

## Leadership in Times of Crisis: Christ's Call to Competent Compassion

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Services



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## The Calling to Compassion

- There is no greater honor....there is no greater responsibility...than to be there for someone on the worst day of their life



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## God Equips Those He Calls

*The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.*

Isaiah 50:4



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### God Equips Those He Calls

- Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles...with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)
- Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. (John 14:27)



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### When All Eyes Are on You



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- Crises do not leave you the same.
- Crises make you more of what you already were.
- Crises magnify small weaknesses.
- Lead your 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders.



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## Leadership Pivot Points

High Impact.

High Visibility.

Geraldo (or You Know Who) shows up at your office.



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## Do the Right Thing and It's Good for Business

**COSTS**

- A faith crisis
- A promise breach
- Attrition: Staff, customers, donors, students and parishioners
- Lowered morale
- Reduced productivity
- Workers Comp and disability claims
- Law suits
- Reputational damage



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## Back to Work/School/Church

There is no business recovery without people who:

- Are **healthy** enough to return to work and be productive
- Are assured enough of their **safety** to not feel afraid to return to work
- Have had their **trust** in the **leadership** established so that they desire to return to work
- Have had their **loyalty rewarded** so they remain employees over the short haul and the long

Marsh Crisis Academy



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### Fight. Flight. Freeze. Focus



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### A Fragmented Community

**Isolate from others**

The lack of control experienced in the tragedy leads people to pull away from others in distrust.



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### The Value of Community

September 11, 2001      February 22, 1980



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## Why?





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## WHY?

### Impact of the Existential Amygdala





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## Finding Meaning

“...the degree to which people can ultimately come to an understanding of such events in the early aftermath may help restore a sense of security and hasten the process of adaptation.”

— Updegraff, Silver, and Holman (2008)







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## Shattered World View

Many trauma survivors struggle with challenges to sense of meaning and justice in the face of shattered assumptions about prevailing justice in the world due to the way in which they were either exposed to traumatic events **or treated during the post-traumatic aftermath.**

• Hobfoll, Watson, et.al., 2007



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## Self-View Predicts Resilience



- Beloved Child of God vs. Evolutionary Fluke.
- Wrong place. Wrong Time vs. They picked me because I'm weak.
- Whew! Grateful to be alive vs. This kind of stuff always happens to me.
- Normal reaction to an abnormal event vs. I'm a weak wimp.



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### My View of My Organization Predicts Resilience



- We are the Hokies vs. We are the Victims
- This organization cares about me vs. I'm just a number.
- My leader knows his stuff vs. My leader is clueless.
- I am part of the Body of Christ vs. I die.....alone.



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### Boston Strong Resilience



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### Organizational Efficacy - Summary

- People bounce back when they view their organization and their leadership as:
  - Competent
  - Compassionate
- How people are treated following a crisis can be more powerful than the crisis itself.
- People bounce back when they believe they have the resources to do so. An expectation of recovery helps people recover. Faith!



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### Anticipate Resilience



- A belief in a cause bigger than one's self. A reason to press on
- Positive social support
- The presence of pre-incident healthy coping skills and activities



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### Crisis Responder "Job Description"

- Consult with the organization's leadership
- Position the organization's leadership favorably
- Let people talk if they wish to do so
- Identify normal reactions to an abnormal event so that people don't panic regarding their own reactions
- Build group support
- Outline self-help recovery strategies
- Brainstorm solutions to overcome immediate return-to-work and return-to-life obstacles
- Triage movement toward either immediate business-as-usual functioning or additional care



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### Planning Your Response

- Contain the crisis
- Draw circles of impact
- Assign response tools
  - Leadership consultation
  - Large group briefings
  - Small group briefings
  - 1:1 support
  - Print and web resources
  - Community/personal resources
  - Professional resources



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## You Have to Go Through It but Not Alone

- Secure professional consultation and response bench strength.
- Logistics. Logistics. Logistics.
- Spread the risk and add credibility by bringing in experts.
- Train/meet regularly to develop muscle memory and trust.



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## Care for Those Who Care for Those

- Pre-incident training for a Crisis Response Team. "Debrief the Debriefers."
- Leaders are human too! Consult from a perspective outside of the circle of impact. Equip and support them. Then support them again.
- Kids respond best to those they already know and trust.
- Don't forget support staff!



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Empirically-Supported Early Intervention Principles  
What Makes a Difference?



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### Compassionate Strength

1. I care.
2. I am strong enough to handle this/you.



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### Toxic and Potentially Toxic

(stuff Job's friends said)

- God works all things together for good
- God doesn't give you more than you can handle
- I know just how you feel
- This is God's judgment
- You reap what you sow
- This reminds me of the time.....
- God needed another flower in his garden
- God loved them so much He couldn't wait
- God has made them an angel
- God was saving them from a bad future
- Don't believe that or don't feel that way
- If you just had enough faith
- Don't be angry with God
- They're in a better place
- At least they're no longer suffering
- He wouldn't want you carrying on like this.



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### Crisis Communication Recommendations

- Court of Law –  
Presumption of Innocence until proven guilty
- Court of Public Opinion –  
Presumption of Guilt until proven innocent



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**3 Critical Messages**  
**(Every Crisis is a Human Crisis)**

1. We are not defined by the event. We are defined by Christ.
2. We are part of the future. (a very long future!)
3. We embrace those victimized. Christ-like caring.



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**Crisis Communication Recommendations**

- Spokesperson must be competent, calm and consistent.
- Drive the story. Don't be driven.
- Break your own bad news. Define the crisis in your own terms, with your own language, and on your own turf.
- Get the facts fast and share only what you know for sure.



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**Crisis Communication Recommendations**

- Identify all stakeholder groups and communicate with each of them. Use and monitor social media.
- Cooperate with the media. "Feed them" early, regularly, and truthfully. Challenge them when they are wrong.
- "No Comment" or avoidance is perceived as guilt and a cover-up.



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## Crisis Communication Recommendations

If culpable in any way:

- Access legal counsel – accept responsibility and apologize
- Cooperate with authorities
- Take real action steps and implement protocols to “make sure it will never happen again.”
- Bring in 3<sup>rd</sup> Party validators
- Open a proactive positive track even as you deal with the crisis to develop an identity separate from the crisis
- Communicate, communicate, communicate the above



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## Crisis Communication Preparation

1. Identify your 5 most likely crises
2. Write scripts for those 5 crises
3. Edit and use those scripts situationally when needed. Receive professional feedback.
4. Edit those scripts also for the media selected
  - Press Conference
  - Press Release
  - Social Media
  - Internal



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## Crisis Communication - ACT



- Acknowledge and name the trauma
- Communicate pertinent information with competence and compassion
- Transition to adaptive functioning and/or refer to additional care

– Crisis Care Network



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**ACT**

Acknowledge

- Acknowledge what has happened
- Deliver information with sensitivity
- Acknowledge the event's impact upon people
- Acknowledge the event's impact upon you
- Grant permission for a wide range of reactions
- Serves to: Demonstrate leadership strength, align the leader with those led, establish a platform for cohesiveness



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**ACT**

Communicate

- Communicate both competence and compassion
- Visibly communicate care and concern for those involved
- Summarize what has happened. This is what we know at this time....
- Present objective and credible information. OK to read a script. Stick with it!
- Serves to: control rumors, reduce anxiety, and return a sense of control to impacted individuals



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**ACT**

Transition

- ▶ Focus upon immediate next steps
- ▶ Provide information about coping – Emphasize resiliency.
- ▶ Triage back to adaptive functioning or to an appropriate level of care.
- ▶ Practical Assistance - determine basic and practical needs.
- ▶ Linkage with Collaborative Services - transition individual to appropriate level of support and provide information. (Church, counseling center, community resources, written communications and web resources, telephonic support via a 1-800 number, to continued personal assistance/ intervention).



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### Self-Care: Prepare Yourself Now

- Prayer, The Word, Fellowship
- Healthy nutritional habits
- Regular physical exercise
- Family and social connections outside of work
- Adequate sleep and rest
- Train for warning signs
- Stress management (coping) techniques
- Reduce chronic stress variables



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### Faith



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### Hope



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## Love



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## Contact Information

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