

De-Escalation Techniques in Disaster,  
Emergency and Group Situations.

***Hurricane Maria – Commonwealth  
of Puerto Rico***

***November 6, Through December 15, 2017***

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## **Deployment to the Disaster Scene - Answering the Call for Service.**

Does delivery of these services inhibit the normal flow of operations ?  
Are we trained to identify the need without sacrificing our safety and professional reputation?



## **Arrival – The Need for Stability on Both Sides**

- The process of De-Escalation begins with trust in colleagues that have experienced the event.
- Remember the Guardian at Home!



## Establishing a Safe Base of Operations.

- Working with FEMA and Local Agencies
- The need to gear down before gearing up
- The tone set here will remain throughout and long after





## **Start the Process of Personnel Selection for the Mission**

- Identify potential barriers
- Communicate with your Team!
- Providing relief with a humble approach – The Golden Rule.... Look and Listen First



## **Expect Collateral Crisis Regardless of the Planning Scale**

- Adapt and Support
- Providing Comfort while Uncomfortable
- Victims are Now Part of Your Team!





## The Language of De-escalation

- Address Language Barriers, First Names , Hugs and Hope (No Kidding!)
- I hear what you're saying ...Quickly Building Trust
- Immediate Referrals – Address Family Needs First

# Communication that Forms a Common Bond







## **Reach Out to Reach In**

- Don't be Afraid to Look Beyond the Surface
- Use Established Contacts
- Enable Community Members to Assist in the Delivery of Relief Services

# ***Best De-Escalation Techniques***

- Simple Listening – Listening attentively without speaking and providing “encouragers”.
- Active Listening – The process of attempting to hear, acknowledge and understand what a person is saying.
- Empathizing with the other person, giving choices and setting limits.
- Make sure that you are not doing anything other than listening. Multi-tasking is not listening!
- Acknowledgement will occur when you legitimately understand the individual’s angry emotion.





## **Share Field Services Intelligence with Operational Base**

- What Challenges Face your Field Units
- What Special Skills are Needed for Follow Up
- What is the Safest Approach / Location





## Use Secure Controlled Locations When Possible

- Reduction in Crime / Fear
- Attracts Those Most in Need
- Allows Closer Observation and Interaction



## Can Existing Organizations Create a Calming Atmosphere

- Faith Based Organizations
- Medical Facilities (Operational or Not)
- Town Commons / Outlying Safe Zones





## **Remember the Need to Partner Regardless of Scope**

- Different Regions – Different Needs
- Existence of Crime and Corruption
- Familiar Faces, Sharing the Mission



# Adapt Services with the Environment

- **Follow a Loose Path as Needed**
- **Keep in Mind that Disaster is Fluid**



# Never Underestimate the Power of Your Team!





# Questions?

