

Chapter Sixteen:

Class Presentations: Response Plans for Communities in Crisis

Class assignment:

Design a crisis response plan and outline how you would implement it.

Your plan should include answers to the following questions:

1. What unique injuries or issues arise out of this fact description?
2. What questions do you have for your local host/contact person before you arrive?
3. What will the team make-up be?
4. What are the likely high-risk population groups?
5. What issues do you intend to cover in the community planning meeting upon arrival?
6. What services will you provide to the community?
7. What problems do you foresee for implementing your plan and how do you intend to overcome them?
8. What recommendations do you think you might leave with your host when you leave?
9. What issues do you expect to address at your press conferences?

Case # 1: Working Group A

Rapid City, South Dakota, is one of the select targets for nuclear strikes by other nations because it contains one of the most sophisticated Air Force and nuclear facilities in the country. Senator Ralph Smith, Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, arrived yesterday to visit the Air Force base and get an update on security. He was talking to a group of ten high-ranking military men over lunch when an employee at the base walked in with a semi-automatic gun and opened fire. The Senator was killed immediately and so were six other people at the meeting, including the supervisor of security. The four remaining people were critically injured.

Lloyd Small, the assailant, was leaving the building when he was confronted by security troops who had been alerted by a secretary in the building upon hearing the shots. The security troops asked Lloyd for his identification, which he showed them, and also said that he had heard shots on the second floor.

The troops went upstairs and found the people dead and wounded. They called for medical aid and issued a "red alert."

No one knew about Lloyd's involvement in the event at that time. But, Lloyd went to a nearby building and shot two other people — this time without killing them. One called for help. Lloyd was confronted in a third building and, in an exchange of gunfire, shot and killed an Air Force pilot before he killed himself. He shouted to all who could hear, "This is for you! I can't stand to live any longer in this country. I can't stand for anyone else to live! The Air Force is to blame!"

A representative of the Air Force has called on NOVA to respond to the base with a Crisis Response Team.

Case # 2: Working Group B

On Sunday afternoon at 5:00 p.m., CosmosAir Flight 23, originating in Los Angeles, was arriving at Washington National Airport after stopping in Pittsburgh, when its landing gear did not drop down. The plane landed on its belly and bounced and slid along the runway. It finally crashed into the terminal after hitting a small commuter plane along the way. The commuter plane exploded, killing the nine passengers and crew that were in it. Five of those passengers were members of a teenage barber shop quartet and their choir leader who had been heading for the national barber shop quartet competition in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

The CosmosAir plane did not explode, but six of the 120 passengers were killed on final impact. One gate agent was killed in the terminal. The pilot, co-pilot and two airline attendants were critically injured, along with 84 passengers. All were rushed to area hospitals. The remaining 2 airline attendants and 30 passengers were virtually unscathed. Three of the dead were unrelated French citizens. Ten of the injured were German citizens who were touring together.

When the plane hit the terminal a wing tip flew off, landing in the nearby marina and sinking one of the boats.

The CosmosAir crew members were highly praised for their calmness and competence in handling the disaster, especially the pilot for landing the plane so well.

The CosmosAir terminal was immediately closed for the day and all flights were cancelled. Flights were on regular schedule the next day.

NOVA did outreach to the Airport Executive at National Airport and he responded by requesting a NOVA team. Shortly thereafter, CosmosAir's Employee Assistance Department called NOVA and asked for a team to deal with CosmosAir employees.

Case # 3: Working Group C

St. Petersburg and the surrounding area was hit by Hurricane Harold yesterday. Warnings to evacuate had been issued twenty-four hours ahead of the actual onslaught, and over 2,000 individuals fled. But at least 22 people were killed. Two had been swept off of the seawalls in the midst of the gale. Three children and an adult were drowned when their car was swept off the St. Petersburg bridge. The driver of a car behind it witnessed the event and reported it to police. Identification of the individuals has yet to be confirmed.

The winds were clocked at over 120 miles an hour and 10 inches of rain fell in less than five hours. Much of a commercial mall was destroyed and over 47 homes were ripped apart. An elementary school and a nursing home were also demolished. Flooding continues today, and as many as 150 homes are partially or completely under water. Fifty-two people have been hospitalized.

There is no electricity and public telephone lines have yet to be repaired. Fresh water and food is in short supply. Rescuers continue to search for stranded, wounded or dead. Early this morning two rescuers in a boat found a 7 year old girl's body floating face down in the flood. A wet and shivering kitten was huddled on top of her.

In one of the commercial sections of town that was only partially damaged, there have been reports of looting. Law enforcement officers have been in short supply since they have been assisting with rescue attempts.

Public officials are worried because more heavy rains are expected tomorrow and the water level is predicted to rise another 9 inches. Individuals are advised to stay away from the area until further notice. The Mayor and the Governor have declared St. Petersburg a disaster area.

The Mayor called NOVA for assistance.

Case # 4: Working Group D

A fire raged through the 20-story Horizons Hotel in downtown Los Angeles early this morning. Fifty-one people died and 120 were hospitalized for burns or smoke inhalation. Occupants were alerted by fire alarms at 3:00 a.m. The hotel was fully occupied at the time because of the annual conference for the National Association for Mutual Aid. Of the 300 known lodgers, 256 were able to escape, as did 13 hotel employees. Forty-four out-of-towners and seven hotel employees were killed.

The fire started in the hotel's kitchen sometime after the hotel bar closed at 2:00 a.m. but the cause is not yet known. Those people occupying rooms on lower floors were able to exit through the lobby or leap from windows, but many suffered burns or broken limbs. One woman, covered with flames, threw herself out of the fifth floor into the swimming pool below. She was rendered unconscious on impact but was rescued from the water by a man nearby. Another woman almost died of smoke inhalation when she went back into the hotel to rescue a close friend who hadn't made it out yet. Those people on the highest floors were rescued by helicopter lifts off the roof of the building. Most of these were uninjured. Many had been enjoying a late-night party with the President of the NAMA in his suite when the alarm went off. They started to descend but were deterred by smoke when they reached the 15th floor. Helicopter rescue workers flying outside the hotel urged everyone on the top floors to go to the roof, and so they did.

Almost all individuals who were trapped and severely injured or died occupied rooms on floors, 10, 11 and 12.

The hotel employees who were killed included the hotel bartender, two cocktail waitresses, a cook, a dishwasher, and two room service waiters. The hotel was destroyed beyond repair.

NAMA is an organizational friend of NOVA so an outreach was done immediately to NAMA's headquarters. NAMA's President, Executive Committee, and Executive Director are all in Los Angeles but when they called into headquarters, they urgently requested NOVA's help.

