

Hurricane Harvey—Aon Resilience Tips for People Located in Affected Areas

The key to addressing a major crisis isn't just mounting an effective response; it's mounting that response while simultaneously dealing with the psychological impact of being shocked by an inconceivable event of staggering proportions.

Prepare for the Impact—know what to expect and how to counteract it

- *Expect* to feel shock, fear, panic, disbelief, anger, overwhelmed
- *Expect* that emergency response and a solution to the problem(s) will be two distinctly different components of effective crisis response
- *Expect* challenges with problem-solving:
 - Oftentimes, no solution exists—must be created
 - Multiple problems likely to appear simultaneously
 - Underlying problem not always obvious—may have to search to find true cause
 - Size/scope of the problem(s) not always easy to immediately understand
- Solutions may not work and/or more than one solution may be needed
- Scale of scenario may initially appear overwhelming due to its inconceivable nature, particularly if no known solution is available yet
- Do not underestimate the fear factor associated with a problem with no solution
- *Expect* that things may get worse before they get better (event arc)
- *Expect* that it will be difficult to make decisions, and difficult to know what the best decision is
- *Expect* that plans may fail

Strategies to Counteract

Use Survivor Psychology to counteract shock factor

Use Aon's seven C's in evaluating every decision as crisis unfolds

Follow Aon's tips for situation analysis and decisionmaking

Know how to react if plans fail

Use Survivor Psychology to Counteract Shock Factor

What is Survivor Psychology?

Research has shown that survivors of disasters typically exhibit one or more of these characteristics:

- **Employ active passiveness**—take a pause and evaluate the situation
- **See what's really there**—not what they expect to see
- **Are open to possibilities**—willing to consider solutions that might have been ruled out before
- **Are confident** they will find a solution
- **Are persistent**—they do not give up

How to use survivor psychology to counteract shock factor in a crisis

- Test and question assumptions to get the full picture; don't assume anything
- Take emotion out of the equation by doing the following:
 - Focus on accurate, factual, objective data—numbers don't lie
 - Expand access to external resources where possible
- Be creative with problem solving (think MacGyver or Apollo 13)
- Break situation down into manageable components for tactical response, but retain perspective of whole
- Own the responsibility for choices
- Be confident that you will find a solution—be relentlessly persistent

Seven C's of Crisis Management Response

Keep these seven factors in mind for each decision

- **Candor**—be candid at all times
- **Creative**—think outside the box
- **Code of Conduct**—stay true to core principles
- **Competence**—keep basic things going at the same time you're fighting the crisis and trying to problem solve
- **Confidence**
- **Compassion**
- **Coordination**—need to communicate and work as a team

Situation Analysis and Decision-Making Tips

Situation Analysis—need to keep asking these things every decision cycle

- What has changed?
- What is happening now?
- What is changing now?
- So what?
- What if?
- What could / might happen?
- Should we change our approach?
- Do we need to re-brief?
- Is the approach clearly understood?

Decision-Making Tips in a crisis

- **Compress your decision cycle**—Cycle through Situation Analysis every 6-12 hours; more or less frequently as necessary
- **It is likely you'll be making decisions with incomplete and/or inaccurate information**—stay true to seven C's as directional compass
- **Maintain situational awareness**—figure out how you're going to monitor, what you'll monitor, and how you'll tell if things are changing

Know How to React if Plans Fail

Depart from a plan when it fails

- When is it time to jettison part or all of a failed plan?
- How to depart?
- Who leads?

Adapt and improvise

- 3 different ways to improvise: replicate what was destroyed; adapt by modifying what isn't working; create from scratch (again, think MacGyver and Apollo 13)
- Who leads?

Returning to the plan

- When is it time to return to the plan?
- Who leads?

Sources

Aon's Black Swan whitepaper: "[Keys to Success in Managing a Black Swan Event](#)"

Aon's Presentation "When the Worst Happens—How to Prepare and Respond"