



# Table Top Exercises

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## Preparing Your Organization for Crisis



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# Message



**This presentation offers a methodology  
for planning, designing and conducting  
low cost Table Top exercises  
to better prepare your organization  
for emergency situations.**

# Overview



- **Introduction to the Table Top Exercise**
- **Planning Considerations**
- **Design Options**
- **Game Play**
- **Processing Lessons**

# Do you ever worry about..... ?



## If (and when) things go wrong...

- Building Fire and Flooding
  - Terrorism and Protests
- Unplanned Loss of Utilities or IT Systems
  - Civil Disaster
  - Severe Weather

# How well is your organization prepared ?



## Challenges

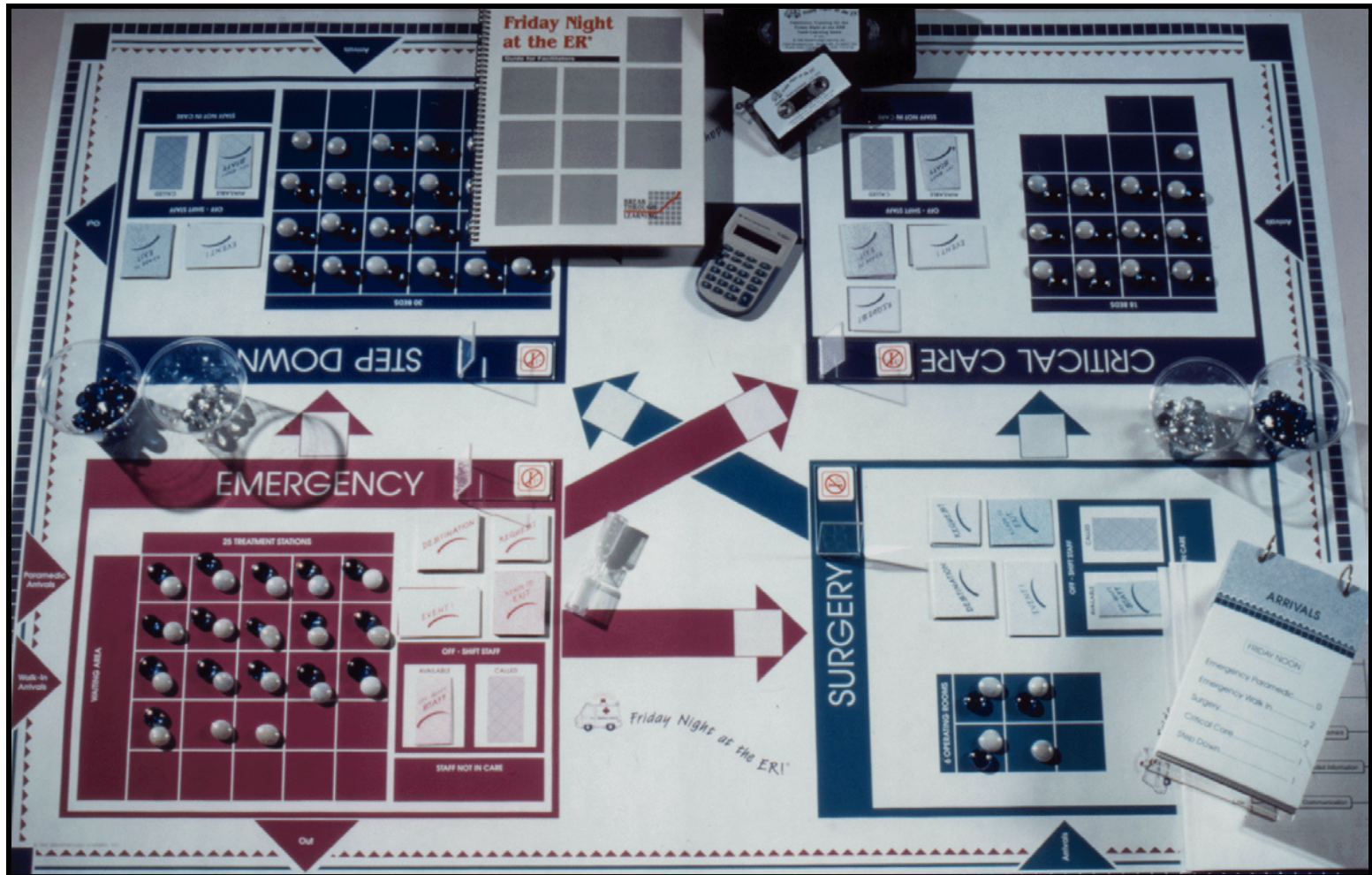
- Are contingency plans in place?
- Are plans current? Adequate?
- Are employees familiar with plans?
- Do plans fit with emergency responders?
- Will employees follow the plans?

# Preparation Through ‘Gaming’

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- **Scenario Planning**
  - Royal Dutch Shell – Envisioning the future
  - Post September 11<sup>th</sup> family contingency plans
- **War Games**
  - War Colleges to Healthcare
- **Oral Board Examinations**
  - Professional Certification Boards – “What if...”
- **Table Top Seminars**
  - Fred Friendly Seminars – “The Constitution”

# Healthcare Planning and Training



# What is a Table Top Exercise ?

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**A planning and training event, often around a table, for management, staff and service providers to game play contingency situations, identify considerations, and generate solutions, with alternatives.**





# Table Top Advantages



- **Customized to your organization**
- **Designed to focus on your priorities**
- **Low Cost**
- **Low Impact on routine operations**
- **Invites Involvement at many levels**
- **Potential for High Return**
  - **Participation, Ideas and Preparedness**

# Table Top Advantages



**Best of all.....**

**YOU CAN DO THIS!**

**Now, let's look at .....**

- **Planning Considerations**
  - **Design Options**
    - **Game Play**
      - **Processing Lessons**



# Planning Considerations

# Why Do This ?



**Be clear on your**

**OBJECTIVES**

**If someone suggests a table top exercise,  
know what you want to achieve.**

**What is your anticipated ROI?**

# Why Do This ?



## What are the Drivers ?

- **Current Events**
- **Risk Analysis**
- **“I wake up at 2 AM worrying about .....**
- **Just sound management & preparedness**

# Clarify Exercise Goals

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## **Gain Lessons Learned - New Ideas - Evaluation**

- **Staff Response To Emergency Scenarios**
- **Clarity Of Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Adequacy Of Contingency Plans**
- **Internal Communications**
- **Team Building**
- **Inter-organization Cooperation**
- **Identify Competing Priorities**

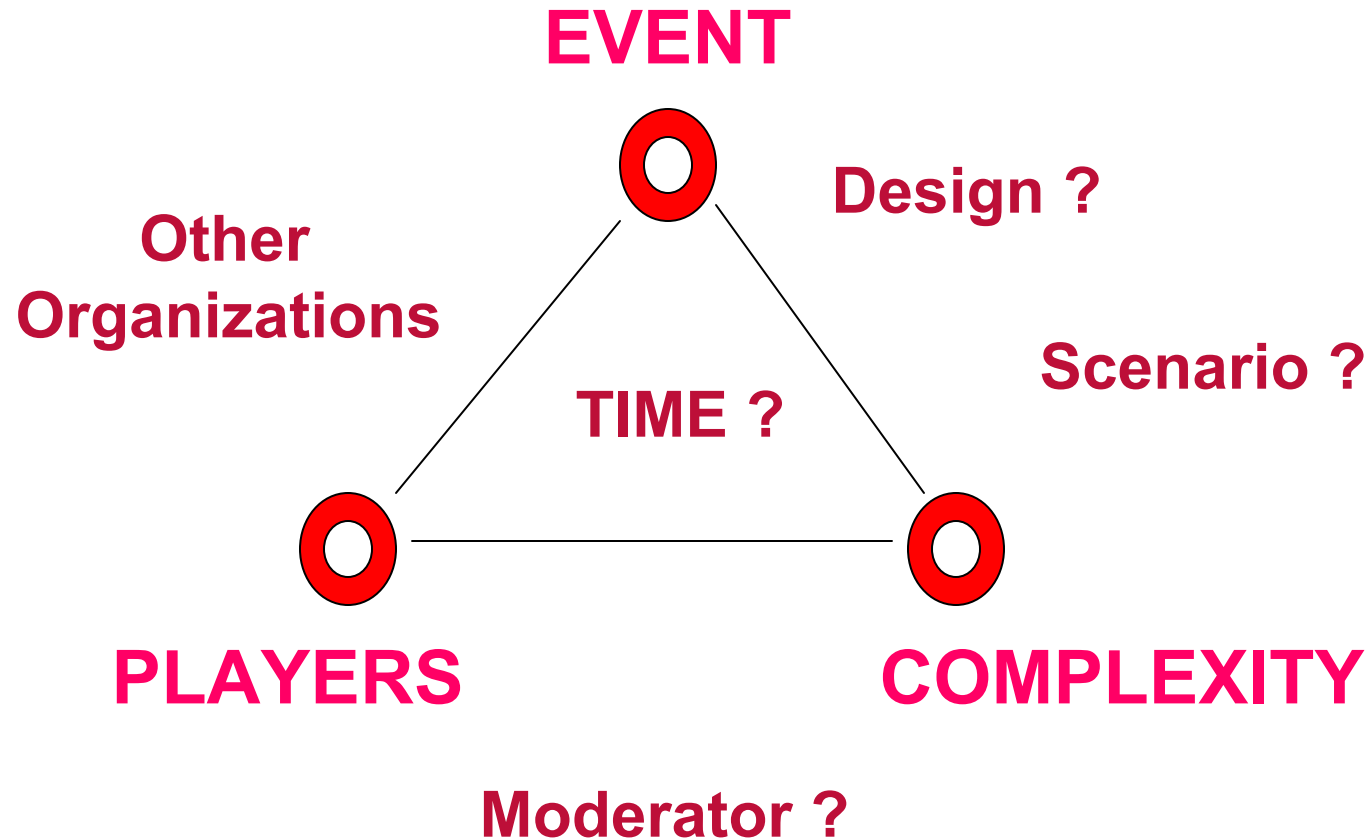
# Conceptualize the Boundaries



- **WHAT – is the Key Event?**  
**Fire – Weather- Protest- etc.**
- **WHO Will Play? – which employees**  
**(& other organizations?)**
- **HOW Complex**  
**Basic or More Advanced**

# From Boundaries to Resources

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# Design Options

# Design Steps to Consider

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- **Charter a Design Team**
- **Specify Objectives**
- **Select a Moderator to Work With Design**
- **Preview Organization Charts, Plans & SOPs**
- **Interview Key Players & Organizations**
- **Evolve the Scenario from Interview Issues**
- **Consider Multiple Game Cells**
- **Coordinate Date, Players, Facilities, Rehearsal**
- **Plan Collection & Evaluation of Proceedings**

# Exercise Scenario Design



## Hallmarks of a good exercise scenario.....

- **Believable – “This situation could happen.”**
- **Involved ‘the experts’ in development**
- **Is Interesting and Invites Participation**
- **Challenges Participants to Think**
- **Presents Open-ended Questions**
- **Segmented into Game Play Rounds**

# Scenario Design Input



## **Interviews can be invaluable**

- **Organization Executives & Leadership**
- **Vets and Technicians**
- **Contract staff**
- **Emergency Response Providers**
- **Suppliers and Service Providers**
- **Customers**

# **Rounds Maintain Focus**



## **Individual Rounds Focus On Exercise Objectives**

**For Example .....**

**Round 1 – Emergency Response  
& Internal Communications**

**Round 2 - Life Safety of Employees and Guests**

**Round 3 - Animal Care Concerns**

**Round 4 - Recovery Actions**

# Rounds Maintain Pace of the Exercise



## Rounds.....

- Artificially Advance Timelines
  - Resolve Dilemmas from Previous Rounds
    - Pose a New Set of Challenges & Issues

# Designing Round Disclosures



- **Generate New Issues & New Twists**
- **Provide Just Enough Information – WYSIWYG**
- **Disseminate Critical Info To Key Players**
- **Prepare Disclosure Cards**
- **Challenge Players To Communicate**
  - **To share information**
  - **To clarify the situation**
  - **To identify issues for discussion**

# Round Design



## For Each Round .....

- **Plan which players receive disclosures**
- **Anticipate actions stemming from disclosures**
- **Prepare questions to stimulate discussion**
- **Anticipate issues and questions**
- **Anticipate conflicting priorities**
- **Remain flexible**





# Game Play

# Game Play



## Moderator Roles and Responsibilities.....

- **Master of Ceremonies - Conductor**
- **Directs Focus and Pace Toward Objective**
- **A Facilitator**
- **Flexible**
- **Assisted by One or More Recorders**
- **Keeps the Exercise Moving**

# Game Day Setting



## Create the Exercise Environment

- **Send Instructions & Directions In Advance**
  - **Flip Charts**
- **Ensure Room To Play – Seats For Everyone**
  - **Name Tags And Table Tent Cards**
- **Documents – Manuals, SOPs, Blueprints**
  - **Refreshments Can Help Set The Tone**

# Introduction and Rules of Play



## First

- **Welcome by Organization Chief**
- **Clarify Expectations**
- **Introduce Objectives for the Exercise**
- **Explain Table Top Play – Rules and Rounds**

## Then

- **“Let the Games Begin”**

# A Typical Round of Play



**For Each Round .....**

- **Start With A General Disclosure Announcement**
- **Distribute Select Disclosures To Individuals**
- **As Necessary, Open With Leading Questions**
- **Draw Players Into Discussions**
- **Leverage Planning Ideas To Stimulate Play**
- **Robust Use Of Flip Charts**
- **Faithfully Record The Proceedings**



# Processing Lessons

# Optimize Use of Flipcharts



- **Capture Issues, Ideas, and Information**
- **Establish a “Bin” for Related Issues**
- **Capture Unanswered Questions**
- **Create an Action List**
- **Invite Players to Post Their Ideas**

# Post Game Critique



**After the Game,**

**Ask the Players...**

- **Initial Impressions**
- **Key lessons**
- **Priorities**
- **Ideas for the Next Steps**
- **Critique On Exercise Design and Play**
- **Suggestions**



# Evaluation of Lessons



## Consider.....

- Recorded proceedings during Table Top
- Flip chart information
- Comments from Post exercise critique
- Critique sheets

## Look for .....

- Trends
- Priorities
- Recommendations

# Common Lessons Learned



## Observed Opportunities to Improve.....

- Communications – methods, accuracy, speed
- Coordination among emergency responders
- Competing Priorities
- SOPs – Inadequate or outdated
- Training issues

**And there are positive observations as well!**

# Finally, After Processing the Lessons .....



**You will want to follow up .....**

- **Feedback to participants**
- **Feedback to the organization**
- **Feedback to supporting activities**
- **Prioritize opportunities for improvement**
- **Initiate actions on the top few priorities**
- **Track and measure your initiatives**

**And then.....**

**another Table Top ??????**

**Thank you for your attention.**



**Questions ???**