THE END OF INNOCENCE PART 2: FURTHER LESSONS IN CRISIS
MANAGEMENT IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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Abstract

Crisis management in school settings is an enormously complex field asking the near impossible out of mere flesh and blood humans. Since 9/11, crisis management has become even more complex and difficult (Lagedec, 2009). The traditional tactical approach to crisis management emphasized identifying possible crises and then making specific plans to be directly followed in resolving the crisis. As shown in previous work (Brack, Brack, Hill, Wells, & Lassiter, 2007), a tactical response is often insufficient for the “surprising crises” of the 21st century (Lagadec, 2009). Lagadec (1993) introduced strategic crisis management built upon adaptive and flexible responses guided more by goals and problem solving, than by manuals to be followed step-by-step. The purpose of the present paper is review updates to Lagadec’s Strategic Model.

Research and analysis of the literature have clarified the usage of a strategic thrust. Further, the present paper clarifies the components of the “Four P” model of crisis response for schools based upon Lagedec’s work.
“Because no one can predict when a disaster or tragedy will occur, you have to be ready for anything at any time.” Terrence Quinn, from “The inevitable school crisis: Are you ready?”

The first decade of the 21st century has provided a steep learning curve for crisis managers. An earlier paper (Brack, Brack, Hill, Wells, & Lassiter 2007) examined a university campus crisis response to the 9/11 terrorist event. That paper illustrated the usefulness of Lagedec’s (1993) “strategic” crisis management model emphasizing problem solving and bottom-up responsiveness compared to the more top down “tactical” guidebook crisis model popular in schools and university settings.

Certainly the various emergencies confronting crisis managers since 9/11 have added support for preparing crisis responders to think before they react and to adapt as they move forward in a crisis. Undoubtedly, crisis managers will continue to face crises of escalating proportions. For instance, Philip Schaeenman, Staff Director, Virginia Tech Shooting Review Panel said, “I’ve been involved with over 60 major incident investigations, including Columbine, Loma Prieta, the Anthrax scare in D.C., and the Oakland Hills fires. Virginia Tech was by far the most challenging” (Schaeenman, quoted in Lessons learned at Virginia Tech shooting, 2007). The scope of the crises that have followed 9/11 have presented Lagedec’s (1993) supporters with sobering lessons too. The purpose of the present paper is to further discuss Strategic crisis management based upon such overwhelming crises as Hurricane Katrina and campus violence like Virginia Tech. These crises have provided evidence that while strategic responses are still
essential, chaos and suffering are inevitable without some coordinated tactical response, especially at the highest administrative levels.

Lagadec (2009) has followed these developments closely and concluded a huge change has occurred within the field of crisis management. In fact, so much is changing so quickly that part of the title of his article states it is “…Time for a radical shift in paradigm and practice.” He writes, “Crises in the 21st century differ – structurally - from those that we had to deal with in the last century” (p. 473). At the heart of the new strategic paradigm is, according to LaPorte’s (2007), “…to prepare to be surprised” (cited in Lagadec, p. 474, italics in original). The assumption of the tactical paradigm that crises can be compartmentalized and placed in specific modes of response is no longer valid. In fact, even viewing the crisis response as a linear progression of well researched and thought out steps is becoming increasingly invalid. Lagadec calls the new field of crisis management the “wilderness of the unknown” (p. 478). He believes that contemporary crises are so intertwined, with multilevel systems inside and outside the school, that tactical approaches are bound to fail. For instance, Lagadec cites Allen (2008) who stated that Hurricane Katrina was not the same crisis across many systems, and, in fact, the hurricane’s impact was so unique from setting to setting that there seemed to be little commonality of crises, despite the fact that they had the same cause – the hurricane. Thus, common event does not produce even semi-similar crises. Just as crisis managers were getting used to dealing with uncertainty, now the paramount challenge is ignorance. The best crisis managers know that they do not know much of anything at all. This realization is especially concerning. Risk management is now becoming an oxymoron.

Yet crisis managers must respond, and Lagedec (2009) believes in a mixed strategy of working within the rules where possible, reinventing rules where necessary, and working beyond
the rules when required. The cases below will illustrate just how accurate and frightening such a new paradigm can become.

**Hurricane Katrina Evacuees**

One of the authors of the present paper (G. Brack) in unpublished research (McMahon, Orr, Brack, Eberts, & Robinson, 2006-2007) examined the crisis response of school counselors dealing with the injection of Katrina evacuee into three schools in the Southeastern United States. The goal of the study was to examine the school counselors’ experiences as they tried to meet the influx of children from the Katrina disaster. The influx of children in dire need of a plethora of resources placed the schools, at least temporarily, on crisis footing. Yet, as the interviews demonstrated, the schools coped with the extraordinary demand, some schools better than others. The school counselors seemed to frame their experiences into four stages. In Stage 1, the school counselors discussed the Pre-Katrina school context. It was clear from the interviews that the existing school environment before Katrina shaped the subsequent Katrina responses. In Stage 2, the school counselors discussed the initial influx of students with the consequent overwhelming demand upon the school system. Here the Pre-Katrina environment either enabled or inhibited the post-arrival responses. In Stage 3, the lasting reality of these students began to be felt by school counselors and the surrounding school environment. Here facilitative contexts in Stages 1 and 2 assisted the school counselors to weather the many unique demands of these students, but those schools having less than optimal school support began to grind down the school counselors. Though all the schools had difficult and troubling experiences, the less facilitative schools began to burn-out the school counselors. Finally, in Stage 4, as the students evacuated after Katrina adapted to the schools, returned to their original homes, or the school year ended, the school counselors reflected back on their year with
experiences ranging from anger and bitterness to relief, with these experiences again tied to the context and developments of the previous stages. The interviews made it clear that having a sense of belonging pre-crisis went a long way toward crisis management - a fact not commonly recognized by crisis managers. Yet, a disturbing question was how much of these individual’s belonging, or lack of it, was rooted in pre-crisis and crisis resource allocation. Garnering resources within an organization may be a significant means of accounting for belonging. Certainly, the counselors in one school felt that their lack of belonging in the school was related to many resource deficits. Still, the interviews suggested that resources were only a component of a positive pre-crisis context. Teachers and administrators were seen less as obstacles and more as collaborators in the other schools that fared better. Though all counselors felt isolated at some point in the crisis response, the schools with a greater sense of belonging seemed better able to reintegrate and reconnect - a critical healing factor.

What does cross through the interviews though is that the Katrina response changed these counselors. For some of the counselors, it was one of the worst professional experiences of their lives while others found it rewarding if difficult. All remarked that the children evacuated from Katrina opened their eyes to the vast inequity of educational experiences in America. Likely, many of their colleagues were not so willing to have their consciousness raised, and thus the marginalization and isolation of these counselors may have derived from denial of such stark tragedies. These counselors simply could not do their job and retain their old view of the world — denial was not a viable option.

Due to the vast needs of these students, the counselors became social workers as much as counselors. Even when social workers were present, the crisis response required a shifting of the counselors’ professional role. The extent of the trauma present among the children also required
the counselors to respond creatively. Normal counseling was often impossible so these individuals often had to reach for new, innovative approaches. In addition, while the children evacuated from Katrina were being helped, normal school demands continued. For several months, the counselors had essentially two jobs - their normal duties and their crisis response duties. The thanklessness of such efforts at one school seemed to lead counselors down the path toward burn-out. Those schools counselors who dealt with the crisis best seemed to have taken a strategic approach to the evacuees, not because they had been acquainted with Lagadec (1993), but simply because no tactical plan existed or was useful in meeting the demand. Administrators who support such an approach made the interventions more effective and less stressful for the school counselors. Of course, wherever possible, the school counselors implemented the existing crisis management plans, but much of the year long crisis was beyond the planners’ worst dreams.

Main Lessons of Columbine to Virginia Tech

Analyzing the voluminous literature on school violence over the last fifteen years can assist in discerning some of the most crucial lessons from these tragedies (Brack, 2008). By some accounts, from 1996-2009, over 50 worldwide school shooting incidents occurred, many within the United States (Time Line of Worldwide School Shootings, 2007). Of course, Columbine and Virginia Tech are the exemplars. On the morning of April 20th, 1999 at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, two student shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, entered the school killing 12 people and wounding 23 more before killing themselves. Almost to the day eight years later, a nightmare struck the Virginia Tech campus on April 16th, 2007. Another shooter, student Seung-Hui Cho, fatally wounded 32 people and injured 23 more before ending his own life. After many reports following the shootings at Columbine and
Virginia Tech (e.g., Cullen, 2009; Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2007; Figley & Jones, 2008; Gervich, 2008; Hasday, 2002; Immel & Hadder, 2008; Kass, 2009; Langman, 2009; Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2009), several conclusions can be drawn from such incidents.

First, it becomes immediately clear that in many cases faculty/students/staff were the first responders. In cases of extreme heroism, some paid for their crisis responses with their lives. In many instances, people were beyond any contemplated crisis situation, and individual actions at crucial times likely saved many more lives. The crises were largely out of control by the time police and others became fully involved. In fact, in most cases, the crisis had already occurred before authorities even had a somewhat accurate picture of what was occurring. The schools involved in the incidents showed some flaws in essential preparation, yet most reports demonstrate that most agencies were simply unprepared for the extreme circumstances of these crises (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Many experts continue to assert that more adequate preparation, practice, and response may have prevented or minimized most of the tragedy, but Lagadec (2009) suggests that may be wrong. Certainly each of the incidents indicates that much more needs to be done. However, Lagadec believes that if we do not abandon the Tactical paradigm, we will likely go from incident to incident learning more but preventing less.

Significantly, any crisis plan dependent upon communication among crisis teams are bound to face daunting challenges. In most of the incidents reviewed, emergency communication is unreliable and undependable, just as the authors of the present paper found on 9/11 (Brack, Brack, Hill, Wells, & Lassiter 2007). Other authors, in addition to Lagadec, view a trend of crises growing more severe (e.g., Bordo, Eichengreen, Klingebiel, & Martinez-Peria, 2001). Within the last few years, the general stress load of an economy collapsing, coupled with significant flaws in mental health laws and services, provides a potent backdrop for violence.
escalation, and schools are proven not to be immune. Lack of sufficient resources results in gaps in the mental health system including short term crisis stabilization and comprehensive outpatient services. Unfortunately, funding is likely to continue to be cut due in fiscal challenged governmental budgets.

It appears that the involuntary commitment process is challenged by unrealistic time constraints, lack of critical psychiatric data and collateral information, and barriers (perceived or real) to open communications among key professionals. This was the problem at Virginia Tech, but most educators recognize similar problems in school districts throughout the country. In fact, there is widespread confusion about what federal and state privacy laws allow. Also, the federal laws governing records of health care provided in educational settings are not entirely compatible with those governing other health records (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Schools must now negotiate what Lagadec calls the “Terrae Incognitae” (p. 478) of crisis management, especially in balancing the consideration of privacy rights with the rights of the academic and service community. “Privacy cannot trump well being,” according Dr. Joe Bertolino, Vice President for Student Affairs Queen College (Paperclip webinar). He emphasizes that in the 21st century, “The objective is to balance effective intervention with privacy.” The bottom line is that students who are at high risk and affect the educational and service experience of other students, and it is school’s responsibility to seek, prevent, or stop this. Violation of the culture of learning may become the new warning signal for crisis management intervention. Rather than trying to assess risk for students, especially regarding suicidal or homicidal propensity, some experts believe it is easier, more humane, and more effective if we identify and deal with the individuals who are disrupting the culture of learning. Perhaps at Columbine and more certainly at Virginia Tech, a crisis management policy based on
interference with the culture of learning may have provided an opportunity for an effective intervention with the shooters before they acted. Protecting the culture of learning can effectively serve as a prime goal directing a strategic approach to school crisis management. Yet, the Strategic responses of the various units within a school must communicate and coordinate. At Virginia Tech, school personnel grappled with many creative approaches to deal with the student shooter pre-crisis, but confusion and lack of coordination prevented an effective, unified approach. The prime risk of strategic approaches is that creativity and adaptation are not coordinated. If the overall goal of protecting the culture of learning is not monitored by crisis administrators, at-risk individuals fall through the cracks as the problem is passed around the system. The false security of the tactical approach is that procedures are well documented and administrative coordination is built in. Individuals as chronically problematic as the shooter at Virginia Tech often overload and bypass most tactical procedures.

Unfortunately, some schools are overreacting to violent incidents and now even suicidal students are being suspended in order to eliminate the “risk” of these incidents occurring on campus but potentially moving that risk to an off campus site. Effective, humane crisis management programs with zero tolerance for disruption to the culture of learning cannot simply remove the problem, but must provide significant psychosocial support. Workplace violence experts long have remarked that without humane zero tolerance policies and interventions, removed individuals may simply wait and return to wreck havoc (e.g., Kaufer, & Mattman, 2001). Over reaction to violent incidents in subsequent crisis management policies may simply move shooters from being current students to former students. Given that the shooter at Northern Illinois was a former student (although not because of removal from the university), it is clear this is not the sole solution to the problem.
Facing the Realities of School Crisis

Therefore, school emergency managers must come to grips with the reality of Terrae Incognitae, and while crisis managers may remain ignorant of exactly what we are facing, we can begin to at least to sketch its frontiers. In order to move forward, every school crisis counselor must acknowledge seven critical facts.

Fact #1: The average school will have several crises each school year:
Crises are not rare and occur in all schools. Fortunately, the “average crisis” is within the prevue of most crisis management, but no school is exempt to the possibility of a typical crisis gone awry. Crisis ignores socio-economic status, location, racial make-up, and tax base. These crises may be from the individual level to the entire system (Cornell & Sheras, 1998; Quinn, 2002).

Fact #2: Most educators during their career will face a host of different crises.
These crises may include: death; suicide; fire; bomb; child abuse; family impoverishment; disease; dislocations; shootings; kidnappings; natural disasters; out of control staff, parent, and/or student; violent staff, parent, and/or student; and other assorted challenges (Cornell & Sheras, 1998; National Child Traumatic Stress Network; Quinn, 2002). While most of the crises within a school are the stock-in-trade of typical crisis management tactical plans, Lagadec (2009) reminds us that today’s crises are more commonly not simple, easy to compartmentalize, or easy to understand.

Fact #3: Many school personnel are unprepared for the crisis.
Even prior to the 21st century, many school personnel were not well trained in crisis management. All crisis managers know that the crisis response is only as strong as the weakest link. The goal of crisis management is to help all school personnel prevent crises when possible, and when a crisis occurs, to address the problem immediately (Cornell & Sheras, 1998; Jaksec,
2007). At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, few schools are meeting these goals.

Fact #4 Schools are often the site of the crisis that began elsewhere

Crisis from domestic violence to crime may invade the school (Trump, 2000). Maybe as many as 10 million children per year witness domestic violence (Domestic Violence Resource Center, 2009). Staff also may “bring in” an outside crisis. As Lagadec (2009) states, the contemporary school is intimately tied to the systems around that school, and crises elsewhere may soon become a school crisis.

Fact 5: School counselors are often the first crisis managers on site and often are responsible for the early crisis management responses.

In catastrophic crises, outside help may arrive far too late, and maybe not at all (i.e., see Virginia Tech Review Panel Report, 2007). In a less severe crisis, the wait time between the crisis onset and systemic support may be unacceptably long. Whether the school personnel like it or not, they will be the ones whose initial responses will facilitate or inhibit a successful crisis resolution.

Fact 6: Administration above the crisis response team determines the likelihood of a successful crisis response.

Without fail, crisis managers state that administrative support is the most salient factor to getting schools prepared. As our Katrina evacuee study found, administrators seemed to set the tone pre-crisis for what was possible during the crisis.

Fact #7: Crisis response leadership will make a huge difference when the actual crisis occurs.

The authors have frequently been told that being the leader of a crisis response team is an impossible and thankless task, and that is true. Stakeholders expect everything to go right, and if
it does, there will be little gratitude. If one thing goes bad, the ramifications are massive. During the crisis, leaders need to be the calm in the center of the storm - teachers and kids look to the crisis team, especially the leader for cues. One veteran crisis counselor said that she learned never to run in the school, as it was always taken as a sign of a crisis getting out of control. Her motto is, “Whatever happens, act calm and walk slow.” The leader must be aware of all procedures and interventions to assist crisis response. Also, the leader has to be an approachable, pragmatic team worker. Leadership is only as useful as the ability to facilitate others to be helpful too. Leaders have to be able to assist highly stressed people to work toward the common goals of crisis management. Effective communication is critical, and putting one’s ego “on hold” is mandatory (Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children’s Services, 2009).

**Four P’s of Crisis Management**

“The essential generic elements of a good emergency and crisis management plan are communications, responsibilities, and preparedness, including provisions for response…” (Donald W. Mortenson, 2006).

It is not enough to tell schools what the problems are and how very difficult crisis management is becoming. In the day-to-day reality of the school environment, real people must do their best to protect the people within their care. Based upon the above discussion, a set of guidelines on how to move toward a more realistic paradigm for crisis management is essential. Based upon Lagadec’s (1993, 2009) work, contemporary crisis managers know that crisis management is a way of looking at the school and service agency, not just a list of what gets done when something bad happens. To properly envision this, remembering the four P’s is helpful.
1. Planning - know what are “high probability” situations;

2. Preparation - design ways of implementing effective interventions;

3. Practice the crisis responses - use a variety of simulated events with unforeseen challenges; and

4. Proaction - implement an actual crisis response in a humane and effective manner when the time comes.

Since no plan is perfect, the crisis response team must be flexible and adaptive. In proactive (versus reactive) crisis management, the task is to match the response to the goals of the crisis response team, using goals as a method to steer the response. The response is only as good as it is practiced. Reality is bound to test a plan, and if the planned response is unrealistic, it will fail. Lagadec (2009) states that even knowing what is realistic in Terrae Incognitae is difficult. Crisis response teams must build in redundancy, especially around communication (Zdziarski, Dunkel, & Rollo, 2007). Crisis preparation means more than having and reviewing a plan or manual of crisis response. Preparation involves building in redundant resources for coping with the various issues that face the 21st century school and helping environment, and then practicing the crisis response over and over (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). Below is a more detailed examination of the keys to the Four P’s.

**Planning**

An effective crisis plan includes detailed description of two things:

1. How specific, high probability crises are to be approached (death of staff, parent, or student; violent action; kidnapping; fire or natural disaster; etc.); and

2. How to be proactive and problem solve when plans hit snags or situations occur beyond the crisis plan (Lagadec, 1993, 2009).
In order to do that, crisis plans need detailed descriptions of how various personnel are to act, react, and proact in the initial stages of crisis, making sure that contingency plans are available for personnel removed by the crisis or and other factors. In addition, crisis plans need detailed descriptions of how the school is stabilized and secured and how negative emotions are immediately addressed. Crisis personnel must ensure that the plan is specific enough to be useful but flexible enough to be adaptive (Lagadec, 1993, 2009). Leaders must answer these questions: What is my assigned role in a crisis? What do I do when a team member is not available? What part of the crisis response is given to me? How does my “responsibility” reflect the “reality” of the school?

**Preparation**

Once plans are in place, the school must ensure that the preparations for implementing the plans are ready. Are all the required resources available? To do so, crisis management leaders must identify needs and then make resources available to appropriate personnel. Have all school personnel had basic crisis management training? Have specialized crisis response personnel been trained thoroughly in their assigned tasks and the tasks of other members who may be unable to respond at the critical moment? The cost of poor preparation is high. An unprepared school is asking for chaos, according to Obiakor, Mehring and Schwenn (1997). Unprepared schools result in environments of chaos, disorganization, confusion, conflict, emotional contagion, and destructive rumors (e.g., American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). Crisis effects can devastate all those in the unprepared schools. Students suffer long term developmental deficits due to stress disorders and loss of a secure culture of learning. On the other hand, preparation assists coping
and thus lowers stress (e.g., U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004). In addition, to preparing the crisis management team, the National Traumatic Stress Network suggests that crisis management leaders prepare the parents, staff, teachers, and especially the principal. For the teachers and staff, adequate training and assistance in the crisis management plan and practice exercises are critical. Also, staff and teachers need pre-crisis stress management training. Keeping communication open between the crisis management team and teachers and staff pre-crisis and during the crisis is essential for keeping personnel informed and avoiding damaging rumors. During a crisis, the principal can become isolated and disempowered by stakeholders, parents, media, and upper administrators. The crisis manager must serve as advisor, technical assistant, and source of support to offset negative and destabilizing inputs. When requested by the principal, the crisis manager may also work closely with various off campus professionals who may become involved during the crisis and post crisis (i.e., mental health providers, medical staff, etc.). Finally, parents need to be informed about the general crisis procedures and stay informed about crisis responses. It is not uncommon during a school crisis for distraught parents to arrive on-site and become hostile to the police and crisis management team. Often such toxic interactions are fully recorded in real time by the media only exacerbating a deteriorating situation. Clearly, preparation is a time and effort intensive stage that leads to crisis response catastrophe when skipped or minimized.

**Practice**

Perhaps the most neglected component of the Four P’s model in schools is practicing the prepared crisis plan. Today, most government agencies engage in at least some form of semi-regular simulations and drills. All schools have routine fire drills, and some have other practice session as well (i.e., severe weather remain in place exercises). Yet, practice is far more than
doing the same thing over and over. Practice exercises must introduce barriers, surprises and challenges to the team. Practice needs to involve other crisis response parties who might be needed during an actual crisis (police, superintendents, EMS, etc.). In order to reinforce proaction, personnel need to be reinforced and highlighted for adapting and problem solving, rather than mere rote reaction. Finally, the crisis response team needs routine assessment of the practice with updating and fine tuning as necessary (Zdziarski, Dunkel, & Rollo, 2007).

**Proaction**

If practice is the most neglected component, proaction is the least understood. It serves as the antithesis of reaction. Experts admit that during a crisis it is difficult to think clearly (Lagadec, 1993). The objective, rational problem solving orientation required by the strategic approach asks much from crisis managers. Tactically oriented crisis managers emphasize the repeated practice of clearly established plans until the crisis response becomes second nature. That approach is a good solution to the fog of crises as long as the crisis fits the appropriate plan. Unfortunately, as Lagadec (2009) emphasizes, this is ever rarer. What is likely to occur then is that tactically trained crisis teams will find their efforts increasingly ineffective. Once such failure overcomes denial, the crisis team may collapse.

Proactive trained crisis teams are trained in how to approach the crisis with an orientation toward innovation, flexibility, and adaptation. The goals of the crisis plan are constantly matched to the outcomes of the latest response. As an earlier article (Brack, Brack, Hill, Wells, & Lassiter, 2007) illustrated, this is difficult at best. It is not that proaction avoids detailed plans, but that such plans are viewed as guides that will need to be fine-tuned as the crisis response develops. In tactical crisis management, the crisis team asks, “What do we do next?” In
strategic crisis management, the crisis team asks, “Is what we are doing working and if not what is the next best option?”

A story, perhaps apocryphal, told by a Strategic crisis manager illustrates this point. A crisis consultant was asked by a school superintendent to assess a school’s crisis management plan. When the consultant arrived at the school, it was clear that the principal and the crisis team were defensive. They made it clear that they had crisis planning well under control and needed no further consultation. The consultant told the principal and her crisis team that she had no desire to waste their time. The consultant merely asked to watch whatever crisis drill the school had prepared. The principal said that the fire drill was their crisis management jewel. The consultant agreed to observe the drill. As the principal and crisis team began to implement the drill, the consultant walked out to her car and brought back several orange cones. The consultant went to one of the far doors and placed the cones. As the fire alarm went off, the teachers methodically led their students to the well rehearsed exits. Unfortunately, for several teachers and their well behaved classes, the consultant with the orange cones stood in front of their designated door exit. As the teachers approached, the consultant announced, “This door is blocked, please proceed to another exit.” Several teachers tried to turn around their charges, but one veteran teacher stood her ground demanding that the consultant move. The consultant merely repeated that the doors were blocked and an alternate exit was required. Quickly, the well mannered lines of students became entangled, teachers frantic, and the entire hall blocked up. Eventually the principal and crisis team were drawn to the commotion. The consultant walked up to them and said, “Your plan works perfectly as long as the fire follows your plans.” Then pointing back to the chaos, the consultant added, “I would be worried if the fire was uncooperative.” That is the risk of a tactical crisis response. Hopefully, strategically trained,
proactive teachers would have quickly accommodated to the disruption and found a new exit without chaos and loss of valuable time.

Conclusions

“Good crisis managers are rarely welcomed and rewarded - until needed!” Anonymous.

School crisis management is not a pursuit for the faint hearted. The responsibility of protecting people at the worst of times requires the best of school personnel. Effective crisis management can maximize the best possible outcome, but nothing is guaranteed. If Lagadec (2009) is correct, we will know less and less about more and more as the 21st century progresses. At present, tactical approaches seem doomed to failure, but Strategic crisis management asks much of crisis managers. Tactical crisis managers grew used to the defensiveness and resistance of school personnel to the crisis management program. After all, in schools where time is precious, preparation for the improbable seemed a luxury. Many recent tragedies have shown that such is a dangerous illusion. Strategic crisis managers face defensiveness and resistance not only from the usual suspects, but many fellow old style crisis managers as well. Much work will be needed to bring Lagadec’s paradigm shifts to fruition, but progress is being made and reality is bound to test this newer model. School personnel are best persuaded by effective outcomes, and it will take time for strategic crisis management to prove itself to the majority of school personnel.
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[http://www.aascu.org/media/pdf/07_expectingunexpected.pdf](http://www.aascu.org/media/pdf/07_expectingunexpected.pdf)


