Expecting the Unexpected
Lessons learned from a catastrophic experience
Suzanne Murphy MSN, RN, NEA-BC
Dawn Nichols MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Objectives
After attending this presentation, the conference participant will be to describe leadership behaviors crucial to managing a catastrophic event.

Disclosure
• No conflict of interests
• No disclosures
Texas Health Resources

Texas Health Resources is one of the largest faith-based, nonprofit health care delivery systems in the United States and the largest in North Texas in terms of patients served. THR is a system of 14 hospitals and a medical research organization. THR is a corporate member or partner in six additional hospitals and surgery centers.

Texas Health Presbyterian Dallas

THD is a 898-bed acute-care hospital treating some of the most complicated cases in North Texas. We are a Center of Excellence for many service lines. Texas Health Dallas is recognized as a Magnet Hospital and Baby Friendly USA. Together with our 75 OB’s and 90 pediatricians we deliver over 5500 babies a year.

Texas Health Plano

THP is a recognized clinical program leader, a Magnet Hospital, & Baby Friendly USA. Key services offered include orthopedics, cardiovascular, oncology, pediatrics and women’s services. The 368-bed facility has more than 1,600 employees and a medical staff of 1,200 physicians.
Catastrophe

*Catastrophe* comes from a Greek word meaning "overturn." It originally referred to the disastrous finish of a drama, usually a tragedy. The definition was extended to mean "any sudden disaster" in the 1700s. Nowadays, *catastrophe* can be used to refer to very tragic events as well as more minor ones.

History of Catastrophic Events

- Bubonic Plague 542
- Galveston Flood 1900
- Titanic 1912
- Chernobyl 1986
- 9/11/2001
- Hurricane Katrina 2005 & Hurricane Sandy 2012
- Joplin Tornado 2011
- Mass shootings in public places

Titanic 1912

- False sense of security,
- Minimal focus on safety — only about 1/3 the number of lifeboats as total capacity
- Breakdowns in wireless communication
- Caused major changes in regulations and new safety measures
- Changes in wireless communication
St. John’s Joplin 2011

“You are never as prepared as you think you are.”

Washington University emergency medicine deployed physicians, nurses and two trucks with pharmaceuticals to Joplin to help in treating patients as part of an agreement between the school and Missouri-DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Team).

Our Experience

• October 2014
• Disruption of operations
• Media
• Resources
• Fear and Uncertainty

Biggest Lesson

“Comfortable assumptions about preparedness crumble to dust in the presence of real time emergency. Some scenarios can’t really be understood until they have been endured.”
Action Orientation

- Creates a culture where collaboration is expected
- Acts with confidence to achieve goals within and outside area of responsibility

Sound Decision Making

- Makes effective decisions without delay
- Demonstrates awareness of how decisions impact other parts of the organization
- Solicits and acts on available data from diverse resources
Focus on Excellence

• Creates a culture of learning and continuous improvement
• Uses customer feedback to improve customer experience

Managerial Courage

• Operates effectively in a changing environment.
• Works to resolve conflicts while maintaining a collaborative environment.
• Uses adversity as an opportunity to drive innovation and change
Values-Based Leadership

- Makes decisions that build trust among and encourages commitment from employees and customers
- Consistently demonstrates respect for the diversity in the community served

Values of THR

- Respect
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Excellence
Visionary Thinking

- Considers and incorporates different perspectives when making decisions
- Communicates a positive vision and inspires the team eliciting their commitment to achieving the vision

Where We Are Today

- Leadership shapes the future of working as a team
- Harmonize rather than compete
- Transformational improvements
- New Partnerships
- Community trust

High Reliability Organization

- High quality experience every time every place
- Leaders shape the culture by building and reinforcing accountability for expectations
- Reliability/Safety Briefings
- Safety stories
Questions

References

• Battles, James B. *Disaster Prevention: Lessons Learned From The Titanic*. BUMC Proceedings, 2001;14:150-153
• [https://texashealth.org/ebola](https://texashealth.org/ebola)