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# Crisis Communications

Effectively Preparing For And Responding To The Unexpected



# Outcomes:

By the end of the day you will:

- Understand the need for planning for a crisis, including awareness of the contents of a crisis communications plan
- Understand how and why the media (both on and offline) react to negative stories
- Identify key stakeholders (internal and external) and create appropriate messages and recognise which media channels to use – and how and when to use them
- Understand the need for speed, accuracy and co-ordination of response both online and offline
- Gain skills and confidence in how to manage communications at the time of a crisis

# Introductions:

- Who are you?
- Any experience of a crisis?!
- What did you learn?
- What do you want to get out of today?



# Issue or crisis?

A crisis is:



*“An inherently abnormal, unstable and complex situation that represents a threat to the strategic objectives, reputation or existence of an organisation.”*

British Standards Institution

# What damage can a crisis do?

Haringey children's services criticised over the death of Baby Peter. LGA research finds:

- 60 % of councils say harder to recruit children's social workers
- One third of councils say retention has got worse
- Nearly 9 out of ten say morale affected

Oxfam aid workers sex scandal:

- Within 10 days 7,000 direct debits cancelled

## It's how you handle it:

“The intensity and ferocity of the attack makes you wonder what did we do? We murdered babies in their cots?”

Mark Goldring - CEO Oxfam

- Within 10 days 7,000 direct debits cancelled
- He stood down at the end of 2018







Who are the stakeholders?



# Exercise: who are the stakeholders?

# SERIAL KILLER LOOSE IN HOSPITAL



**By STEPHEN WHITE**  
A SERIAL killer is feared to be stalking a hospital after three patients given contaminated saline died.

Police are investigating the deaths of two men aged 84 and 71 and a woman, 64, to whom 30 vials of saline were injected with needles at Stopping Hill Hospital, Stockport. Dozens more may have been injected.

A health trust spokesman said last night "We have boosted security."

**FULL STORY: PAGE 11**

## Fears as poisoner 'tries to murder dozens'













# Take CARE:

- **C**oncern
- **A**ction
- **R**eassurance











# How do you respond?

- You are head of comms for hospital trust. A Channel 4 news reporter wants an interview about the poor state of NHS food.
- You are head of comms for a police force. There are confidential discussions about closing a police station to save money. A local reporter rings to ask what cuts you are planning to make as they know you have budget issues.
- You are head of comms for a charity. A BBC reporter has read a report about charities investing reserves in lucrative investments like tobacco companies (your charity does, as do many others) and wants someone to go on national news.
- You are head of comms at an academy trust. Your gender pay gap report is not good reading. Your CEO wants you to issue a press release to explain why.
- You are head of comms at an international charity. The finance director is due in court for fraud. Your CEO tells you to say 'no comment' to the media.





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## Possible chapter headings:

Context – what crises? Risk analysis

Audience - stakeholders

Activation of plan – when/ who?

Media channels – how you communicate

Roles and Responsibilities (who does what)

Policy and Procedures (how you do it)

## Possible appendices:

Appendix 1 Internal contacts

Appendix 2 Partner organisations' contacts

Appendix 3 Log on details

Appendix 4 Media contacts

Appendix 5 Media inquiries logsheet

Appendix 6 Draft press statements

Appendix 7 Emergency response kit







## Remember:

- A crisis can hit at any time – be prepared
- Think: who are you talking to, what are you saying, how are you saying it?
- Your reputation can depend on how you respond
- Do you need to respond? If yes – respond quickly
- Think about how you are perceived – not how you feel
- Take CARE when you respond





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# Thank you

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