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JOHNS HOPKINS
Center For Public Health Preparedness

Improving Understanding and Collaboration among First Responders

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Part One of Four

Training Module Framework

How Will this Differ from What I've Already Seen?

- After 9/11, state, local, and federal authorities flooded first responders with training materials
- Most of this training material suffers from one or both of the following problems:
  - The training ignores the individual cultures associated with each responder group
  - Training materials tailored to one responder group almost never mention how other groups respond to the same situation, which can produce confusion and chaos in an already-turbulent crisis situation
- Unlike other training products, this training will describe the cultures of the various responder groups and will teach how each group responds in a crisis situation

What Is an Institutional "Culture"?

- Institutional culture:
  - Explains **why** individual members of a group do what they do
  - Explains what drives and motivates them to put themselves at risk to serve the public good and save lives
  - Explains how they approach problem solving and crisis management
- The responder groups have very different cultural mandates, goals, priorities, but they also share similarities
  - Working in crisis situations demands both understanding the differences and appreciating the similarities

The Five Responder Groups

- This training focuses on five "groups" of responders:
  - EMS
  - Law enforcement
  - Fire
  - Public health
  - Private security
- Please note that differences exist within each group
- For example:
  - Law enforcement in small counties differs from big cities
  - Providing private security for shopping malls differs from doing the same for university laboratories
  - The fire service has both volunteer and career members

Defining the Different Cultures: EMS

- When dealing with a crisis event, the culture of EMS can best be summarized by the following characteristics:
  - Prioritization of individual injuries in order to save the majority, even if it means not treating an individual deemed too critical to save
  - Will take a calculated risk based on their assessment of the scene at the time of arrival

Defining the Different Cultures: Law Enforcement

- When dealing with a crisis event, the culture of law enforcement agents can best be summarized by the following characteristics:
  - Law enforcement's response is based on brief information at the time of the call; every call is an unknown
  - Response time is paramount and enforcement agents feel a sense of pride on being first on the scene and knowing the territory first hand
  - The first to arrive serves as an assessor of the situation and establishes whether the event is a police matter
  - Priority is given to controlling access to the scene and securing perimeters

Defining the Different Cultures: Fire Department

- When dealing with a crisis event, the culture of fire service personnel can best be summarized by the following characteristics:
  - Overwhelming need to do something
  - The response is pre-planned when possible
  - Situation cannot be allowed to worsen after a fire service person arrives at the scene
    - Otherwise it is perceived as a failure to manage
    - Therefore the response must be overwhelming in order to ensure containment
  - The scene is constantly assessed in order to verify that sufficient and adequate resources are available
  - Update action plan

Defining the Different Cultures: Public Health

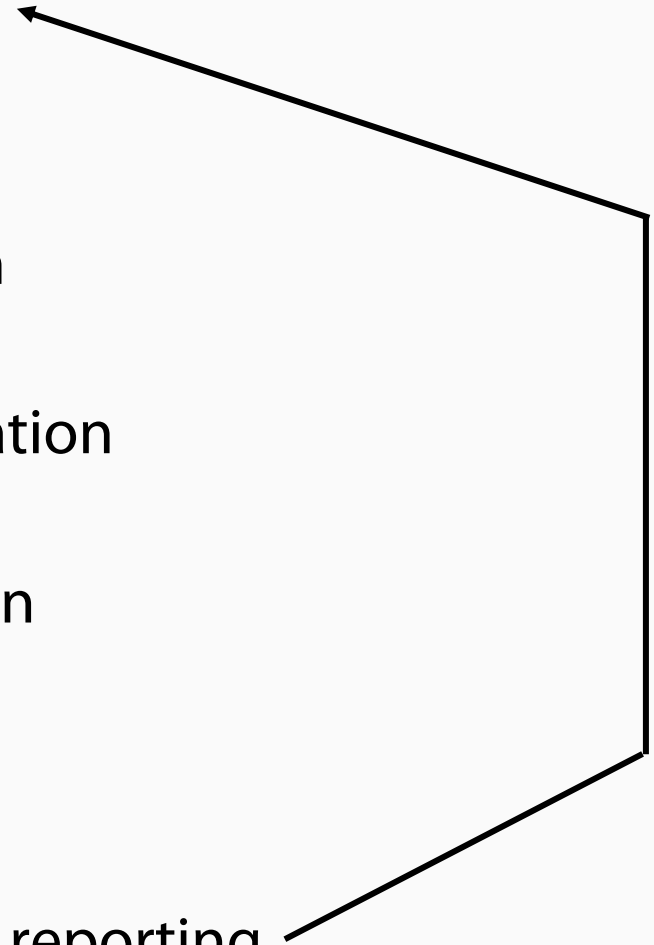
- When dealing with a crisis event, the culture of public health officials can best be summarized by the following characteristics:
  - Must have data to determine event and response
  - A need to understand the nature of the risk to those impacted by the event and those otherwise exposed
  - A need to identify and mitigate ongoing exposure to risk
  - A need to provide timely information and communicate the risk appropriately
  - A need to identify and locate those affected by the incident

Defining the Different Cultures: Private Security

- When dealing with a crisis event, the culture of private security agents can best be summarized by the following characteristics:
  - Know who to call and the specifics relevant to a particular scene (intelligence), such as access to equipment and mechanical specifics of area/building
  - Willing to assist first responders (need to be recognized as a resource)
  - 80% of all protective services in the United States are private security

Definitions: Stages of an Event

- Pre-event
  - Education
  - Prevention
  - Recognition
- Event
  - Communication
  - Response
  - Coordination
  - Mitigation
- Post-event
  - Clean-up
  - After action reporting



Application of Lessons Learned