

Action Sheet Nr. 8: Key MHPSS¹ Aspects in General Crisis Management

Area

All event types, all target groups, all phases

Key actions

- **Appraise the threat and what it is about**

Policymakers have to make sense of the critical nature of development. They must appraise the threat and what it is about

- **Making decisions in uncertainty and high risk situations- coordinate actions**

Many decisions are not taken by individuals, but they emerge from “various loci of decision-making and coordination.” Interagency and intergovernmental coordination is crucial.

- **Provide an authoritative account of what is going on**

Authorities cannot often provide accurate information right at the outset of a crisis. However it is vital to provide an authoritative account of what is going on as soon as possible. Problems arise at these times as information comes from multiple sources.

- **Be accountable and do not engage in defensive post-crisis blaming**

Governments cannot stay in crisis forever. Shifting back from crisis to routine mode is one aspect. ‘Blame games’ often start after a crisis is over. Those in charge must be accountable for their actions and not engage in blaming others or defend themselves from attack.

- **Learn from crises and use long-term studies of impact**

Lessons are not often drawn from crisis. Long-term studies are needed to examine the impact of a crisis on society. Collective learning is very important for future crisis response.

BASED ON:

Boin, A. & t’Hart, P. (2007). The Crisis Approach. In H. Rodriguez, E. Quarantelli & R. Dynes (Eds.) Handbook of disaster research, p. 50ff. NY: Springer. Available at <http://link.springer.com/content/pdf/bfm%3A978-0-387-32353-4%2F1.pdf>

Additional resources

Bovens, M., t’Hart, P., Sander Dekker & Verheugel, G. (1999). The politics of blame avoidance: Defensive tactics in a Dutch crime-fighting fiasco. In *When things go wrong: Organisational failures and breakdowns*, ed. H. K. Anheier, 123–47. London: Sage.

Dekker, S. & Hansén, D. (2004). Learning under pressure: the effects of politicization on organisational learning in public bureaucracies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(2), 211-230.

Deverell, E. & Olsson, E.-K. (2010). Organisational culture effects on strategy and adaptability in crisis management, *Risk Management*, 12 (12), 116-134.

Deverell, E. (2009). Crises as Learning Triggers: Exploring a Conceptual Framework of Crisis-Induced Learning, *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 17 (3), 179-188.

¹ Mental health and psychosocial support

Eyre, A. & Dix, P. (2014). *Collective Conviction: The Story of Disaster Action* Paperback. Liverpool University Press.

Tools

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2007). *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*. Coordination – Establish coordination of intersectoral mental health and psychosocial support, p.33. Available at http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf

Philippine Department of Health - Health Emergency Management Staff (DOH-HEMS) & World Health Organisation - Emergency and Humanitarian Action - Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WHO-WPRO) (2012). *Pocket Emergency Tool*. Available at <http://mhpss.net/wp-content/uploads/group-documents/219/1384428965-pocketemergencytoolphilippinesdeptofhealth.pdf>

Practice examples

Council of Europe / EFPA (2010). *Lessons learned in psychosocial care after disasters*. Available at http://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/publication/Lessonslearned_psycosocial%20care%20EC_EN.pdf

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) (2001). *Psychosocial Support: Best Practices from Red Cross Red Crescent Programs*. Available at <http://helid.digicollection.org/en/d/Js2902e/>

OPSIC-Team (2014). *Practice examples*. Comprehensive Guideline OPSIC-Project – Annex.

Sahin, B, Kapucu, N, Unlu, A (2008) *Perspectives on Crisis Management in European Union Countries: United Kingdom, Spain and Germany* *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies* 1, 2008, <http://ejeps.fatih.edu.tr/docs/articles/49.pdf>, (online document)