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2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
ENDING HOMELESSNESS
June 30–July 2, 2025 🌅 Washington, D.C. 🌅 #NAEH2025

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Navigating Crisis Communications



Crisis Communications



Ending Homelessness is Possible.



A crisis...

- Interrupts normal operations.
- Impacts multiple departments.
- Involves unforeseen elements.
- Escalates in intensity.



A crisis can...

- Adversely impact your organization's external reputation.
- Impact your financial performance or donor relations.
- Influence the communities near your facilities.
- Generate interest from traditional news media and social media—both wanted and unwanted.
- Affect life, property or the environment.



Examples of a crisis

- Fires, floods or other natural disasters that hinder operations
- Incidents that result in fatalities or injuries
- Inappropriate behavior by employees
- Online attacks
- Legal action against your organization or senior leaders
- Government regulatory or criminal investigations or other actions that impact operations or damage your reputation



How do you prepare? Crisis craves structure.



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Preparation and training are essential to good crisis management.



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A good crisis plan...

- Clearly defines roles and responsibilities
- Acts as an early-warning system
- Ensures the right people are notified quickly
- Allows for rapid decision-making



During a crisis people need...

- To understand who is in control
- To have access to information
- To be able to adjust to changing conditions



While each crisis is different, there are similarities that can help you plan.



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Step One

- Assess the situation carefully. Is it already a crisis or is it an incident that could erupt into a full-blown crisis?
- Determine a crisis communications strategy with special attention to your website and all types of media including social media influencers.
- Continually monitor the situation on social, digital and traditional news media and calls or emails to the organization.



Tell your story

- If you don't tell your story, someone else will.
- What do you want to accomplish?
- Who are your most important audiences?
- Develop and deliver clear messages about **the facts** of the situation and what you are doing to address relevant issues.
- Determine whether you need an incident-specific microsite to keep crisis updates separate from other information on your main website.



Low comment vs. no comment



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Choose the right spokesperson



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Stick to your message



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Communications channels

- Social media posts
- Website content
- News releases
- Public statements
- Employee communications
- Client communications
- Stakeholder communications



Looking ahead

- Anticipate probable developments in the crisis based on news media coverage, social media activity, political and regulatory interest, and stakeholder concerns and feedback.
- Continually assess the situation and the perception of the situation.



Post-crisis performance assessment

- Internal communications
- Media communications
- Customer communications
- Communications to other stakeholders, communities, partners, and/or vendors
- Evaluation of the crisis plan



There can be long-term benefits from surviving a crisis.



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Treat each crisis as a learning experience. How can you improve?



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The Road Home, Salt Lake City Utah

- Helping People End Their Homelessness and Move Back Into Housing
- Nonprofit Homeless Service Provider
- Families with Children, Single Adults, Veterans, Older Adults
- Family Street Outreach, Five Shelter Programs, Three PSH + Rapid Rehousing & rental assistance

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Real Life Example

Arrest at Midvale family shelter prompts concerns about children's safety

Published: Nov 19, 2019, 6:14 p.m. MST

 VIEW COMMENTS



The Midvale Family Resource Center | Laura Seitz, Deseret News



Hey check out these offers



Insiders know this is the

You won't believe his favorite local music joint in
Think you know the craziest thing to do in Amst

Other Operating Expenses

\$29,814

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And...Another One

Sandy homeless shelter resident jailed on suspicion of killing roommate

By Tim Vandenack, KSL.com | Updated - May 27, 2024 at 3:22 p.m. | Posted - May 27, 2024 at 10:25 a.m.



A resident of a homeless shelter in Sandy has been jailed on suspicion of murder in the death of a roommate. (Spenser Heaps, Deseret News)

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Any questions?

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Thank you!

