



RISKRESOLVE

Critical Incident Response Management #1

Dr. Clare Dallat

"A crisis is a brutal audit of prepared plans"

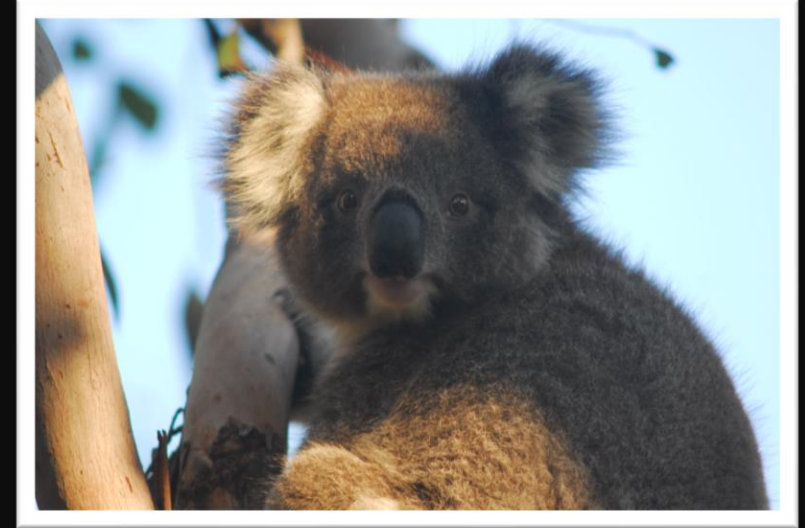
Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007

Aims of Workshop

- Provide some context into the 2019 world we are now living, and associated expectations;
- Understand what happens to us under excessive stress and share some examples of this in a critical incident management context;
- Discuss what we can do about it;
- Provide some specific strategies that you can adapt for use in your organisation;
- Participate in a scenario.

A few assumptions

- ‘What happens in Vegas...’
- The more we put in, the more we get out
- This can be a difficult topic which may trigger some past experiences.
- Please don’t be surprised if we check in with you if you need a break.
- By sharing, we’re improving how we prepare for and manage critical incidents. Please both share, and listen.





Local Rationality

No-one wakes up and says “Today is a great day to mess things up”.

Ask yourself:

Why did it make sense to do, say, think or feel that?

Definition of a Critical Incident



First things first... the benefits of planning

Organisations are better able to handle crises when they have:

1. A crisis response plan that is updated at least annually;
2. A dedicated crisis response team;
3. Conduct exercises to test plans at least annually, and
4. Pre-drafted and pre-approved crisis messaging.



Barton (2001) & Coombs (2006)

“Planning and preparation allowed teams to react faster and make more effective decisions”

(Coombs, 2007)



You're the Journo...

The first-place the public/ journalists will go in the event of a critical incident are the places you market and communicate your organisation's messages.

1. You've heard there's been a serious incident on the scanner involving xxxx School
2. Only information you have is the following....
3. You want to be the first to break the story
4. By finding out what you can about the school, design a two-sentence story and headline to present to the group

Some Examples...

“Drawing on more than 160 years of tradition and success, **we have a contemporary outlook defined by excellence** and inclusion”.

“Today we offer a broad and challenging curriculum, and a comprehensive co-curricular programme, which encourages students to develop their own identities, strengths and pathways to achievement”.

“We provide a rich learning environment that encourages academic, social, physical, emotional and spiritual growth”.

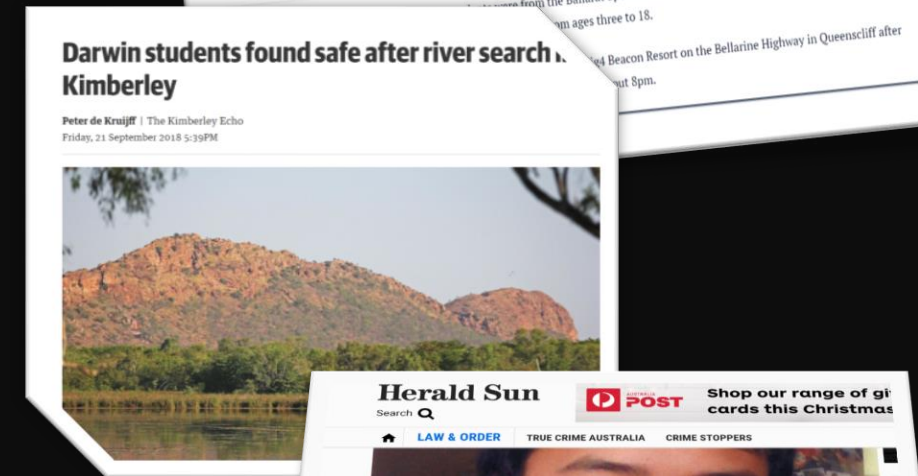
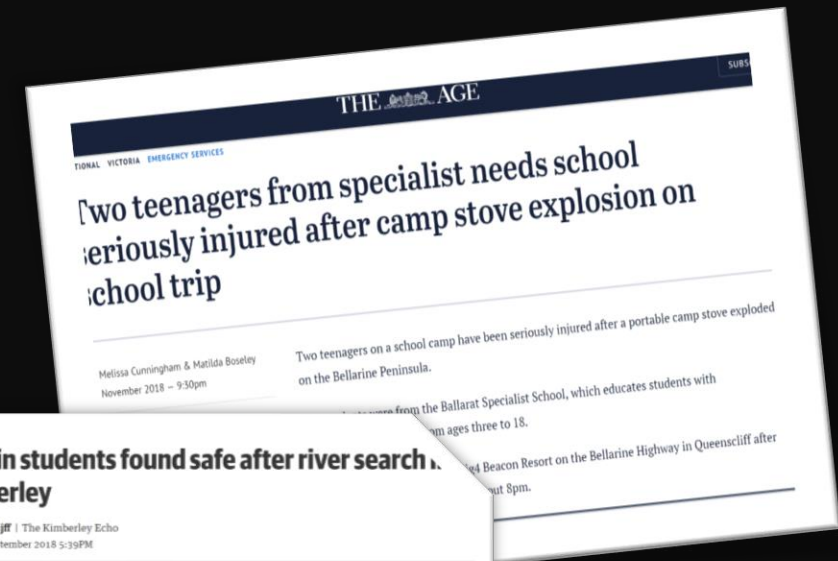
“We have tried to embody in the school’s culture, for *students, staff and parents*, a sense of community; a place where people *share high* levels of *trust* and respect for one another”.

“At xxxxx we take the view that the great majority of people want to do well with their lives and will welcome responsibility, as well as the opportunity to show leadership by making a positive difference in their own lives and in the lives of others”.

The World We Live In

- Significant media attention in wake of incidents
- Look for the blame is quick
- An effective critical incident management plan is a basic expectation
- Potential for significant reputational damage due to how an incident is handled

“A risk assessment of the swimming hole had not been completed and the school’s crisis management was lacking, Mr White said”



School camp safety needs improving after Catholic schoolboy's swimming death: Coroner

Updated 27 Oct 2014, 4:59pm

Safety guidelines for swimming and water-based school excursions need to be improved, the coroner investigating the swimming death of a Victorian Catholic schoolboy says.

Kyle Vassil, 12, died in a cold, dirty dam while at a school camp with Aquinas Secondary College near Kinglake in February 2010.

Coroner Peter White found Vassil had been swimming for four to five minutes while close to shore when he started to struggle, and two of his classmates tried to assist him.

In his 58-page report, Mr White found the boy was thinking he was suffering a



Penn State says too risky for outdoors clubs to go outside

The Associated Press

APRIL 23, 2016, 4:46 PM

A near-century-old outdoor recreation club will now refrain from going outside because it is too dangerous out in the wilderness, according to officials at Penn State University.

The Penn State Outing Club, originally founded in 1920, announced last week that the university will no longer allow the club to organize outdoor, student-led trips starting next semester. The hiking, camping and other outdoors-focused activities the student-led club has long engaged in are too risky, the university's offices of Student Affairs and Risk Management determined.

Richard Waltz, the Outing Club's current president, said that the decision was made by an office that never consulted them.

The decision was based on a two-month review that didn't include consultation with student leaders at any of the clubs deemed too risky, according to students.

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NATIONAL VICTORIA

Stranded at sea: the school camp from hell

Adventure Alternatives Education Centre

By Henrietta Cook, Education Reporter

Updated 5 May 2016 - 11:08pm, first

published at 7:51pm

A school camp turned into a

School camp deaths 'disasters in waiting'



14:43, Jan 31 2009

School camp deaths are disasters waiting to happen and could happen to anyone's kids, says the mother of a boy who drowned at a camp.

Kirstin Dufty, of Auckland, said she felt for the parents of the Elim Christian College pupils who died.

Mrs Dufty's 11-year-old son Joshua McNaught and fellow pupil Revan Naidoo died in February 2000 when they went missing while swimming with 59 other children at a river near Thames.

She says parents are failing to ask the right questions before their children go away to camp, and sign consent forms without reading them.

"Rivers are too unpredictable. There are so many other things that kids can do.

"It's not cotton-wooling our kids, it's finding out who is looking after them and who is professional."



Reaction to Extreme Pressure without a Plan

"We're sorry for the massive disruption it's caused to their lives," Hayward said.

"There's no one who wants this thing over more than I do, I'd like my life back."

Tony Hayward, former CEO, BP



First Rule of Critical Incident Response

It cannot be about you.

Critical Incident Management should *always* be centered around your customers, and what you've done, are doing, and plan to do to make things right for them.



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“As a mother of 2 young children this tragedy has made me step back and consider school opportunities my children will take part in. No, I cannot “wrap” my children up in “cotton wool”, but at the same time, I want my children to return to me after any school excursion safe and unharmed.”

(NZ Herald 23/4/08).

The Court of Public Opinion



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Coroner's Court

“....I find that no consideration was given to the crisis management, either by the school or the retreat management”

(Coroner Peter White,
27/10/14)



What is a “Crisis”?

“An unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending”
(Merriam-Webster, 2019)



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What is Crisis Management?

“The actions that are taken to deal with an emergency or difficult situation in an **organized way**”

(Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).

What is a Critical Incident Management Plan?

- A reference tool, not a blueprint.
- A CMP saves time during a crisis by:
 - Pre-assigning some tasks
 - Pre-collecting information, and
 - Serving as a reference source
- Pre-assigning tasks presumes there is a designated Critical Incident Management Team
- Plans and teams are of little value if they are never tested.

(Barton, 2001; Coombs, 2007; Fearn-Banks, 2001)

The image shows two overlapping forms from RiskResolve. The top form is the 'INCIDENT FACT GATHERING CHECKLIST' and the bottom form is the 'CRITICAL INCIDENT FIRST NOTIFICATION FORM'.

INCIDENT FACT GATHERING CHECKLIST
This document was developed by Dr Clare Dallat, Director
To prepare objectives...

CRITICAL INCIDENT FIRST NOTIFICATION FORM

Date: _____ Time of First Contact: _____
Name of Person Calling In: _____ Phone #: _____
Current Location: _____ Program Name: _____
Staff Name (s): _____

WHAT IS THE INCIDENT?

<input type="checkbox"/> Fatality	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious Illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle (Injury)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Threatening	<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle (No Injury)	<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious Injury	<input type="checkbox"/> Lost/ Missing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Near Miss	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempted Suicide	<input type="checkbox"/> Assault	

HAVE THEY CONTACTED: ☐ AMBULANCE ☐ POLICE ☐ PARENTS ☐ OTHER _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

WHEN DID THE INCIDENT OCCUR? DATE: _____ TIME: _____ am / pm

WHAT TIME ZONE?
If other, name time zone and exact difference: _____
☐ QUEENSLAND ☐ OTHER _____

Ultimate Goals of Critical Incident Management

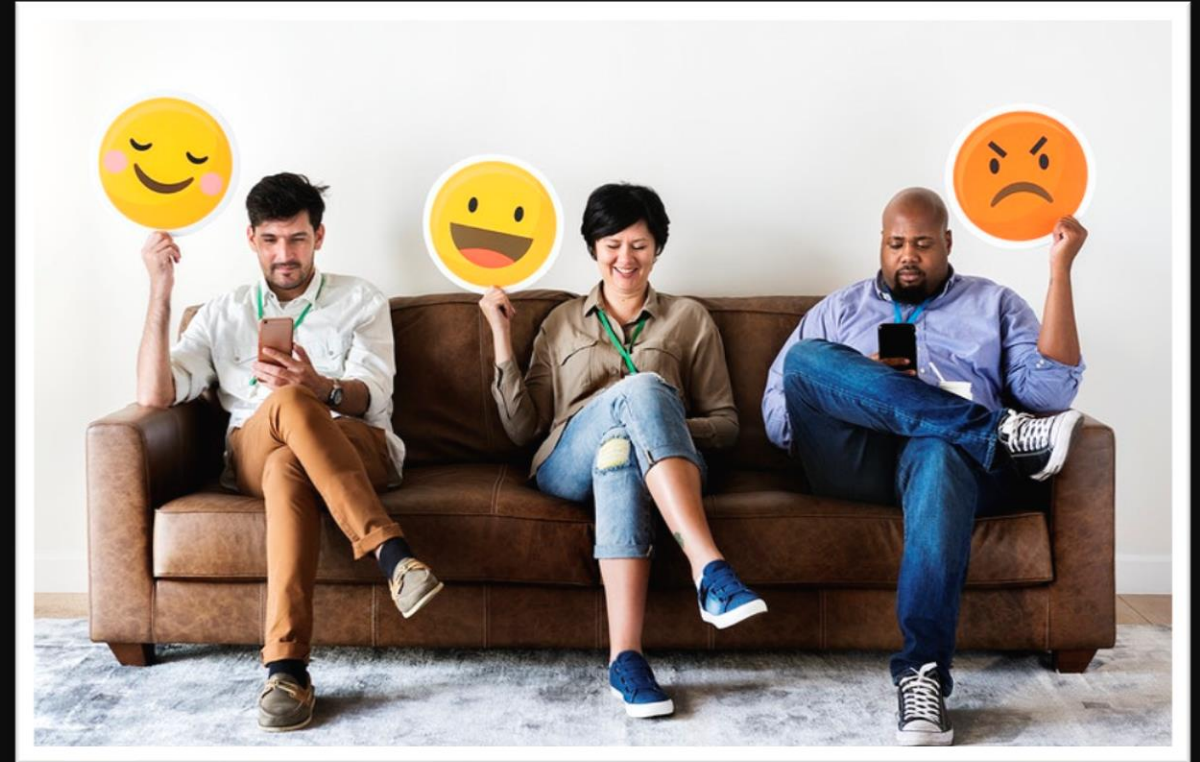
- To best support participants, staff and community (at a very difficult time);
- To keep organisation operating (at a very difficult time) and ensure it continues to do so.



Dealing with an angry public

- 'Acceptable' accidents
 - Public knowledge/understanding of 'what we do' - car accident vs. death on school programs/ excursions overseas;
- 70% already think you are hiding something before you start speaking.

(Susskind & Field 1996)



Risk Perception

Individuals respond according to their perceptions of risk, and not to an objective risk level or the scientific assessment of risk.

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Individuals respond according to their perceptions of risk, and not to an objective risk level or the scientific assessment of risk.

“Statistically speaking, there is a far greater chance of being run over by a motor boat than being eaten by a shark. The reality, though, is that no-one will ever make a movie called “Propeller” (Smith, 2005).

How the responders, respond...

- Three major types of response to a critical incident:
 - 15% cope very well – can jump into solution-focused ‘action’/leadership role;
 - 15% cope very poorly – retreat into old habits – these people should not be put in a position of leadership and;
 - 70% of us are ‘bewildered’ and looking for leadership, wherever that comes from...

(Ajango, Pers. Comm,
Leach, 1994 Survival Psychology)

Second Rule of Critical Incident Response

It will be about you if you don't plan.
Your reaction will be borne out of fear.

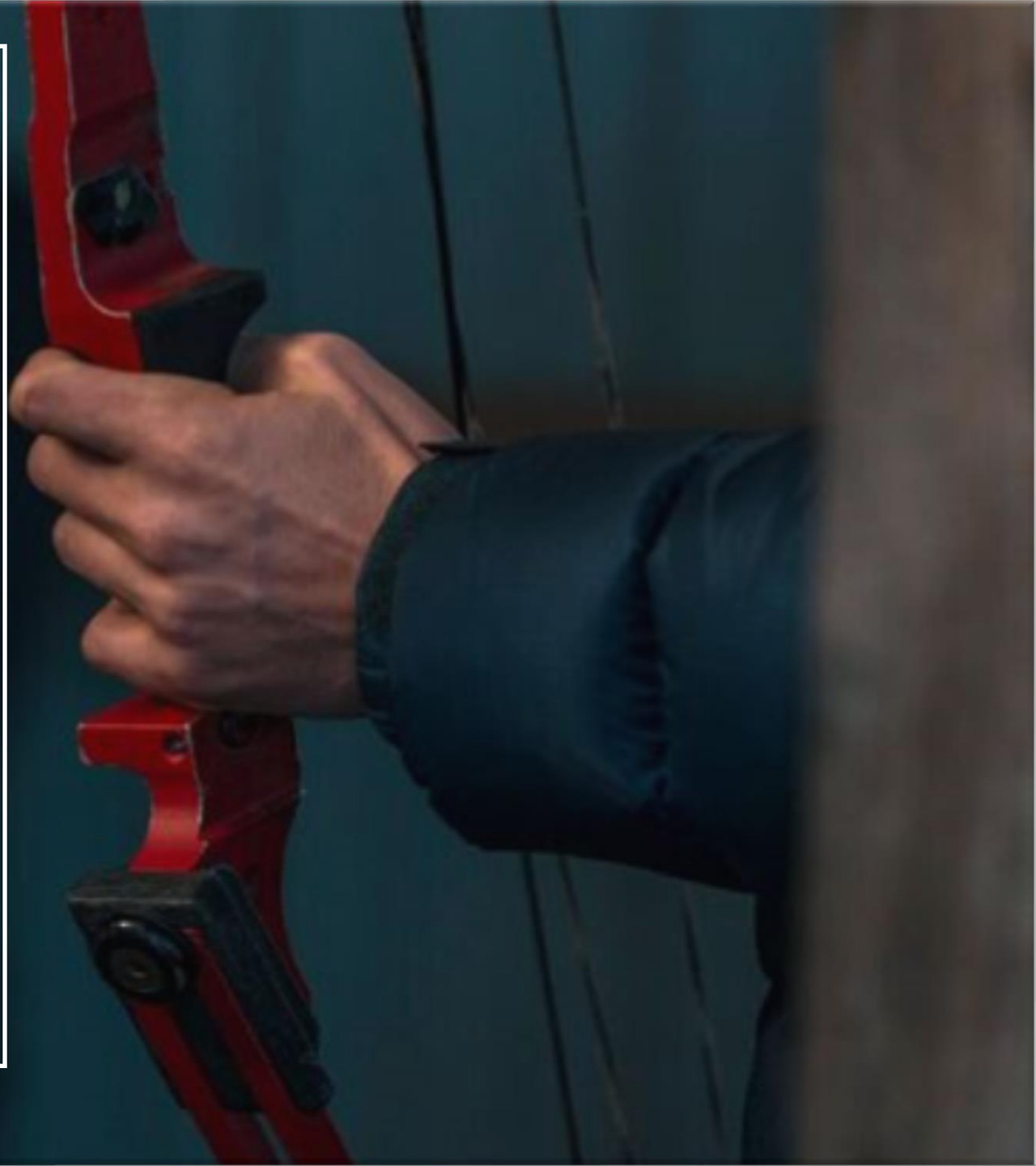
What happens to us when we are under excessive stress?

- A bodily reaction ('Fight, Flight or Freeze') is activated
- Hard wired into our brain (our limbic system) to protect us from bodily harm
- Chemicals like adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol are released into our bloodstream
- Pulse and respiratory rate increases
- The thalamus sends the information to the amygdala
- Our amygdala has taken over from the hippocampus (which helps us encode and store information in our memory)



Impact

- Blood is shunted away from our digestive tract and directed into our muscles and limbs, which require extra energy and fuel for running and fighting
- Our pupils dilate
- Our awareness intensifies
- Our sight sharpens
- Our cognitive processes are overridden at this point
- Our emotional and physical reactions are scattered and do not make sense at this point.





Ultimate Impact

- Our rational mind is bypassed, where our more well-thought out beliefs exist
- Almost everything is perceived as a threat to our survival
- We may overreact to the slightest comment
- Our fear is exaggerated
- Our thinking is distorted

Impact on Critical Incident Management

- We see everything through the filter of possible danger
- We narrow our focus to those things that can harm us
- Fear becomes the lens through which we see the world

*"The accident did not occur as a **result of anything me, or my staff did.** It was just a bad accident. We've been doing this for over twenty years and we'll keep doing it".*

What does this look like in high-stress situations?

- People gather 'stuff'
- People have a need to be with others
- People mill, touch, check in with those around them
- People return to low stress behaviours – e.g. habit
- People seek information; if they don't get it, they check in with others, start rumours etc
- People become vulnerable and open to suggestions



How then, do we manage this?

- Knowledge and Practice!
- Imagining or simulating stressful scenarios can actually give you the mental confidence and agility to confront and survive them (Coombs, 2007)
- Simulation of high-stress situations, meditation and even positive self-affirmation serve as important brain nutrients
- Research suggests that if we mimic even a little of the types of situations we may encounter, that's enough to get us accustomed in a real crisis



Possible Components of an LOA Critical Incident Response Plan

- All Hours Contact
- Incident Commander
- Family Liaison
- Media / Communication (Internal/External)
- Operations
- Documentation



Components of OEG's Critical Incident Response Plan

All Hours Contact

Incident Commander

Family Liaison

Media/Communications (Internal/External)

Operations

Documentation

A scenic landscape featuring a calm river in the foreground, reflecting the surrounding greenery. A line of trees stands on the opposite bank, with a large, sunlit hill rising in the background. The sky is clear and blue, with a bright light source creating a lens flare effect. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and list.

All Hours Contact (AHC)

- Enact Critical Incident Response Plan
- Contact person to the field
- Contact school/organisation AHC (If relevant)
 - Information transfer
 - Initial contact with outside authorities
- Accurate documentation

Incident Commander

- To oversee incident response
- Lead sub teams
- Assign roles
- Approve and distribute most current information
- Inform board



Communications

- Coordinate all aspects of media
 - Regular updated information
 - Media area
 - Spokesperson
- Internal communications
- Ensuring accuracy & professional approach
- Accurate documentation



Operations

- Organise necessary resources
 - Transport, communications, people
- Liaise with outside authorities
- Accurate documentation



Family Relations

- Maintain ongoing relations with family
- Act as liaison if necessary
- Single point of contact
- Ease of reaching



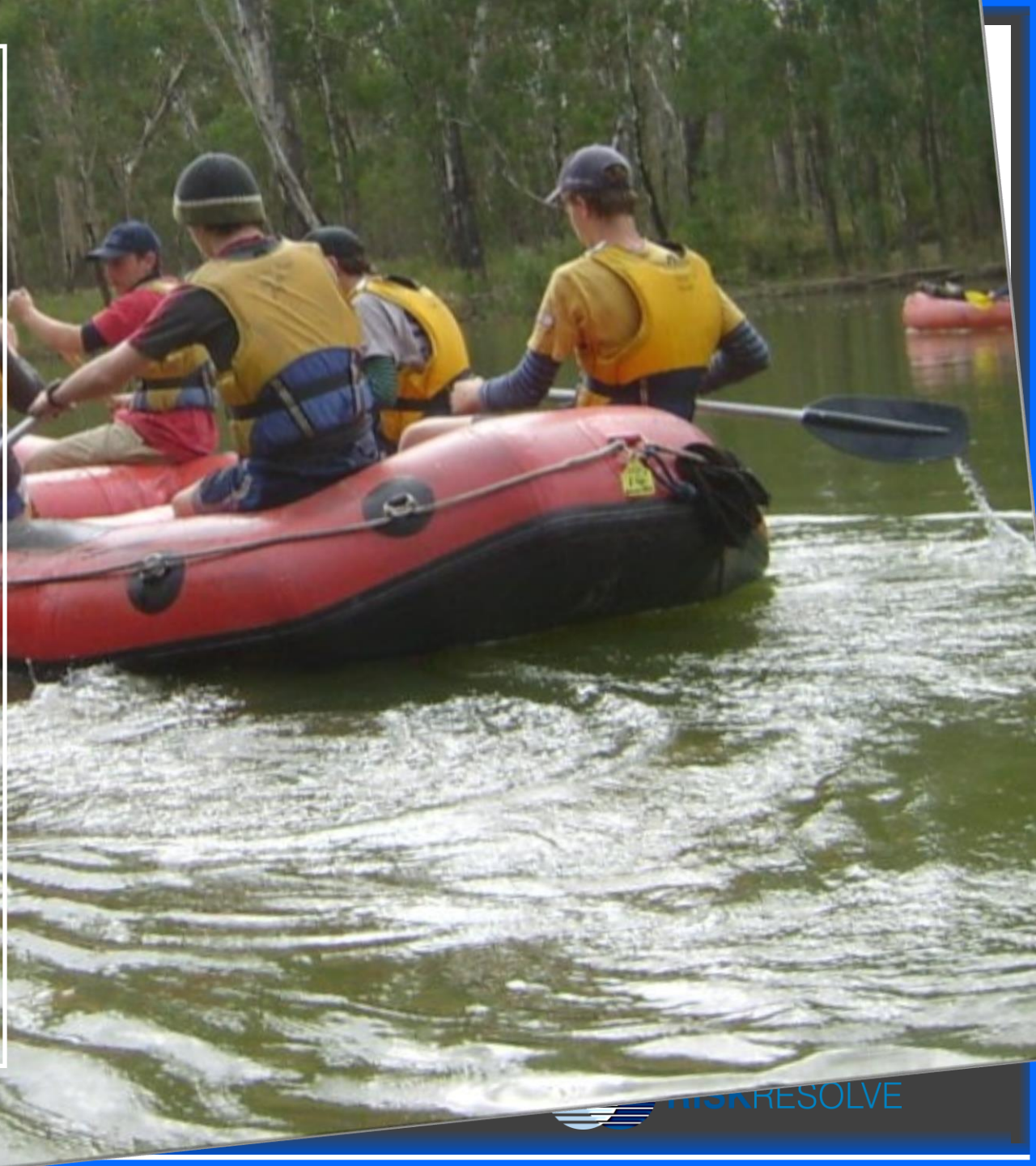
Documentation

- Gather & evaluate incoming information
- Ensure documentation is complete and legible
- Filing
- Monitor external documentation (media)



When is Crisis Response Over?

- Initially twofold
 - Immediate needs of all involved have been addressed
 - Counselling
 - Upcoming programs/business?
 - Incident review has occurred (external and/or internal)
- Ongoing needs of all involved are addressed



- Importance of receptionist
- Social media – students, parents, media
- Early public expression of concern is paramount (Dean, 2004)
- Plans and people date very rapidly
- Sharepoint or other cloud applications
- Partnerships are king – needs to be seen to be a united front
- Single points of communication
- Have media statements pre – outlined
- You have to make it about those affected
- Preparing for press conferences – Don't learn this during a critical incident
- Mass communication
- Website updates – IT support
- Phone messages recorded and updated

**Some key
learnings...**



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- Crisis media consultants
- Multiple groups
- An external team around you – advice and support
- Other participants returning to school/home
- Other programs you may have out
- Informing next of kin - accompany police
- Staff members involved and their next of kin (Argenti, 2017)
- Private meeting rooms & office space
- Planning for a 'marathon', not a 'sprint'
- Attending to wishes of next of kin
- Staff attrition/ long term emotional impact at all levels
- Ongoing relations with family
- External authorities and investigations (e.g. Worksafe)
- Birthdays, holidays and anniversaries

**Learnings
continued...**



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Plan 0: Do 1, then do 2,
then 3, then 4, then EXIT.

0. Conduct optimal Critical Incident management

Plan 1: Do 1.1 then
do 1.2, then 1.3,
then 1.4, then 1.5,
then 1.6 and 1.7 in
any order, then
EXIT

1. Plan Pre-Critical Incident Mgmt Phase

2. Deliver effective CI Mgmt during early crisis phase

3. Conduct effective CI response

4. Conduct effective post CI phase

1.1 Create CI Management Plan (definition)

1.2 Get buy-in from Org Leadership

1.3 Select CI Management Team

1.4 Train CI Team in CI Plan

1.5 Train CI Team in Media Skills

1.6 Conduct regular CI system testing

1.7 Review and update plan annually

Plan 2: Do 2.1 then 2.2, then 2.3, then 2.4, then 2.5. Do 2.6 and 2.7 in any order. Then do 2.8, then 2.9, then 2.10, then EXIT

2.1 Receive notification of incident

2.2 Determine incident is a CI

2.3 Capture key info on First Notification Template

2.4 Activate CI Plan

2.5 Notify CI Team

2.6 Activate receptionist role

2.7 Assemble CI team

2.8 Disseminate CI Task Folders

2.9 Confirm IT support

2.10 Commence CI task lists

3.1 Conduct check-ins every 30 mins to coordinate information

3.2 Communicate quickly, accurately, consistently with all stakeholders

3.3 Work in unison with partner school/organisation (if relevant)

3.4 Maintain single, accessible point of contact with NOK family

3.5 Ensure organisation representation at site/ hospital/ other location

Plan 3: Do 3.1 and 3.2, then do 3.3 to 3.14 in any order, then EXIT.

3.6 Plan for media access to site/ organisation/ school

3.7 Ensure all information released is current

3.8 Keep hydrated/ well nourished

3.9 Consider all employees wellbeing

3.10 Monitor media sources

3.11 Leadership to constantly evaluate response

3.12 Consider calling on external support (industry, media support, other)

3.13 Patients and their NOK must always be primary focus.

3.14 Inform legal/ insurance/ Work Health and Safety Authorities as per task lists

4.1 Deliver all promised info to all stakeholders

4.2 Consistently communicate to NOK/ patient/ partner orgs with incident investigation actions

4.3 Ensure ongoing peer and professional support to employees

4.4 Analyse the CI response for opportunities for improvement

Plan 4: Do 4.1 and 4.2, then do 4.3 to 4.4. in any order, then EXIT.


Scenario

- Goal of today is about testing the system, not the person
- It is a scenario but planned to make it as 'real' as possible
- Some specifics;
 - "Stop" word
 - Observers
 - Play it out – don't get caught in the 'scenario' trap



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Thank You!

Dr. Clare Dallat 



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