Implement response/intervention activities
6. Monitor response/intervention effectiveness
7. Implement communications plan

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Essential qualities of communication plan

- Maintaining trust and credibility
- Providing timely and accurate information
- Mitigating negative impacts

Essential elements

- Crisis management team
- Designated spokesperson
- Communication/contact lists
- Pre-drafted templates for messaging
- Up-to-date information

Keep your communication cascade, contact lists, messaging templates, and complete plan documents in a prominent place on your intranet accessible to everyone on the crisis team. Many businesses keep a backup paper plan, too, in case there's a tech interruption.

A Holding Statement

A pre-prepared, fill-in-the-blank template that allows immediate adaptation to the situation and can be issued as quickly as possible. It allows the crisis management team more time to understand the situation, collect the facts, and ultimately issue a more informative statement. It also helps to prevent an uninformed rumor mill.

Holding statement template

"We are aware of the incident at our facility and are taking steps to address it. Safety of staff and clients is our highest priority. Further information will be provided as soon as possible."

Holding statement template

We are saddened by the recent allegations surrounding the [incident/accusation] with/against [employee]. [Company] is committed to being a safe and inclusive workplace for all. We're still assessing the situation and these accusations. We want to understand what happened, and our next step will be to work with our [people operations/human resources/executive/legal] team(s) to determine the best course of action. In the meantime, we would like to offer our sincerest apologies to all of those affected or upset by these accusations.

Timeliness of communication

The 15-20-60-90 Communication Rule:
- First 15 minutes: Initial acknowledgment of the situation.
- First 20 minutes: Preliminary statement with known facts.
- First 60 minutes: Detailed update with action steps.
- First 90 minutes: Comprehensive briefing and regular updates thereafter.

Communication channels

- Phone
- Your intranet
- Instant messaging
- Email
- Text
- News releases/statements to media

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Crisis Management—Legal considerations

- What are the legal requirements of the situation? Are there specific laws that pertain to the crisis?
- Is there mandated reporting?
- Are notices required?
- What requirements are there for record-keeping and documentation related to the crisis and how long should it be retained by the institution?
- Who will be the key decision-makers in addressing the crisis and what role does your legal counsel play?

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- Have legal counsel review all legal and regulatory requirements for various types of crisis situations **BEFORE** you are in a crisis.
- Knowledge will facilitate faster response and careful compliance.
- Most countries and states/provinces have specific mandates for various types of crisis: environmental issues, chemical spills, cyber issues that raise privacy and related concerns.

Insurance Considerations

- A pre-crisis insurance question: What types of crisis do I need coverage for; how much coverage is needed; and what deductibles can your organization assume?
- Does your insurance call for certain crisis management steps?
- Do you have to notify the insurer when a crisis occurs and does that apply to your current crisis?
- How much latitude does the institution have in resolving the crisis versus obligations to allow the insurer to handle resolution?

Be Proactive **Before** a Crisis

- Conduct a legal review
- Implement robust documentation protocols
- Know who the regulatory and legal authorities are for various potential crises and, when possible, develop positive relationships with them ahead of time.
- Have legal counsel monitor changes in laws and regulations that may apply to your organization. The world of new crisis situations and regulatory requirements is evolving. Stay current.

Crises affecting the larger Community

- Hospitals are often in the first line of action when a devastating crisis hits the community/area.
- The crisis itself may impact the internal workings of the hospital and its ability to respond to the community needs. Demands placed on the hospital and how they are met will test the hospital's ability to function at optimum level.
- Being unprepared to respond to emergency needs may overwhelm the hospital and it may fail to treat patients in need.

Emergencies to Plan For

- **Natural Disasters**—earthquakes, volcanoes, snowstorms, hailstorms, flooding, hurricanes/cyclones, tsunamis, tornadoes and wildfires. These events may impact the hospital itself while facing an overwhelming demand for medical services.

- **Terrorism**—including bioterrorism, mass deaths and injuries (shootings etc.) threats and actual attacks on the hospital. These may result in a large inflow of patients.

- **Accidents**—mass casualty such as bus, train or airplane crashes

Note this list is not exhaustive but suggestive of the types of emergencies that can occur. Often geography plays a role in the type of emergency any hospital may face.

Emergencies to Plan For

- Biological & Chemical Agents——Does the hospital have the expertise and appropriate medicines to address the potential impacts?

- Chemical Incidents——Factory explosions or hazardous leaks that pollute major systems and sicken people. Does the hospital have the expertise and appropriate medicines to address the potential impacts?

- Disease Outbreaks——Epidemic diseases e.g. Covid-19, SARS, Ebola, Zika virus… Does the hospital have the expertise and appropriate medicines to address the potential impacts?

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Crisis recovery

- Declare an 'end-time' for the crisis and the beginning of recovery.
- Establishes a new mental orientation.
- Selective and sequential restoration of activities.
- Quantify damage assessments/claims (if any).
- Express thanks for sacrifice/difficulties/trauma endured.
- Ensure attentiveness to emotional and mental health of staff.

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Crisis as catalyst for change

- Conduct Root Cause Analysis (RCA) to find underlying cause of the problem.

Root Cause Analysis

Investigating a problem to find its underlying cause, not just the symptoms. Key components typically include:

- A clear problem statement
- Data gathering
- Analysis (people, process, equipment, materials, environment, management)
- Identification of the root cause(s)
- Development of corrective and preventative actions
- Assignment of responsibilities and timelines

How to do 5 whys analysis

Identify the Incident

Identifying the event, understand the basics of what happened.

Assemble together everyone who is immediately affected by the problem

Gather your team

Ask "Why?"

Ask what's causing the main problem.

Ask "why" for each answer.

Ask "Why?" four more times

Identify Root Causes

Know what the root cause of the problem is.

Discuss the best solutions with your team and decide how to proceed.

Develop and Implement Action Plans

Crisis as a catalyst for change

- Changes to policies, procedures, practices, property.
- Look beyond your own organization to learn how others have responded to similar crises.
- After identifying needed changes, determine the action steps for implementation.

Challenge of initiating change:

How do you rock the boat without falling out of it?

Adopting change in the organization

- Change can be slow, incremental, and involve set-backs
- Must be open to constructive criticism

Dealing with resistance to change:

Strategies for managing change:

1. Visualize a bright future.
   - Leaders often rush too quickly to the mechanics of change without investing the effort to create an appetite for change.
   - Create a clear tomorrow—but do not denigrate the past.
   - Build a belief that "we can do better"
   - Engage people's emotions. When you become inspired and excited about the change your influence begins to work in others.

Strategies for managing change: —cont'd

2. Make a convincing case.
3. Set up team and charter expectations
4. Review the current state
5. Educate (the need, the how, and the benefits) and energize
6. Identify new symbols, systems, behaviors
7. Implement (model the behavior you expect)
8. Keep at it for significant change will take time

Reactions to workplace change:

Shock

Denial

Confusion

Anger/fear

Resistance

Hostility

Sadness

Stress

Crisis management in action

Tylenol Crisis in 1982

- Seven people died in Chicago after taking Tylenol capsules that had been laced with cyanide.
- Johnson & Johnson acted fast and aggressively, recalling 31 million bottles of Tylenol despite not knowing how the cyanide got into the product.
- To regain consumer trust, they issued a public apology, collaborated with law enforcement, and introduced tamper-resistant packaging.
- Their quick response and transparency eventually saved their brand's reputation.

Crisis management case studies:

- Hurricane Melissa—blown roof panel almost strikes staff
- Hospital—nurse applicant provides counterfeit name to verify passage of exam. (Claim name change due to marriage)
- Hospital—nurse charged after hospital discovers unexplained fractures in infant.
- Hospital—Nurse sentenced to life in prison for knowingly administering lethal doses of insulin.
- Company brand: Boeing 737 MAX Grounding (2019-2021).
- Supply chain: Toyota (2011 Tohoku earthquake).

Resources

1. Crisis Management Templates https://www.smartsheet.com/content/crisis-management-templates
2. Holding statements:
https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://useworkshop.com/blog/11-examples-of-holding-statements/%23:~:text%3DWe%2520are%2520saddened%2520by%2520the,or%2520upset%2520by%2520these%2520accusations.&ved=2ahUKEwio-eG62taNAxVJDE
3. https://www.nsf.org/knowledge-library/creating-successful-crisis-management-plan
4. 5 Why slide templates: https://JustFreeSlide.com