
HANDOUT 3.1: PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

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Step 1: Size up the situation.

Sizing up the situation involves analyzing the current situation to determine:

- What is happening (and not happening).
- Who is involved.
- What the stakes are.

Sizing up means making sure that you have the full picture.

Once you have the full picture, you can accurately identify the problem(s). *Identifying the problem accurately is probably the most difficult step in the process.*

Step 2: Identify contingencies.

The next step in the process is to identify all of the contingencies.

Contingencies are what can go wrong—“Murpheys.” Think about all of the things that can get in the way of resolving the problem you are facing.

Step 3: Determine objectives.

Objectives should clearly tell you what you need to do to be successful.

You should develop objectives that allow you to monitor your progress. Your objectives should also help you prioritize how you and your staff spend time and resources.

Remember to use your analysis of the situation and possible contingencies when setting your objectives.

The objectives developed will drive the alternative solutions and, ultimately, the solution selected.

Step 4: Identify needed resources.

Resources include people, information (data), and things needed to resolve the problem.

Often information is overlooked when people identify their resource needs. Don't forget to include your information needs when identifying resource requirements.

Step 5: Build a plan.

Building a plan is simply stating who will do what by when.

Plans need to be communicated to all involved parties.

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Step 6: Take action.

Implementing the solution may not be easy. There may be repercussions to any solution selected. Consideration must be given to how the solution will be implemented before selecting an alternative.

Monitoring the success and results of a solution (checking) is an ongoing process that is critical to fine tuning a course of action.

HANDOUT 4.1: ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

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Ethical decision making requires being aware of your own and your organization's ethical values and applying them when necessary. It involves being sensitive to the impact of your decisions and being able to evaluate complex, ambiguous and incomplete facts. Three major components of ethical decision making are ethical commitment, ethical consciousness, and ethical competency.

Ethical Commitment (Motivation)

Demonstrating a strong desire to act ethically and to do the right thing, especially when ethics imposes financial, social or psychological costs. A crisis or emergency confronts us with many situations that test ethical commitment. Hence, you need to be very clear about your own ethical values and have a strong understanding of ethical standards of conduct.

Ethical Consciousness (Awareness)

Seeing and understanding the ethical implications of our behavior and applying our ethical values to our daily lives. Understanding that people's perceptions are their reality—what we understand to be perfectly legal conduct may be perceived by taxpayers as improper or inappropriate.

Ethical Competency (Skill)

Being competent in ethical decision making skills which include:

- *Evaluation.* The ability to collect and evaluate relevant facts. Knowing when to stop collecting facts and to make prudent decisions based on incomplete and ambiguous facts.
- *Creativity.* The capacity to develop resourceful means of accomplishing goals in ways that avoid or minimize ethical problems.
- *Prediction.* The ability to foresee the potential consequences of conduct and assess the likelihood or risk that persons will be helped or harmed by an act.

The Stakeholder Concept

Ethical individuals understand that each person, group, or individual who is affected by their decisions is a stakeholder who has a moral claim on them. They consider the potential impact of their decisions on others when making decisions. And, they take steps to avoid unjustified harm.

HANDOUT 5.1: SCENARIO UPDATE #1

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By 11:15 p.m., the evacuation is proceeding smoothly, and most people are being relocated safely in Rose County, 17 miles to the south. Jackie White, the representative from the Department of Natural Resources, is working with Don Slader to evaluate the condition of the dam. Water is now seeping through the embankment, and the water is now rapidly rising. They make the decision to use sandbags to temporarily stop the water seepage through the wall and keep the wall from breaking.

Tom Snow from the Department of Transportation has sand and empty sandbags, and EPM Jones has 20 shovels. The best estimate is that at least 30,000-50,000 sandbags will be needed throughout the night.

Questions:

1. What is the problem to be solved?
2. What decision might have to be adjusted?
3. What might be the new set of objectives?
4. What are the needed resources?
5. Are there any ethical considerations at this time?

HANDOUT 5.4: FINAL EXAM

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Instructions: This examination will test how much you have learned during the *Decision Making in a Crisis* workshop. You will have 30 minutes to complete the examination.

1. Read each question carefully. Scenarios will precede some of the questions.
2. Select the best answer that you believe is correct.

Scenario 1: Rothville Bomb Threat

The fire chief of Rothville received a call from a concerned parent, who is also a newspaper reporter, about a bomb threat at the middle school. Her children told her about a bomb threat at school that day. The school did not evacuate the building, and, apparently, this has happened several times before. The parent had called school officials, and they referred her to the fire department. After making some phone calls, the fire chief learned that it is the school district's policy to evacuate the schools for **all** bomb threats.

Questions 1-5 refer to Scenario 1: Rothville Bomb Threat.

1. Which of the major impediments listed below would apply to this scenario?
 - a. Time pressure
 - b. Political pressure
 - c. Fatigue
 - d. Financial pressure
2. In sizing up the situation, the fire chief should determine all of the following **except**:
 - a. Who is involved.
 - b. What the stakes are.
 - c. What is happening.
 - d. Why bomb threats are being made.
3. After collecting the information needed to resolve this situation, the fire chief should use the problem-solving model. All of the following are steps in the problem-solving model **except**:
 - a. Generate ideas.
 - b. Determine objectives.
 - c. Build a plan.
 - d. Take action.

HANDOUT 5.4: FINAL EXAM

4. Which of the following blocks in the decision making process would **not** apply to this scenario?
 - a. Perceptual
 - b. Emotional
 - c. Cultural
 - d. Intellectual

5. The fire chief's ability to recognize and assess the relevant facts in this situation is an example of the _____ aspect of ethical decision making.
 - a. Prediction
 - b. Creativity
 - c. Evaluation
 - d. Awareness

Scenario 2: Fundraiser

A local businessman is hosting a political fundraiser. The keynote speaker will be a former U.S. Senator, and a famous vocal group will perform at the fundraiser. Admission to the fundraiser is by invitation only. Tickets to the event cost \$250 per person. The city manager asks his secretary to call the businessman for tickets to the fundraiser. His daughter is a big fan of the vocal group. After the secretary explains the situation to the businessman, he gives the city manager four tickets.

Questions 6-8 refer to Scenario 2: Fundraiser.

6. The city manager is violating which ethical "don't" in this scenario?
 - a. Using his position to seek personal gain.
 - b. Making promises to gain favors.
 - c. Using inside information to benefit others.
 - d. Using company time for personal reasons.

7. Possible consequences for the city manager could include administrative and _____ sanctions.
 - a. Financial
 - b. Political
 - c. Criminal
 - d. Federal

8. The secretary has an obligation to _____ or she will violate her ethical obligations.
 - a. Report the incident to the media.
 - b. Report the incident to another secretary.
 - c. Report the incident to her friends.
 - d. Report the incident to the city manager's supervisor.

HANDOUT 5.4: FINAL EXAM

9. The most difficult step in crisis decision making is:
 - a. Implementing the solution.
 - b. Selecting the alternative.
 - c. Identifying the problem.
 - d. Monitoring the success of the solution.

10. Decision making in a crisis is made more difficult because of all of the following except:
 - a. Stress.
 - b. Aggression.
 - c. Fatigue.
 - d. Time pressure.

11. Once you implement a decision, you must:
 - a. Praise the results.
 - b. Maintain the plan.
 - c. Evaluate the plan.
 - d. Avoid the results.

12. Which part of the problem-solving model helps to establish deadlines and assign tasks?
 - a. Plan
 - b. Evaluation
 - c. Objectives
 - d. Problem definition

13. Cultural blocks to creative problem solving are caused by people refusing to change tradition, saying, "We've always done it this way".
 - a. True
 - b. False

14. Credibility and reputation are at risk if you do not comply with ethical standards.
 - a. True
 - b. False

15. Sizing up the situation involves analyzing the situation to determine all of the following **except**:
 - a. What is happening.
 - b. Who is involved.
 - c. When the situation occurred.
 - d. What the stakes are.

HANDOUT 5.4: FINAL EXAM

16. One step in decision-making/problem solving is to identify some of the contingencies.
- True
 - False
17. Objectives should do all of the following **except**:
- Use all available resources.
 - Set measurable tasks.
 - Establish priorities.
 - Tell what is needed.
18. Resources include all of the following **except**:
- Information
 - People
 - Equipment
 - Ideas
19. After taking action, it is **not** critical to monitor the progress of the problem.
- True
 - False
20. When plans are completed, they need to be communicated to all parties involved.
- True
 - False
21. Which of the following statements about effective decision-makers is **not** true?
- They recognize their own capabilities, biases, and limitations.
 - They weigh the risks, responsibilities, reward, and results of alternatives then accept the positive and negative consequences.
 - They are born knowing how to make good decisions; no one who isn't born with the skill can develop it.
 - They work hard at obtaining information and suspend judgment until all the facts are in.
22. Ethical competency involves all of the following **except**:
- Authority
 - Evaluation
 - Creativity
 - Prediction

HANDOUT 5.4: FINAL EXAM

23. Ethical _____ is demonstrating a strong desire to act ethically and to do the right thing.
- Competency
 - Consciousness
 - Commitment
 - Prediction
24. All of the following are ethical “Do’s” **except**:
- Placing the law above private gain.
 - Acting impartially.
 - Protecting department property.
 - Using company time for personal reasons.
25. The solicitation of gifts is an example of seeking personal gain.
- True
 - False
26. An example of preferential treatment by a disaster worker is:
- Setting up a Disaster Recovery Center in a central location.
 - Treating all contractors the same.
 - Processing all applications in the same manner.
 - Providing more information to one group of disaster victims than to another group.
27. All of the following are reasons to comply with ethical standards **except**:
- Professional reputation
 - Political sanctions
 - Clear conscience
 - Leadership by example
28. After taking action on a situation, it is critical to ask all of the following questions **except**:
- Has the situation changed?
 - Are more resources required?
 - Has the media been contacted?
 - Is a different alternative solution required?
29. Monitoring the success and results of a solution is an ongoing process that is critical to fine tuning a course of action.
- True
 - False

HANDOUT 5.4: FINAL EXAM

30. All of the following are ways to prevent making poor decisions in a crisis situation **except**:
- a. Be afraid to take calculated risks.
 - b. Don't rush decisions.
 - c. Be flexible.
 - d. Consider all options.
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