

# **Responding to a Crisis**

A Reasonable, realistic, organized response to Crisis Plan for your camp.  
Guidelines to consider in responding to an event that has occurred

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The following guide is a collection of resources that has been compiled for the use of camp professionals in preparation for responding to emergency and crisis situations. This material should be used as a guide only and consideration should be given to the unique qualities each of the programs before application.

When something dreadful happens, the sense of enormity, the urgency, the emotional weight that we feel may affect our ability to think clearly. We may not have time to search for the information and to gather the materials that we might need. In those first few minutes, we must make important decisions: Do we do "A" or "B" or "C"? When confronted with a crisis, it is more desirable to invest most of our energy in a reasonable and realistic response. Planning now to refine and update procedures instead when it happens will make response quick and concise and assist in a clear thoughtful process.

First recognize that *terrible things do happen*. Even when we have a sound risk management plan, even when we screen staff carefully and train staff professionally and thoroughly. Next, *some things are beyond our ability to control*. For example, we can't predetermine how people will react. And what may be regarded as a "crisis" by one person may be perceived as an "incident" by someone else. Making this distinction may include: the number of people involved or affected by the event, the length of time that camp is disrupted by the event, and the severity of injury or damage.

There is a series of actions we can choose in responding to a crisis that may increase the likelihood of a **"good outcome."** What is meant by a "good outcome"?

- Individuals directly affected by the event receive appropriate medical and psychological care in a timely manner.
- Individuals indirectly affected by the event are provided with appropriate medical and psychological care.
- The "summer experience" is preserved (life goes on).
- The integrity of the camp has been maintained. You continue to operate a successful business while holding onto your sanity.

Before using this crisis response material consider the following:

- You may already have a crisis response plan in place or you could come up with a plan on your own if you invest the time and energy.
- This is **one** approach. These actions are too many or too few, or that the order many need to be changed. Take this material and customize it for your own use.

- It's difficult to convey the dynamic nature of responding to crisis. The material shared may seem to flow from one action to another but you might be carrying out several actions simultaneously.

In the process of adapting this material make room for "**Plan B Thinking.**"

- Plan B Thinking involves anticipating "what ifs?" and taking the time to come up with alternative actions. Outside services and resources may not be readily available, some individuals may not be able to carry out their assignments, *unanticipated things do happen.*

There are certain attributes or qualities that are essential in leading a reasonable and realistic response to a crisis that has occurred.

- The first attribute is a strong sense of **responsibility**. You are responsible for maintaining a place where campers and staff feel safe and for re-establishing a safe place when something terrible has happened.
- The second characteristic is **courage**. It's more difficult to think about and to plan for the possibility of a crisis than anything else. When something terrible has happened, a willingness to be honest in one's communications with everyone is another essential quality. What you do and say in responding to a crisis will have a significant impact "down the road."
- The next characteristic is a **willingness to face perplexing issues** rather than to deny their existence or put off dealing with them.
- The ability to **prioritize** is another important skill.
- Finally, **compassion**, an attribute that is hopefully part of your approach to dealing with others, is an indispensable ingredient in leading a response to crisis.

In the following section consists of a six part risk prevention outline that could be used to as a precursor to help prepare for the Crisis Response Outline (CRO). The first part addresses prevention followed by evaluations and assessments, screening, operational policy and procedure, training and orientation, and insurance. Unlike the CRO, the risk prevention outline stands alone without descriptive narrative. With time, the narrative will exist as this project develops and should be available for future presentation.

Following this section is the Crisis Response Outline.

## Part 1

### Risk Prevention

#### 1) The Five P's

- a) Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance
  - i) Always expect the unexpected
    - (1) If you expect it then it is not unexpected.
    - (2) When planning your response to various emergencies, you may be faced with at unexpected issues without warning.
    - (3) This is how emergencies can occur.
    - (4) Proper planning is the key to minimize exposure.
  - b) Check and Recheck

#### 2) People do WELL the things you check...

- a) Regular visual and written evaluations
  - i) Program
    - (a) Regular written program specific assessments in each program area.
      - (i) Analyze program effectiveness
      - (ii) Provided curriculum
        - a. Meets or exceeds current industry standards
        - b. Effective and age appropriate
      - (iii) Equipment condition
        - a. Meets or exceeds current industry standards
        - b. Effective and age/size appropriate
      - (iv) Facility condition
        - a. Meets or exceeds current industry standards
        - b. Meets local/national building standards
        - c. Meets/exceeds ADA compliance
      - (v) Permitting and licensing
        - a. USDA Forest Service
          - i. Guide Service Permitting and Usage Requirements
          - ii. River Permitting and usage requirements

- b. Local/State Child Services
    - i. Child Care license Requirement
  - c. Local/State Health Department
    - i. Food/water permitting
    - ii. Operations permits
  - d. Local/State DNR
    - i. Game and fisheries
- ii) Staff
- (a) Written program specific skill assessments in each program area.
    - (i) Assess staff teaching ability
      - a. Solid understanding of skill being taught
      - b. ability to clearly articulate curriculum
      - c. establishes and follows safety procedures
    - (ii) skills proficiency
      - 1. Program Staff
        - a. Administration (including medical)
          - i. Clear understanding of program goals
          - ii. Able to supervise and advise other staff
          - iii. Is safety conscious
          - iv. Follows and enforces camp rules
          - v. Follows camp procedure in documenting policies
        - b. Program coordinators
          - i. Appropriate training and certifications
          - ii. Maintains and inspects all equipment in supervised area
          - iii. Ability to supervise and advise other staff
          - iv. Applies camp goals and outcome to programming
          - v. Observes and enforces safety rules
          - vi. Executes curriculum that meets or exceeds industry standards
      - c. Activity leaders
        - i. Appropriate training and certifications
        - ii. Maintains and inspects all equipment
        - iii. Ability to supervise and advise participants
        - iv. Applies camp goals and outcome to programming
        - v. Observes and enforces safety rules
        - vi. Executes curriculum that meets or exceeds industry standards
      - d. Cabin Counselors
        - i. Understands health and safety concerns of age being supervised
        - ii. Maintains and inspects all equipment in living area
        - iii. Ability to supervise and advise participants

- iv. Ability to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for participants
      - v. Applies camp goals and outcome to cabin life
      - vi. Observes and enforces safety rules
    - e. CA's, and CIT's
      - i. Understands health and safety concerns of age being supervised
      - ii. Maintains and inspects all equipment in living area
      - iii. Ability to supervise and advise participants
      - iv. Ability to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for participants
      - v. Applies camp goals and outcome to cabin life
      - vi. Observes and enforces safety rules
    - f. Volunteers
      - i. Understands health and safety concerns of age being supervised
      - ii. Maintains and inspects all equipment in living area
      - iii. Ability to supervise and advise participants
      - iv. Ability to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for participants
      - v. Applies camp goals and outcome to cabin life
      - vi. Observes and enforces safety rules
  - 2. Maintenance
    - a. Maintenance Director/Coordinator
    - b. Grounds/Landscaper
    - c. General Maintenance
    - d. Volunteers
  - 3. Support staff
    - a. Housekeeping Supervisor
    - b. Housekeepers
    - c. Laundry
    - d. Volunteers
  - 4. Food Preparation
    - a. Head Cook/Kitchen Supervisor
    - b. Line Cook
    - c. dishwashers
- (b) Conduct regular written program specific evaluations to monitor staff proficiency.

iii) Equipment

- (a) Maintenance and Grounds
- (b) Food preparation
- (c) Laundry
- (d) Program

- (e) Housekeeping
  - (f) Transportation
  - (g) Medical
- 3) **Screening** (thorough background checks)
- a) Staff
    - i) Administration**
      - (1) Face to face interview
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience
      - (4) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
      - (5) Possible Social Security trace, Credit screening
    - ii) Medical**
      - (1) Face to face interview
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience
      - (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
      - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
    - iii) Program Coordinators**
      - (1) Face to face interview
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience
      - (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
      - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
    - iv) Activity leaders**
      - (1) Face to face/Skype or phone interview
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal or professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience
      - (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
      - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
    - v) Cabin Counselors**
      - (1) Face to face/Skype or phone interview
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal or professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience
      - (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
      - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
    - vi) CA's/CIT's**
      - (1) Prior program experience
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal or professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience
      - (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
      - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
    - vii) Food Preparation**
      - (1) Face to face interview
      - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
      - (3) Qualified experience

- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

**viii) Maintenance**

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience
- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

**ix) Support Staff**

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience
- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

**x) Transportation**

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience
- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

b) Volunteers

i) Program

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience
- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

ii) Maintenance

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience
- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

iii) Housekeeping

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience
- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
- (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check

iv) Grounds/landscaping

- (1) Face to face interview
- (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
- (3) Qualified experience

- (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
    - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
  - v) Food preparation
    - (1) Face to face interview
    - (2) Written and verbal reference checks (personal and professional)
    - (3) Qualified experience
    - (4) Appropriate training and license/certification
    - (5) Court search, DMV records, US SOR check
- c) Contract Labor
  - i) Construction
    - (1) Bonded and insured
    - (2) Written and verbal reference checks
    - (3) Company policy on staff screening
    - (4) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
  - ii) Landscaper
    - (1) Bonded and insured
    - (2) Written and verbal reference checks
    - (3) Company policy on staff screening
    - (4) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
  - iii) Other...
- d) Vendors
  - i) Food
    - (1) Bonded and insured
    - (2) Written and verbal reference checks
    - (3) Company policy on staff screening
    - (4) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
    - (5)
  - ii) delivery
    - (1) Bonded and insured
    - (2) Written and verbal reference checks
    - (3) Company policy on staff screening
    - (4) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
    - (5)
  - iii) Laundry
    - (1) Bonded and insured
    - (2) Written and verbal reference checks
    - (3) Company policy on staff screening
    - (4) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
  - iv) Other...
- e) Outfitters
  - i) Rafting
    - (1) Bonded and insured
    - (2) Training requirements for staff
    - (3) Written and verbal reference checks
    - (4) Company policy on staff screening

- (5) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
- ii) Climbing
  - (1) Bonded and insured
  - (2) Training requirements for staff
  - (3) Written and verbal reference checks
  - (4) Company policy on staff screening
  - (5) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
- iii) Transportation
  - (1) Bonded and insured
  - (2) Training requirements for staff
  - (3) Written and verbal reference checks
  - (4) Company policy on staff screening
  - (5) Written instruction on camp policy and procedures for visitors
- iv) Other...
- 4) Preventive Operational Policy and Procedure**
  - a) Establish written Hiring Policies
    - i) Establish job descriptions for each job
      - (1) Duties and responsibilities
      - (2) Special requirements to perform job
      - (3) Supervisor in charge of position
    - ii) Regularly review policies with human resource professional or legal counsel
  - b) Communication with national and community emergency response organizations
    - i) County and Metropolitan EMS
    - ii) Fire Marshall and Fire Department
    - iii) Public safety
      - (a) Sheriff
      - (b) Police
      - (c) Hired security firms
    - iv) Health authority
      - (a) local and state health department
      - (b) Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
      - (c) Local Hospitals
      - (d) On-site medical staff
      - (e) Medical practices providing standing treatment orders for medical staff
  - c) Safety Audits
    - i) Activity areas
      - (a) Rules
        - (i) Appropriate for each activity
      - (b) Procedures
        - (i) Operations
        - (ii) Safety
        - (iii) Emergency
      - (c) Equipment
        - (i) In good repair
        - (ii) Appropriate sized for age/gender

- (iii) Meets industry standard for age and use
- (d) Facility
  - (i) Ball fields
    1. Soccer goals properly anchored
    2. dugouts provide protection from fly or foul balls
    3. bases securely in place
    4. Rules posted
  - (ii) Recreation buildings
    1. equipment securely fastened to floors or walls
      - a. volley ball standards
      - b. basketball goals
      - c. gymnastic equipment
      - d. Other...
- ii) Living quarters
  - (a) Proper ventilation
  - (b) Adequate lighting
  - (c) Fire equipment
    - (i) Extinguishers
    - (ii) Smoke detector
    - (iii) CO<sup>2</sup> Detector
    - (iv) Egress lighting
    - (v) Secondary escape route and equipment
  - (d) Bedding
    - (i) Sanitized regularly
    - (ii) Void of damage
    - (iii) Sturdy, secure and in good repair
    - (iv) Adequate spacing between beds
  - (e) Sinks, toilets, showers
    - (i) Sanitized regularly
    - (ii) Void of damage
    - (iii) Adequate ventilation
    - (iv) Privacy barriers
    - (v) Valves operating properly
    - (vi) Hot water controls prevent scalding
- iii) Bathhouses
  - (a) Adequate lighting
  - (b) Sanitized regularly
  - (c) Void of damage
  - (d) Adequate ventilation
  - (e) Privacy barriers
  - (f) Valves operating properly
  - (g) Hot water controls prevent scalding
- iv) Multipurpose buildings
  - (a) Rules posted
  - (b) Equipment in good repair

- (c) Adequate lighting
- (d) Fire equipment in good repair
- (e) Fireplaces in good working order
  - (i) Recently inspected
  - (ii) Fire suppressant screens in place
  - (iii) Damper in good repair
  - (iv) Accessible tools
- (f) Bathrooms sanitized and in good repair
  - (i) Sanitized regularly
  - (ii) Void of damage
  - (iii) Adequate ventilation
  - (iv) Privacy barriers
  - (v) Valves operating properly
  - (vi) Hot water controls prevent scalding
- v) Barns
  - (a) nc99 rules posted (Equine risk law)
  - (b) camp rules posted
  - (c) manure removed on a regular schedule
  - (d) grain and feed stored securely and free of vermin
  - (e) medication stored in a secure location
  - (f) tack cleaned and inspected regularly
  - (g) veterinary care available as required
  - (h) safety equipment is in good repair and appropriately sized for participants
  - (i) safety equipment is require when riding or working this horses
- vi) storage areas
  - (a) Clean and organized
  - (b) Shelving is secured and appropriately rated for weight
  - (c) Adequate lighting
- vii) Roads, perimeter fencing, gates
  - (a) Limit access where appropriate
  - (b) Signage clearly establish speed limits and warnings
  - (c) Roads in good repair
- viii) Water supply
  - (a) Access prevention
  - (b) Back up source
  - (c) Storage and treatment
- ix) Kitchen and food preparation areas
  - (a) Refrigeration and food holding temperatures
  - (b) Dry food storage free from vermin and insects
  - (c) Preparation and sanitation of raw vegetables and fruit
  - (d) Proper sanitation guidelines for prep areas
  - (e) Dish washing and storage procedures

- (f) Menu planning and execution
  - (i) Balanced and healthy
  - (ii) Special dietary restriction
  - (iii) Procedures for responding to food allergies
- (g) Back up power source for refrigeration
- x) Dams
  - (a) Inspected on a regular basis for cracks or breaches
  - (b) Control vegetation growth that may effect dam integrity
  - (c) Monitor down stream development that may effect dam classification
- xi) Grounds
  - (i) Paths and trails
  - (ii) Landscaping, trees (deadfall, general health),
  - (iii) Erosion control
  - (iv) Blind spots created by overgrown trees or shrubs

## **5) Training and Orientation**

- a) Program Staff
  - i) Administrative
    - (1) Directors
    - (2) Office Staff
    - (3) Owners
  - ii) Program Coordinators
    - (1) Arts and Dance
      - (a) General arts and craft
      - (b) Pottery and clay works
      - (c) Glass work
      - (d) Ballet, modern, tap, contemporary, etc...
    - (2) Adventure
      - (a) Rock Climbing
      - (b) Bouldering
      - (c) Ropes course (high and low)
      - (d) Backpacking
      - (e) Hiking
      - (f) Mountaineering
      - (g) Repelling
      - (h) Biking
      - (i) Mountain boarding
      - (j) Hot air ballooning
      - (k) Other...
    - (3) Water Sports
      - (a) Swimming
      - (b) Waterfront inflatable's, slides, and other waterfront attractions

- (c) Canoeing
- (d) Kayaking
- (e) Water skiing
- (f) Jet skiing
- (g) Sailing
- (4) Land Sports
  - (a) Gym Sports
    - (i) Basketball
    - (ii) Volleyball
    - (iii) Group games (dodge ball, musical chairs, etc...)
  - (b) Field sports
    - (i) Soccer
    - (ii) Lacrosse
    - (iii) Softball/Baseball/Kickball
    - (iv) Cricket
    - (v) Ultimate Frisbee
    - (vi) Frisbee golf
- (5) Target Sports
  - (a) Riflery
  - (b) Skeet
  - (c) Archery
- (6) Equestrian
  - (a) Horseback Riding
    - (i) English
    - (ii) Western
    - (iii) Vaulting
    - (iv) Pony rides
    - (v) Barrel racing
  - (b) Horsemanship
    - (i) Equine care
    - (ii) Equine therapy
  - (c) Equine Care
    - (i) Feeding
    - (ii) Medication
    - (iii) General health
- (7) Gymnastics/Cheer/Tumbling
- (8) Nature and animals
- (9) Specialized
  - iii) Activity instructors
  - iv) Cabin Counselors
- b) Support Staff
- c) Maintenance
- d) Grounds/Landscaper
- e) Transportation
- f) Volunteer

## 6) Insurance

- a) Adequate coverage in all program areas
- b) Adequate coverage for property
- c) Adequate liability coverage
- d) Regular thorough review with agency or independent auditor
- e) As much as you possibly can afford...

The following section contains some excerpts from *The Frontier Responding to a Crisis* authored by Bruce Muchnick, Ed.D. Dr. Muchnick has graciously allowed use of this material in it's present state or to be updated as needed. Much of the material has been updated or altered to meet the requirements of today's technological advances. Forms have also been created to accompany some of the subject matter both new and old which can be found on the thumb drive provided in this presentation.

The following section consists of three parts:

The first section, the **Crisis Response Outline (CRO)** consists of two parts. Part I describes twelve actions that you may choose to follow in responding to an event. These actions include gathering pertinent information, managing the event, communicating information to the camp community and the outside world, and dealing with the aftermath. Part II is comprised of two sections, one that deals with files and reports, and a second section that outlines actions you can take to maintain your sanity.

The second section, "**Now What Should I Do?**" provides focused questions and detailed descriptions and explanations of the steps comprising the various Actions.

The third section contains the **Crisis Response Checklist (CRC)** a "flow-chart" version of the **Crisis Response Outline** that allows you to enter pertinent information *before* you have occasion to deal with a crisis (names and phone numbers; etc.). After you have entered names and phone numbers on the **CRC** you may want to make additional copies so that you have a fresh checklist to use in responding to each event. During your response to an event, you may decide to enter relevant information (summary of phone conversations, etc.), check off Actions you have completed, and note steps yet to be carried out.

## **Part 1      Respond**

### **1. Find Out**

- A. **What** happened?
- B. **Who** was involved?
- C. **Where** are they now?
- D. **What** action has been taken so far?
- E. **What** is their present condition?
- F. **What** do they need?
- G. **What** camp resources are available to deal with this situation?
- H. **What** outside resources are needed? How will assistance be delivered?
- I. **Who** is in charge? (at scene? At camp?)
- J. **When** and **Where** did the incident occur?

### **2. Call Emergency Services**

- A. Emergency Medical Service
- B. Fire Department
- C. State/local police
- D. Other

### **3. Stabilize the Situation**

- A. Disperse "greeters" with appropriate instructions.
- B. Account for individuals involved (count and gather in a centralized area, if feasible).
- C. Attend to their needs.
- D. Look for additional injuries.
- E. Deal with non-injured individuals in area of incident.
- F. Deals with hazards (i.e. identify and contain; remove everyone from harm's way).
- G. Assign staff person to focus on continuity of camp activities.
- H. Preserve everything involved in the incident.

### **4. Establish Crisis Headquarters**

- A. Put emergency equipment in place.
- B. Designate spokesperson for the camp.
- C. Prepare protocol for phone calls.
  - a. Set up and maintain phone logbook for incoming and outgoing calls.
  - b. Provide for staffing of phone until the crisis is resolved.
- D. Prepare protocol for internet/social media
  - a. Who is in charge of updates
  - b. Prepared statements to post

#### **5. Contact Parent/Guardians (I)**

- A. Compose a statement.
- B. Call parents/guardians of person(s) involved in the incident.
  - 1) Make arrangements for their travel to camp or hospital and for their accommodations once they've arrived.
  - 2) Consider the feasibility of sending someone who can accompany them.

#### **6. Mobilize the Crisis Team(s)**

- A. Coordinate available information.
- B. Assess range of care and supervision needed.
  - 1) Individuals involved in the incident
  - 2) Others affected by the incident
  - 3) Camp community
- C. Assess level of intervention needed.
  - 1) Camp crisis response team
  - 2) Local community resources (e.g. clergy, mental health professionals)
  - 3) Outside resources
- D. Give assignments to team members (e.g. coordinate information flow).
- E. Begin interventions (e.g. group meetings, trauma counseling).
- F. Keep track of each person affected by the incident.

#### **7. Call Emergency Resources**

- 1) American Red Cross
- 2) Centers for Disease Control
- 3) Child welfare agency
- 4) EPA
- 5) FEMA
- 6) Health department, local
- 7) Health department, state
- 8) National Guard
- 9) Poison Information Center
- 10) OSHA
- 11) 1) Gas and electric company
- 12) Phone company
- 13) Evacuation sites (school **gym**; local movie theater; sanctuary)
- 14) Local/regional hospitals

- 15) Alarm company
- 16) Animal control center
- 17) Auto mechanic
- 18) Bus company
- 19) Electrician
- 20) Fire equipment service company
- 21) Food service vendors
- 22) General contractor
- 23) Plumber
- 24) Medical supplies
- 25) Pool service company
- 26) Tree care specialist
- 27) Veterinarian
- 28) Other

### **8. Call Support Resources**

- A. Insurance company
- B. Camp attorney
- C. Crisis Response Team
- D. ACA Hotline/Section Office
- E. Nearby camps
- F. Partner(s)
- G. Chairperson, Board of Directors:
- H. Community resources (clergy, mental health professionals; physicians)

### **9. Contact Parents/Guardians – (II)**

- A. Prepare a general statement.
- B. Notify parents/guardians of campers not directly involved in the incident (phone, letter, fax).

### **10. Deal with the Media**

- A. Prepare communication
  - 1) Write up statement(s) including:
    - a brief history of the camp;
    - a description of the camp (program, facilities);
    - the most pertinent facts about the incident that can be released without assigning blame.
  - 2) Avoid speculation about why the crisis occurred.
  - 3) Locate one place for meeting with the media.
- B. Media contact
  - 1) Print
  - 2) TV
  - 3) Radio
- C. Interaction with the media
  - 1) In person

- 2) By telephone
- 3) In writing

### **11. Find Out More**

- A. Assign two adult staff members to gather FACTS independent of each other.
  - 1) Maintain objectivity.
  - 2) Avoid statements assigning blame.
  - 3) Speak with everyone directly or indirectly involved.
  - 4) Describe conditions pre- and post-incident (e.g. weather conditions, the "pulse" of camp life).
- B. If possible, take photographs with a digital camera or phone of everything and everyone involved in the incident.
- C. Cooperate with ongoing investigations.

### **12. Post-Incident Actions**

- A. Periodically, check status of -
  - 1) Person(s) involved in the incident and families
  - 2) Others in camp affected by the incident
  - 3) Camp community
  - 4) Crisis team members
  - 5) Crisis Response Plan
  - 6) Supplies
- B. Continue/revise/add interventions.
- C. Check in with anyone who has left camp.

## **PART II**

### **Organize Files and Prepare Reports-**

- A. Files should be complete and organized.
- B. Keep copies of all records.
- C. Reports (in consultation with attorney and insurance representative)
  - 1) Should be factual in content;
  - 2) Should contain everything that happened and how you and the camp community responded;
  - 3) Should not be released to anyone who is not authorized by you to receive it.
- D. File appropriate forms/claims -
  - 1) Camp medical accident insurance
  - 2) Worker's compensation
  - 3) Camp liability insurance
  - 4) Child welfare agency
  - 5) OSHA
  - 6) Other local and state agencies

### **Support for you!**

- A. "Inside" support
  - 1) Spend time with staff, campers.
  - 2) Engage in regular physical exercise.

- 3) Take time for relaxation.
  - 4) Enjoy daily routines, activities, and the week's schedule.
  - 5) Participate in special events.
  - 6) Treat yourself with kindness.
  - 7) Be aware of, appreciate, generate humor.
- B. "Outside" support
- 1) Maintain contact with the "outside world"
  - 2) Plan for time away from camp.
  - 3) Maintain contact with personal friends.
  - 4) Find someone with whom you can talk

## **"NOW WHAT SHOULD I DO?"**

### **Part I**

#### **1. Find Out**

*What are the first things I would need to know?*

Accuracy of information is crucial here. You can imagine what might happen, for example, if the wrong camper or staff person were identified as being involved in an event. While these ten questions may not all be relevant in gathering information about every event, the accurate, factual information you initially obtain will form the cornerstone of many of the subsequent actions you will take. Document this information on the CRC.

#### **2. Call Emergency Services**

*Whom would I notify immediately?*

Telephone numbers for emergency services in your area should be recorded in the **CRC**. Be prepared to provide emergency services with accurate information and directions (printed ahead of time) not only to your camp but also, if feasible, to the site of the incident. Remember to record the name(s) of individuals you speak with, the time of your call, and comments about the outcome of your conversation on your **CRC**.

Consider inviting representatives from various emergency services to camp for a visit so that they will have some familiarity with your site. In coping with an event, response time is crucial. Such a non-emergency visit would also provide an opportunity to generate some "good will" with professionals in your area.

*Do they know to look for "Greeters" when they arrive at camp? (Greeters will be described below.)*

*Will they be able to turn their sirens off when they arrive?*

### 3. Stabilize the Situation

*What steps would I need to take to steady the situation?*

One of the first steps you might take would be to send "greeters" to the camp's entrances. Greeters help monitor the flow of traffic into and out of camp, prevent unauthorized individuals from entering the area, guide emergency services, deal with the media who may arrive, and with neighbors and onlookers who may show up. You may also want to place one or more greeters at the site of the event to help restrict access to only those individuals who need to be there. The greeter(s) should be diplomatic, authoritative, level headed, and articulate.

Two other points:

- First, it will be important to establish a transfer of operational authority from any camp personnel who may be providing assistance to the emergency services personnel.
- Second, you may want to assign more than one individual to manage the rest of the camp community (**3g** on the **Crisis Response Outline**) in order to maintain balance and perspective. If we concentrate our efforts exclusively on the crisis, the rest of the camp community may be adversely affected. The camp's program could become disorganized. Anxiety, fear, and distress might spread. If on the other hand, we concentrate too much of our effort on moving onward, if we were to deal with the impact of the crisis incompletely, our coping, the functioning of staff, and the experiences of campers may be adversely affected. Problems may surface within days, later in the summer, or even months later that will require our attention.

### 4. Establish Crisis Headquarters

*Where would be the best place to set up crisis headquarters?*

Once the initial response is underway, it will be helpful to designate and set up one location as "headquarters." Ideally, this spot should not be the camp office. It's important to create a quiet, perhaps, secluded setting where you and your crisis team can think clearly, discuss issues without intrusions, and make phone calls without distractions. It's also important that the day-to-day flow of business continue without interruption.

**CRISIS HEADQUARTERS CHECKLIST (forms, logs, policies and procedures)**

Some things to keep in mind as you communicate with "the outside world":

- While it is likely that you would be the "**designated spokesperson**" for the camp, consider (i.e. Plan B Thinking) who might assume this responsibility if you were not available.
- Set up a **phone log book** in which all incoming and outgoing phone calls are recorded with notations for "name of person calling in/calling out", "name of person Receiving/making" the call, "time of call", and "summary/outcome" (e.g. follow up needed). Prepare a "**phone protocol**" containing basic **factual** information you want to convey to individuals with whom you speak. Designate one person and at least one backup person to handle **incoming calls**. *Who would be the best person to handle this task?*
- **Digital communication** should be a top priority. It is important that any information being communicated is factual and accurate. How is information presented, when is it updated and how often, and who is responsible for posting and updates. Should policies be considered that limit updating personal statuses by participants and staff?

## 5. Contact Parents/Guardians (I)

*What would I say on the phone to a parent or guardian of a child or staff person who has been seriously injured or killed in an accident?*

In actuality, you may have made this contact earlier in your Response. Or, if the individual(s) involved was/were taken to a trauma center or hospital, that organization probably contacted the family. In any event, here are a few things to keep in mind.

- We recognize that this contact requires sensitivity, compassion, skill, and courage. Take some time to think about what you want to convey. Put yourself in the parent's position. How would you want someone to communicate this kind of information to you? What and how much information would you want to know? How would you react upon hearing this information? It may be helpful to compose an outline for these conversations (with input from your support team) that provides the facts of the situation and reflects your concern for the well being of everyone involved. **OUTLINE OF THINGS TO CONSIDER**

"Your child is unconscious, lying on the deck next to the pool. We're waiting for the ambulance to arrive" is substantially different from "Your child has been involved in an accident. We've administered first aid and we're awaiting the arrival of an ambulance to take your child to the Mashville Trauma Center."

- Offer to help with arrangements for parents to travel to the hospital, emergency center or to your camp. Consider, if feasible, having one of your staff members (or someone you know *very* well in the parents' community) pick them up. Make arrangements for someone from camp to meet them at the hospital. Consider making arrangements for comfortable accommodations once the family has arrived in the area. **MAKING ARRANGEMENTS CHECKLIST**

## 6. Mobilize the Crisis Team(s)

*Which individuals would be best suited for participation on your crisis response team? What qualities or skills would be important for people to possess in carrying out different assignments? **CHECKLIST OF QUALIFIED RESPONSE TEAM (complete contact information)***

Responding to a crisis is a complex undertaking. While you may be leading your camp's response, you can not possibly carry out all of the necessary tasks. You must be willing to delegate responsibility to others within your organization. Isn't this part of your leadership approach in managing your camp anyway? Some points to keep in mind:

- First, you and your support team will need to assess the **range** of care that will be needed for the following groups: individuals directly involved in the event (those who are injured), individuals indirectly involved (those who were in close proximity to the 'event), others affected by the event (cabin mates, friends of the injured), and the rest of the camp community.
- Second, you and your support team will need to assess the **level** of intervention that will be needed. Your mental health resource person can be especially helpful here.
- Third, keep in mind that you can draw from three levels of assistance: the camp's crisis response team, local community resources (community businesses, school personnel who reside in the area, experienced physicians and clergy) and outside resources such as your insurance crisis support team, and the agencies and organizations listed in Actions **7** and **8** of the **Crisis Response Outline**.

## 7. Call Emergency Resources

*Which emergency resources would I need to contact and when should these calls be placed?*

**The Crisis Response Outline** lists **27** different emergency resources. Make note of the appropriate phone numbers and contact person and record this information on your **Crisis Response Checklist**. Keep in mind that different agencies have different reporting criteria. The **CRC** also contains provision for recording pertinent details of your conversations.

## 8. Call Support Resources

*Do I have complete information about each member of my support resource group so that I could reach them any time, day or night?*

You need to know if someone in your support resources group will be away or unavailable at any time during the summer; line up some back-up resources to provide assistance.

## 9. Contact Parents/Guardians (11)

*What do I want to communicate to parents and guardians of campers and/or staff about this event? What will be the best means for conveying this information (phone, letter, **fax** email)? What technology is available for rapid communication to a large group of people? Should I text, use Facebook, Twitter, Constant Contact mailing list or other digital media resources? How should I go about organizing these communications?*

Let's consider a sample communication regarding a fictitious event:

***NEED A NEW EXAMPLE!!!***

**Is this something that Lach can help out with?**

Hello \_\_\_\_\_

(Child's name) is fine.

An incident occurred this afternoon that we want you to know about. A resident of the nearby town of Lindalu abducted two of our senior campers at gunpoint while the campers, their cabin mates, and counselors were visiting a convenience store on their way back to camp from a day-hike. The police were notified immediately. The two campers were released unharmed by the suspect several miles down the road. The Montana State Police apprehended the suspect within two hours. This person is now in jail facing multiple charges.

We met with the two campers and others in the group who witnessed the kidnapping so that they could express their feelings and concerns. They are being closely supervised as usual. We have consulted with professionals and a psychologist who specializes in trauma response has talked with us by phone and will be here in the morning to help us process and begin to work through this experience. We are determined to handle this situation in the best possible way.

This is the first incident of this kind at Camp Arthbe in its 81 years of operation. We are grateful that no one was hurt and that camp is continuing in its regular routine.

We wanted you to know about this situation first hand. We need your help to dispel any rumors that might crop up. If you are aware of people who report a different version of this incident, please call me or encourage them to get in touch with me.

If you have any questions, please give us a call.

Flint Stone,

Some points to consider:

- First, Flint began by telling the parents that their child was safe. If you were a parent sitting at home and the director of your child's camp called unexpectedly wouldn't the first thing on your mind be concern for your child's welfare?
- Second, Flint described what happened in a factual manner. The director mentioned "at gunpoint" but did not elaborate with details about the weapon or about the suspect.
- Third, Flint described the series of actions that were taken to stabilize the situation.
- Fourth, the director emphasized that the flow of life at Camp Arthbe was continuing.
- Fifth, the needs of the camper and staff directly and indirectly involved in this incident were being addressed.

- Sixth, Flint sought support and cooperation from campers' families. With respect to organizing a communication to a large number of people, it may be helpful to group families in terms of their children's proximity to the individual or individuals involved in the event. You may want to phone some groups of people and send letters to everyone else. As is the case with so many aspects of responding to a crisis, much depends on the nature of the event and the course of action **you** want to take.

## 10. Deal with the Media

*What information do I want to include in a press release? What steps can I take to increase the likelihood of "good outcome" in dealing with the media?*

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A sample press release based on the above-described incident might start with:  
Camp Arthbe, established in 1918, is a family owned "brother-sister" camp located about 150 miles from Deer Lodge and Missoula Montana. Arthbe has been owned and operated by the Stone family for its entire history. The residential boys and girls camps are situated at opposite ends of a private two-mile long lake.

- perspective and to provide positive information about Camp Arthbe.
- Second, the director provided the most pertinent facts about the event.
  - Third, Flint did not mention the names or hometowns of the campers and counselors.
  - Fourth, the director offered no speculations about the suspect or about the suspect's motives for the abduction.

The press has an obligation to report events that are newsworthy for the community. They are constantly under pressure to meet deadlines. You have the responsibility to maintain the health and well being of your camp community and to respond reasonably and realistically when something terrible has happened. *Before releasing any communication to the media, please consult with members of your crisis support team (insurance, legal, and media relations).*

Some points to keep in mind before you meet with the media:

- First, the media may not come onto your property (@rivate land) without your permission.
- Second, the camp's spokesperson should be clearly identified. All inquiries should be directed to this person, only.
- Third, take the time to identify and discuss the important information you want to convey to the media with members of your crisis support team.
- Fourth, there is no such thing as "off the record." *Anything* you communicate can be quoted

Some points to keep in mind *during* your meeting with the media:

- First, consider letting them know that you respect their need to report events and that you hope they will be fair and accurate and not sensationalize the event.
- Second, find opportunities to deliver the "message moments" you delineated in discussions with your support team.
- Third, avoid speculation about the event. Do not mention names or hometowns.
- Fourth, correct or clarify inaccurate statements made by the media during the interview.

I'm grateful to Bob Schultz, Director of Development and Corporate Relations of ACA, and media specialist for Frontier's crisis support team, for his invaluable input in the development of the material in Action 10. **Update...**

## 11. Find Out More

I've encountered various points of view about the desirability of including Action 11 in these protocols. I would encourage you to discuss this Action with your crisis support team and make a decision based on your preference.

## 12. Post-Incident Actions

As stated previously, responding to an event is a *dynamic* rather than a static process. In practice, I would encourage you to "insert" Action 12 steps *throughout* your Response. Keep in mind that this process should continue throughout the remainder of the summer and beyond. "Revisit" your crisis response plan and make refinements and adjustments that might improve its usefulness if you are, again, confronted with a crisis.

"NOW WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

### *Part II*

#### 1. Organize Files and Prepare Reports

I'm continually amazed at the volume of information that passes through a camp office. You've had lots of experience with organizing information and this experience will be helpful in sorting through, completing, and preserving the information you will gather in response to an event.

Reports should be prepared in consultation with your crisis support team. They should be factual in content, contain a description of everything that happened, and describe the actions that you and your camp community took in response to the event. *Copies of reports should not be released to anyone who is not specifically authorized by you to receive them.*

File reports and claims in a timely manner. Different agencies have different requirements for the submission of reports.

## 2. Support for You!

Wait....don't skim past this section! As a camp director, you take care of everyone. When something terrible has happened, you may feel an increased desire to support others. Don't overlook your own needs. There are sources of support that are available to you inside your camp community (playing with campers, spending time with your staff, participating in the rich and varied activities of camp life) and out in the world (contact with personal friends, an evening in town, your favorite newspaper). Allow these experiences to help you avoid or at least reduce the sense of "aloneness" that sometimes comes with being in charge. Allow these experiences (and others listed in the **Crisis Response Outline; Part 11, Action 2**) to help you re-connect with your core beliefs about life in general, about *your* life in particular, and about your camp.

Two other points to keep in mind:

- First, give yourself permission and take the time for regular exercise. We all recognize the physical, psychological, and emotional benefits of regular exercise. Why is this awareness more valid for others than for us? Somehow, making time for exercise is often pushed aside by other priorities especially when something terrible has happened.
- Second, be aware of, appreciate, and generate humor. In his book, *Head First-the Biology of Hope*, Norman Cousins describes laughter as "internal jogging" which activates the release of endorphins, our body's pain reducing substance. Laughter also serves as a stimulant to the body's immune system, which can be invaluable when we're confronted with incredible stress. There is no better place than your camp to encourage the expression, the release of genuine, spontaneous laughter.

## **INTRODUCTION**

When something terrible happens, we don't know what lies ahead. We're faced with an overwhelming number of possibilities: loss of life, a ruined summer for those individuals directly involved in the incident, an adverse impact on the rest of the camp community, the loss of "the summer," the fear that parents won't re-enroll their children for the next season, litigation, financial ruin, and the loss of the camp.

This manual consists of three sections:

The first section, the **Crisis Response Outline (CRO)** consists of two parts. Part I describes twelve actions that you may choose to follow in responding to an event. These actions include gathering pertinent information, managing the event, communicating information to the camp community and the outside world, and dealing with the aftermath. Part II is comprised of two sections, one that deals with files and reports, and a second section that outlines actions you can take to maintain your sanity.

The second section, "**Now What Should I Do?**" provides focused questions and detailed descriptions and explanations of the steps comprising the various Actions.

The third section contains the **Crisis Response Checklist (CRC)** a "flow-chart" version of the **Crisis Response Outline** that allows you to enter pertinent information *before* you

have occasion to deal with a crisis (names and phone numbers; etc.). After you have entered names and phone numbers on the **CRC** you may want to make additional copies so that you have a fresh checklist to use in responding to each event. During your response to an event, you may decide to enter relevant information (summary of phone conversations, etc.), check off Actions you have completed, and note steps yet to be carried out.

Much of the material has been created over many years and continues to be refined as the required. With the guidance and assistance of Will Hendricks (Morrow Insurance), Lach Zemp (Roberts & Stevens), and Bruce Muchnick this material has been made available for use in hope that it will allow camp professionals to use best practices to prepare themselves in the event of a crisis.

Efforts have been made to obtain consent of materials not authored during the productions of this document. Those materials used will be sourced at the conclusion of this document. Some of the material included in this guide has been altered from its original state to accommodate the changing climate of camp to include advances in technology and communication resources.