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# COVID-19 Emergency Planning and Financial Liquidity

Presentation by Jo Parker

# The purpose of this presentation

- Help you prepare for issues you may meet with Covid 19
- Give you skills you can use for other emergency or unplanned situations
- Help you to use your experiences to:
  - Manage day to day activities better
  - Develop case study of good practice to help get donors 'on side'
  - Prepare you for 'learning by doing'
- Help you prepare an Emergency Response Plan and budget for funding agencies
- **Rockblue has been working with African water utilities to help them prepare Emergency Response Plans and can supply sample documentation**

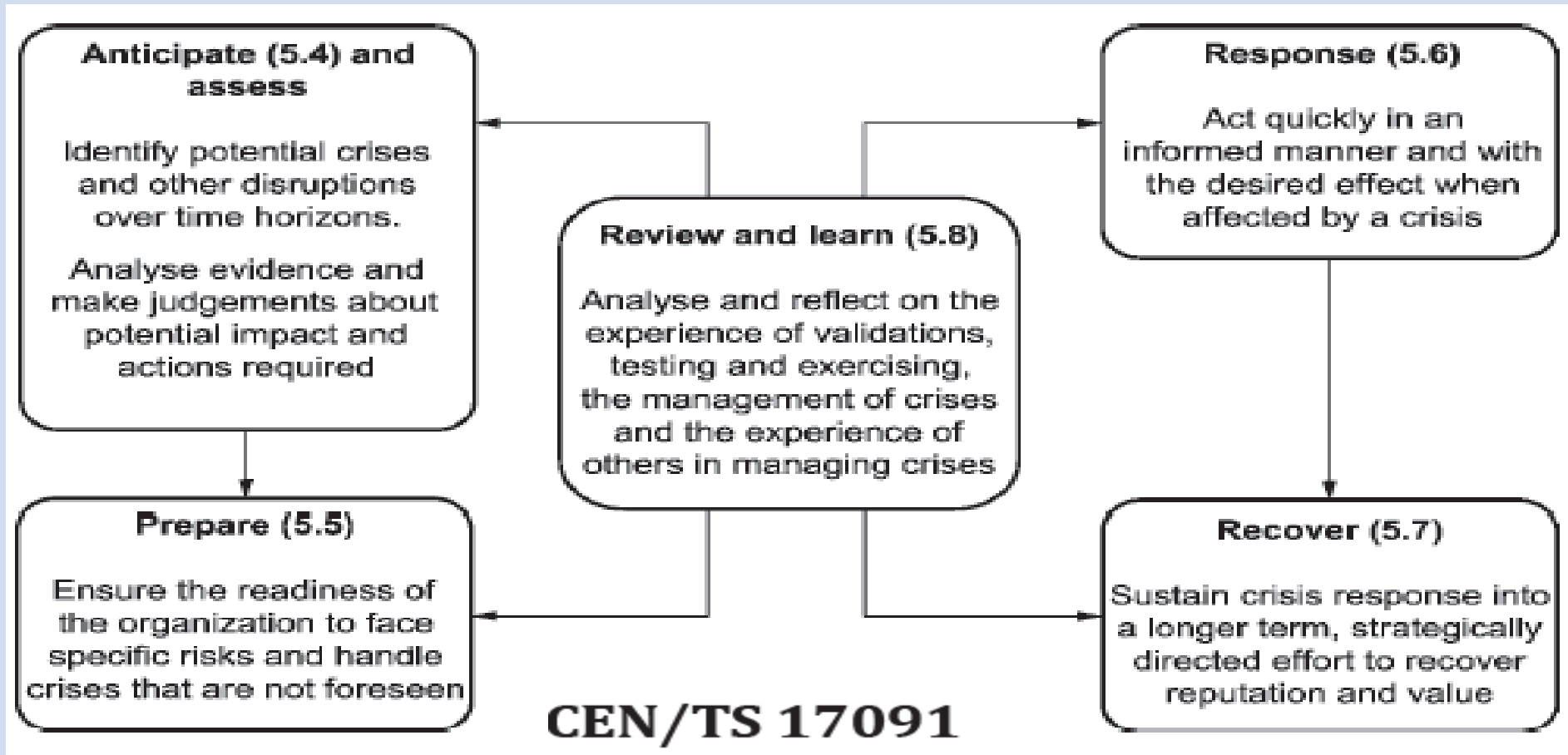


# What is the Difference?

- Emergency Planning
- Focuses on the risks and what you will do in response
- Business Continuity
  - Focuses on the business and what are the critical parts of the business
- This presentation will cover both as you need both!



# A framework for Crisis Management



Source: BSI – Crisis Management – Guidance for developing a strategic capability



# Five Key Steps - 1

- Anticipate and assess
  - Normally this would include identification of potential risks and their impact
  - Here we'll focus on Covid 19
  - Use any time before the major outbreak to
    - Collate information- develop fact sheets, credibility
    - Identify impacts
    - Establish contacts and communication lines
    - Prepare and be proactive
- Preparedness
  - What can you do in advance of the main impact?
    - Briefing staff, collecting equipment, developing plans
  - Write everything down – emergency plan



# Five Key Steps - 2

- Response
  - Identify when to implement the plan – ‘triggers’
  - Implement the plan
  - Monitor the situation and respond
    - Uncertainty, exacerbation, future scenarios
  - What can you do to minimise the impact?
- Recovery
  - There will be an end to this – need to recognise that.
  - Identify triggers to allow de-escalation
  - How can you return to ‘normal’ as quickly as possible?
- Review
  - Learn from this experience and apply to other risks afterwards



# Anticipate & Assess Possible Impacts of Covid 19 - staff

- Need to minimise risk of infection to all staff
- Key workers sick
- Some workers will work from home
- Key workers isolated
  - Caring for family
  - Government rules
  - Lack of transport
- Remaining staff over worked/over tired



# Other impacts

- Need to minimise risk to customers
- Problems with key supplies (even more!)
- Problems with customer payments
  - Cash can bring contamination
  - Reading meters
  - Customers able to pay
  - Commercial customers
- Changes in demand patterns
- Shortages of water
- .....





# Minimising Risk to staff

- Education, information and communication critical
- Generally water is a key activity – work needs to continue
- Even if on lockdown/home working now, think about when offices open
- Work procedures to minimise proximity
  - Keep customers at a distance e.g. Bill payments
  - Working from home
  - Split up teams so working singly
  - Move desks/provide barriers/movement
  - General education and staff bulletins
- Hand washing facilities – water and soap
- PPE
  - Explain importance and when it makes no difference!
  - Water is PPE



# Minimising risk to staff – outside work

- Working from home
  - Can their productivity be maintained?
  - How will you measure their outputs?
  - How will you motivate them?
  - How will you keep in touch and communicate?
- Transport to and from work
- Think about their families as well
  - Self isolation
  - High risk occupations
  - Shopping



# Key workers sick or isolated

- Identify critical activities
  - What MUST be done
    - Water treatment operation? Pumping?
  - Can anything be deferred? What is the impact?
    - Meter reading? Cleaning or maintenance?
    - Construction/repairs?
- Identify critical workers
  - How do you normally cover for them?
  - Skills
  - Knowledge
    - How much is written down? Document NOW
    - An opportunity to write/update manuals/SOPs



# How will you cover for critical staff?

- Can the supervisors/managers do the work?
  - Will their skills need refreshing?
- Can other staff be trained in some tasks?
- Can contractors do the work?
- Make a table
  - key roles
  - who currently does it
  - Who else could do it
  - Training or documentation required to cover
- Whatever actions can be taken, do them NOW whilst the key workers are still here



# Staff welfare

- Ensure staff don't get over tired
  - Relief at all levels (including for yourselves!)
- Temporary accommodation
  - Minimise transport
  - Minimise contact with possibly infected friends and family
  - Ensure regular meals (shopping puts people at risk)



# Other risks

- Ensure customers can pay without risking themselves or staff
  - Bank transfers
  - Card payments
  - Some sub-contractors offer this service
- Check with suppliers
  - What are they doing?
  - Can you help them prepare?
  - Energy supplies may be problematic
- What contingency plans can you make?
  - Alternative supplies e.g. Bleaching powder instead of chlorine
  - Collect rather than have goods delivered (or vice versa)
- Cash flow – what happens if customers can't pay?



# Help minimise general rates of infection

- Special customer communication
  - Importance of hygiene and hand washing
  - Not just water – soap as well
  - Not just people – anything they touch – food, clothes etc.
- Locations where water availability an issue
  - Bowsers
  - Water tanks
  - Any temporary water container



# Document the plan

- Write down all the contingency measures
  - Don't over complicate things
  - Don't over manage
- Communicate to all staff
- Reassurance rather than alarmist
- Define lines of management
  - With and without staff missing
- Define methods and responsibilities of communication during the incident
  - Decision makers, specialists, politicians, crisis team, staff, customers, suppliers, media, incident logs
- What will it cost?
  - Go through requirements – explain assumptions
  - Stick to essentials
  - Think about time constraints





# Documents to prepare in advance:

The following tools and templates can support the crisis management plan:

- a) identification of current and potential new sources of relevant information;
- b) aides-memoire, standard agendas, and checklists of key decision points and required actions;
- c) defined roles and responsibilities;
- d) draft holding statements;
- e) guidance for call takers and switchboards;
- f) up-to-date fact sheets and press kits;
- g) a list of items necessary for a practical response;
- h) tools and systems to help manage social media monitoring and engagement;
- i) a list of interested parties and a management matrix;
- j) 24/7 contact information for resources, including spokespeople; and
- k) locations for press conferences.

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Source: BSI – Crisis Management – Guidance for developing a strategic capability



# Communication

- Communication is critical
- Don't over complicate and don't over report
- Identify who manages different communication to different groups
  - Key messages
- Identify best forms of communication
  - Minimise contact e.g. Zoom meetings/Whatsapp
  - What to do if key communication channels lost
  - Different stakeholders, different messages
    - E.g. staff, customers and decision makers
- Two way
  - Trust operational staff - allow them to do their job
  - Managers may not always hold the solutions!



# Implement the plan

- Keep calm & address problems as they arise
- Identify an overall incident manager and team
- Identify an overall incident document controller
- Hold regular briefings to assess the situation
  - Decide on a regular time and day for briefings
  - Adjust frequency according to how quickly things change
  - Better to have frequent short check-ins than risk leaving someone unsupported
- Assume the incident is likely to run for some time – UK started lockdown nearly 4 months ago
- You won't get everything right – accept that and learn



# Update the plan as and when you can

- Unidentified impacts
- Changes in government policies
- Improved ways of handling issues
- Mistakes
  - people will make them
  - this is not about blame
  - Make it an opportunity to learn
- If necessary ask all to keep a note of what they'd do differently
  - Collate these afterwards when to time to review



# When the incident is over

- Identify a point in advance when emergency procedures can be terminated – trigger point
- Ensure all staff aware that it's back to business as normal
- Say thank you to all those who deserve it
- Have a management brain storm
  - What went well
  - Even better if.....
- Ensure all lessons learned are captured
- Write up the incident as a report



# Make use of the learning

- Use the report/learning points
  - Identify better ways of working for the future
  - To improve emergency planning and business continuity for the future
  - Demonstrate your ability to manage under difficult circumstances
    - to decision makers
    - to potential donors
  - Build team spirit



**Thank you and good luck**



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**Q&A**



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