

Insights for inclusive Crisis Preparedness: Development and Implementation of a Field Crisis Exercise Involving People with Disabilities

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Crisis exercise



Implementation of a Crisis Exercise

Role play: Communication, collaboration & united action



Participants

- Five people from the crisis preparedness/ management function in three municipalities with different roles
- Seven people with different types of disabilities (blindness, wheel-chair users, intellectual)
- Four researchers with different roles
- Two non-participating observers



Implementation - Method

- Find & inform participants, sign consent forms
- Meet in predetermined premises
- Description of role play & rules
- **Start exercise:** Lecture about "crisis preparedness"
- Notifications– something has happened
- Individual movements to security point
- Staff room – situation analysis, decisions
- Activities and information at the security point
- **End exercise:** Planned activities and set time end
- Debriefing with participants
- **A few days later:** Researchers sum up
- Interview with a few participants
- **Post-analysis:** Evaluation and documentation



Role play - Rules

Start 9.00 finish at 11.30, lunch at 12 at restaurant

Drinks and something to eat available during the play

Everyone has agreed to sound recording and taking photos

- Something is pretending to happen
- Everyone can do what they want
- You can interrupt and ask questions whenever you want
- You can go to the toilet at any time
- If you don't want to participate anymore - just tell anyone
- You can pretend you don't know each other
- Everyone has name tags



Gathering and Introduction



- Meeting room easy to find and access
- Hand out: Reflective vests and name tags
- Instructions about set-up and rules
- Presentation via clear Power Point – images, text, speech

Lecture about crisis preparedness

- Talks about the importance of being prepared
- Different crisis scenarios
- The variability of citizens in times of crisis
- Shows where the nearest security point - map web with link



Text messages to crisis management

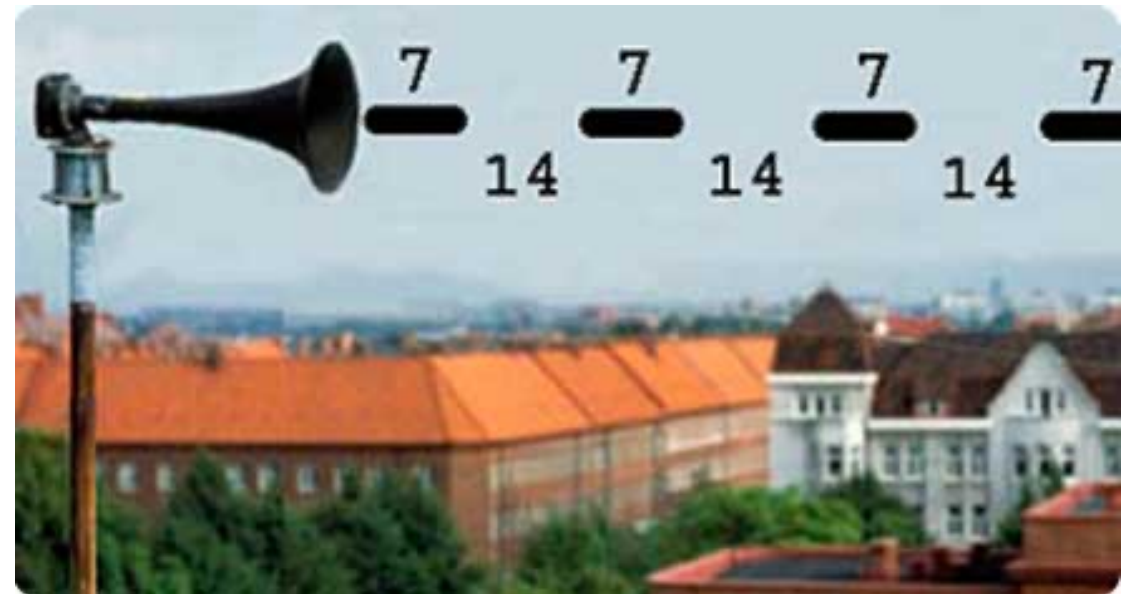
'There seems to be something wrong with the water. We must warn the public. **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER.** Still unclear exactly what it is. Will return.'

'The water unserviceable. Not sure if boiling helps. VMA sent. Inform everyone do not drink tap water! The security points are opened, the staff are manning'



IPA and text messages to all citizens

'Unserviceable water in Edenby. At present, tap water should not be drunk. It is unclear whether boiling the water is enough. Anyone who does not have access to bottled water: go to a security point to get drinking water and more information.'



IPA Important public announcement

Security point

Find it and get there themselves



Staff room



Further information

- **To all in the crisis management:**
'Power outage in most of Edenby municipality. Cause unclear.
No forecast yet'
- **To all in the crisis management:**
'The power outage seems to apply to all the region. Cause unknown.
No forecast as to when the electricity will return. Report this at the
security point'
- **Till the manager of the crisis management team:**
'Internal information: According to the police, sabotage is suspected
behind the water and electricity. ATTENTION! This is not confirmed
and should NOT be spread!'

Activities at the security point



A number of "unusual questions" were asked

Emergency radio, charging equipment etc. were tested

Crisis boxes were studied

Distribution of water, food and medical care

The caretaker run errands in the city and brought information

Situation pictures and ongoing measures were given orally and in writing



Questions and Issues about



Water

Charging

Phone calls

Security for family

Pets, especially dogs

Medications

Transportation

Want to go home!



Final information

Move indoors due to the unsafe situation!





Debriefing

Debriefing



Questions discussed:

How did it feel to play?

Any realism?

Something surprising?

Something learned?

How did the communication work?

To be a resource?

The structure of the exercise?

Insights from the exercise for the participants

The crisis preparedness people

- New, unexpected insights from questions asked
- Deeper understanding of problems and weaknesses
- Need for immediate and simple answers, clear language

The people with disabilities

- helped each other when they had to ask or do something
- understood each other's concerns well
- served as resources for each other
- gained a realistic understanding of how a crisis can affect them



Insights from the exercise for the researchers

- **Demanding preparation** to find participants, roll play/scenario content, logistics and execution to work - several unforeseen issues can and did happen!
- **Unprepared participants and prepared inputs** generated an effective scenario play that worked according to plan and provided hands-on practice!
- **The conscious educational element** interesting – the participants gathered for lectures on crisis management, security points and diversity among residents
- **Direct interactions** between different participant groups provided insight - limited previous experience of communicating and acting together
- **People with disabilities** are important co-players and can act as resources - they know their own shortcomings and needs best, and understand the problems of others
- **The crisis preparedness people fell into their trained roles** at first but became very innovative and creative as time went on!

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