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**The end of innocence: Lessons learned from crisis management of the September 11
terrorist attack**

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Abstract

For many college counselors, professional careers can be broken into two periods: before and after September 11, 2001. In many cases, the period immediately after September 11 was a time of testing the crisis management plans and responses that had been developed over the years. It is critical that lessons learned from that response be clarified and used to further improve the entire field of crisis management. The present paper presents a specific crisis response plan developed at a Counseling Center at a large urban southeastern university that was tested to its limits following September 11. The crisis response plan was based upon Lagadec's (1993) Strategic Model. The debriefing of crisis response members and intense evaluation of the notes kept during the response have served as the data for evaluating the response, and constructing recommendations for improved future response plans. The crisis management response went through five identified stages: "Pre-crisis planning", "The Beginning", "Mobilization and Early Responses", "Later Responses", and "Review". While overall the Strategic Method worked as a viable framework for the response plan, numerous shortcomings were identified from communication loss among the response team, to confusion about how the response team was to link to inter-organizational members throughout the university.

"It should be...acknowledged that in this complex and unpredictable period of colleges and universities, a crisis may focus on an event that is at least initially perceived to be quite critical and could occur at any time. If administrators understand this, then they will be in the right frame of mind ..."(Darling, 1994, p. 49)

For many counselors, especially those working with colleges and universities, professional careers will be broken into two periods: before and after Sept. 11, 2001. Despite the optimistic hopes of many, the beginning of the 21st century has brought a new "cold war", one neither so cold nor distant as before. In fact, the collective shock to the American psyche has been termed the "end of innocence" (Carver, 2001). Clinicians in all sectors of the profession were called upon to assist the nation to cope with the many facets of terror seemingly looming on the horizon. Many within the profession were tapped to respond not merely to individual clients, but to whole organizations grappling to protect personnel from an ambiguous and frightening threat. In many cases, the period immediately after September 11 was a time of testing prior crisis management plans developed over the years. Yet, few counselors seriously had planned for an event of the scale facing their communities on that day (Galloway, 2001). It is critical that lessons learned from that response be clarified and used to further improve the entire field of crisis management. The present paper presents a specific crisis response plan developed at a Counseling Center at a large urban southeastern university that was tested to its limits following September 11.

The College Counselor as Crisis Manager

Due to the many job descriptions and responsibilities of counselors and psychotherapists, September 11th brought a demand that many were not anticipating. As the incredible news of the attacks in New York and Washington filtered in, entire organizations switched into crisis mode. Major cities were placed on "Red Alert"- a scary term with a lack of operationalization or concrete response plan (Galloway, 2001). Clinicians within such organizations were pressed into service (APA Monitor, November 2001; Simmons, 2002). Many had only preliminary training, and even those professionals with extensive preparation found the emerging situation beyond existing resources. These clinicians quickly learned the old adage "to fail to plan is to plan to fail." Yet, how could one plan for such a contingency?

Unfortunately, counselors have a sparse empirical literature upon which to draw, and little of it has been directly applied to counseling-type settings (i.e., see Bishop, 1990; Pruett & Brown, 1990a). Though many theoretical sources are available (i.e., see Pearson & Clair, 1998 for an excellent list), most are untested. One source of advanced practical information is Lagadec (1993). Lagadec indicates that there are basically two ways of preparing a crisis response:

- a. The Tactical Method which gives the counselor a "guidebook" on what to do and is typically favored by Americans using a problem solving style which focuses on a "first aid" orientation like the response teams of the American Red Cross, and
- b. The Strategic Method which gives the counselor a means of approaching a crisis by providing decision makers with questions to ask and providing known answers to deal with complex, ambiguous crisis situations. This method is

favored by Europeans (especially the French) in dealing with complex environments and focuses more on judgments.

The Tactical Method has many proponents and many clinicians have become certified in advanced crisis management by the Red Cross (Foster, 2001), but, unfortunately, "spectacular terrorist incidents" like September 11 can defeat a purely tactical approach as the crisis response team is confronted with events that often were not anticipated, planned, and/or practiced.

With events such as September 11, a clinician using the Strategic Method can adapt a general approach to the crisis, and, with effort, act to meet even the most unexpected developments (i.e., see Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). In most crises, there exists what we call the "fog of crisis," a term paraphrased from such military theorists as Clausewitz (see Lagadec, 1993 for a discussion of Clausewitz). Events such as September 11th are surrounded by vague and conflictual information that makes response difficult at best. Further, once a response begins, the effort to keep track of the various components of that response increases exponentially. Lagadec emphasizes that the counselor must plan to adapt to the emerging crisis. As Lagadec suggests, under crisis conditions, it is imperative that emergent patterns of crisis response seek to address the crisis.

In discussing these two approaches, Lagadec states,

What do we do, then, to prevent and manage a crisis? A clear choice needs to be made between the two alternatives. The first approach would have been to write a guide, similar to others that already exist...which would offer the decision maker some basic answers. For many reasons... we abandoned this approach. The other option was to portray as closely as possible the complexity and ambiguity of crisis situations and to

suggest tools for thinking about them and offer means to ask questions - and of course, to provide answers that have already been tested, with all their limitations, on the best-known aspects of the issue" (p. xi, italics in original).

The key to the Strategic Model of crisis management is to "reason strategically" (Lagadec, 1993, p. xxv). The essence of strategic reasoning is an interactive cycle of objective distancing from the immediate crisis demands, asking key questions about which types of actions might lead to both short term and long term crisis management, and then taking the best identified action. Rather than relying solely on guidebooks or formal action plans, the counselor takes the previously identified plans and resources and then adapts them to the emerging crisis. The counselor maintains an attitude of adaptation and coping rather than mastery. The first priority of the counselor is to garner resources to contain and stabilize the crisis within the organizational setting. Next, through analysis of incoming information and organizational development, the counselor begins a series of reasoned actions targeted to move toward crisis resolution. Such actions are bound to go astray in the dynamic crisis environment, but, by following the strategic reasoning cycle, the crisis response is altered and adjusted until a crisis resolution occurs. Simply, strategic crisis management is more an attitude toward the crisis response rather than a formula, and as shown below, an excellent way of framing the crisis response when the crisis literally shatters the reality of counselors.

Testing the Strategic Model in the Line of Fire: September 11, 2001

The present paper reviews the action of a crisis management team of a university-counseling center that used a modified Lagadec approach. The modified Strategic Model response, though severely strained at points, was able to meet needs in the dynamic and

terrifying hours and days after the initial terrorist attack in Pennsylvania, New York and Washington. The crisis management response went through five identified stages.

Stage 1: "Pre-crisis planning"

The university counseling center described in this paper had worked to develop a basic crisis management plan for addressing high probability crisis at the university level. The university's plan was last revised in 1999. A review by consultants Marsh and McClennon in 2000 concluded it was "adequate, effective and workable," but stated several problems. First, it focused entirely on the first 24 hours after a crisis and needed to include subsequent "business continuity." Due to administrative turn over, we believe most university personnel did not know the university plan. Second, it primarily focused on the safe evacuation of buildings in the case of non-mental health related catastrophes, such as weather storms, fires, or criminal activity. No one guessed that being in the heart of urban Atlanta might mean being a target of terrorism of the magnitude of September 11. The Division of Student Services crisis plans included only student death and student sexual assault. Finally, none of the plans had been practiced, except in 1992, during campus-wide student demonstrations advocating responsiveness to African-American student concerns that closed classes and scared some students. This demonstration created the opportunity for the Counseling Center and University to respond to practical, political, and psychological issues on a university wide basis. The Counseling Center used critical incident stress debriefing teams on campus in order to diffuse, educate, and provide a bridge between the demonstrators, complainants, victims, and administration. This led the Counseling Center to develop a campus-wide crisis plan that included a crisis diffusing response team approach, which served the Center well on September 11.

In addition, the department of counseling and psychological services had begun the detailed process of developing its own plan prior to September 11, and the counseling center faculty had worked with the counseling and psychological services department in reviewing the basic weaknesses of the entire system's crisis response orientation. The counseling center (CC) and the counseling and psychological services department (CPS) had trained dozens of graduate students in crisis management, traumatology, and critical incident stress debriefing as a normal part of clinical training, so clinical resources were recognized as available, but generally unorganized for the magnitude of the events occurring on September 11.

Therefore, the four crisis plans (university, division, counseling center and department of counseling and psychological services) were not completely integrated and had never been tested together. Many members of these teams did not know the members of other teams, or even that such teams existed. So, as the crisis developed, it was recognized that several teams would be mobilized without adequate coordination.

Thus, the situation at the time of September 11 required a Strategic Method of response for several reasons:

- a. The Tactical Plan was not satisfactory to deal with the crisis at the departmental, counseling center, division, or university level;
- b. The crisis confronting the response team was ambiguous, vague, and dynamically changing; and
- c. The organization of response resources needed to be rapid, innovative, and creative.

Stage 2 "The Beginning"

The morning of September 11 began, as most crises, without an obvious sign of the approaching chaos. As the information about the terrorist attacks trickled in, it was obvious to administrators at the university, division, department of counseling and psychological services, and the counseling center that a significant crisis was looming. Although early recognition and action is important (Darling, 1994), reasoning strategically to adapt to the crisis and meet unexpected developments is essential (Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). As Darling writes, "The real challenge is not just to recognize crisis, but to recognize them in a timely fashion and with a will to address the issues they represent." (p. 52). Reasoning strategically to adapt to the crisis and to meet unexpected developments is also essential (Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). In light of the confusing situation, a Lagadec style strategic response was established synchronistically at all levels. Using strategic reasoning means objectively distancing from immediate crisis demands, defining the problem, asking questions regarding appropriate actions, taking the best identified action, and adapting to changes (Lagadec, 1993).

The city where the university is housed was put on "Red Alert" during the first few hours after the attack on the World Trade Center, and the response team had no idea what might next occur (Tofig, September 2001). This alert was particularly concerning, since the university is located in the downtown area and is potentially at risk. During this stage, many members of the crisis management team were off campus or not in their office. Due to intense media coverage, most members were rapidly informed, and, within 20 minutes of the second World Trade Center crash, the crisis management teams of the department of counseling and psychological services and the counseling center were activated.

Stage 3 "Mobilization and Early Responses"

This third stage began immediately as the crisis response leaders of the counseling and psychological services department and counseling center formed the initial organization of the first response teams. There was an immediate demand for information about possible university closing, etcetera, so crisis team leaders began to communicate via cell phone, as information was gathered and processed. The director of the Counseling Center was in immediate communication with the Dean of Students who called a Division-wide Crisis Response Meeting. These meetings included the Dean of Students, the Director of the Counseling Center, the Director of University Police, and the Director of Health Services, the Director of International Student Services. Included on September 11 were the Provost, the Vice-President of Student Services, the Vice-President of Financial Administration, the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, the Director of Faculty and Staff Assistance. Since the emerging crisis was largely unambiguous and had no crisis management plan prepared for it, in this early stage, the crisis team leaders decided to strategize before acting. Lagadec writes, ..."the rule that is essential in handling any crisis situation: *always take time to define both the problems and their context, and always force yourself to ask questions first and to take some critical distance before plunging in*" (p xii). Yet as Pearson and Clair (1998) indicate, the crisis team leaders reported an overwhelming sense of urgency to act. The terrorists' attacks had directly shattered the crisis team members' illusion that such things could not happen to the United States. As Pearson and Clair predicted, the shattered assumptions, and the urgency for action, gave the crisis team leaders tremendous pressure to respond, but in a context where response was unprecedented. The fact that there was no guidebook to implement, though, required the crisis team leaders to stop and think, hence making this period extremely stressful.

As Lagadec predicted, during these first two hours, rumors began to spread, and there was a fear that the mass transit system was shut down. The rumor of the closing of the mass transit system created a near panic as many people were afraid that they could not evacuate and get to their loved ones. Crisis team members checked with the city's mass transit authority and found that though initial transit had been disrupted, a complete shut down was untrue, and the system was back to normal functioning. So crisis management leaders began to inform various university personnel, so that scared students could be informed. At the same time as the crisis management team at the counseling center was mobilizing, the university crisis team was also forming. Many important decisions were required in the information vacuum, including timing of closing the university, since it was undesirable to release the university community at the same time nearby state and local governmental offices and private business were closing. The crisis management team, however, was still fragmented, as the counseling and psychological services department was involved in dealing with departmental matters, while the counseling center team dealt with more global university matters. A cohesive crisis response team could not solidify as the crisis managers were pulled in many different directions (via university, departmental, and counseling center responsibilities). The best that could be achieved was that the leaders kept in constant touch about the developments at the three levels and began to strategize what was needed for each group. In actual practice, the initial loosely coordinated response had many benefits, since specific forms of information came to each group separately, and, by constant communication, the various teams were able to stay abreast of developments.

Approximately two and a half hours after the initial World Trade Center crash, the university president, after much thought and deliberation, decided to close the university.

However, there was some confusion about what that meant. Some people assumed that the buildings should be evacuated immediately. Others interpreted it to mean that classes were cancelled but students and staff were welcome to stay on campus. Due to their need to secure the buildings from theft and vandalism, the university police announced, over loud speakers in all buildings, that everyone was expected to exit. As a result, traffic congestion was at its maximum in the parking decks and the campus was not emptied for two more hours. At this point, the department of counseling and psychological services crisis team merged into the counseling center team. To centralize communication, as recommended by Smiar (1992), a center of operations room was chosen within the Counseling Center's administrative suite. This location served as central headquarters, where crisis team members were sent for direction and information.

During this stage, there was a recognition of a massive "information vacuum," so a faculty member was appointed to listen to the radio and report to the response central office the latest information. By merging the departmental crisis team with the counseling center team, greater coordination and mobilization of resources was possible, but significant information access was lost. The faculty member monitoring the media became an essential tool in combating rumors and updating team members about the city's status. It must be remembered that, at this point, there was still a serious realistic threat to the city's infrastructure, with major federal agencies and airport facilities designated for attack.

Once the university decided to close down, many students were afraid to evacuate and rumors and anxiety became a central concern. Two actions were taken to address these concerns. First, personnel on call at the counseling center monitored the front office and the

phones until it was clear all students were off campus. A Dean of Students office representative was giving students updates in the New Student Center. Second, graduate students with crisis management training were organized into four small response teams that were sent to designated student-gathering areas (Recreation center, Child Care Center, University Library Plaza, New Student Center, General Classroom, Student Housing, and assorted other high occupancy areas).

The teams were asked to:

- A. Assess the needs of the students
- B. Distribute accurate information,
- C. Engage in rumor control, and
- D. Defuse/debrief at-risk individuals.

The response teams sought to calm and inform concerned students, staff, and faculty and assist those in need to evacuate successfully. As recommended by McCarthy and Knapp (1984), response teams were instructed to approach students in an empathic, but more direct, problem solving style than many counselors naturally employ. Response teams approached groups of students in these locations, informing students about the latest developments and assessing whether anyone was in need of specific help. In a few cases, potential conflicts were interrupted, as groups of students voiced extreme anger about the attacks, and some intense debates were beginning to alarm bystanders. In all cases, students listened to the response team and concluded discussions in a cooperative manner.

Also, at this stage, the administration of the counseling center was absorbed into university meetings as the university itself tried to respond. Thus, the counseling center established a hierarchy of response authority. The counseling center director maintained contact

with the crisis response central office via cell phone while the associate director remained on duty within the center and assumed administrative and decision making responsibilities. A counseling and psychological services department faculty member acted as organizational liaison. The organizational liaison dealt directly with the response teams, and funneled information to the administration and back to the response teams. The task of the organizational liaison was to keep a thorough log containing:

- a. List of crisis team members and their current location,
- b. Time line of actions taken,
- c. Important phone numbers, and
- d. List of prioritized actions yet to be taken.

The list served as the "crisis team memory" as the confusion increased and personnel were funneled across campus to respond to various needs. Lagadec states,

Events are going to pick up speed. It is important to set down quickly in writing the elements of information received, the procedures undertaken, and the steps already decided upon...If the log book is not kept up to date, within a few hours no one will be able to know what is going on, how the procedures have been implemented, and who said what, who did what, and so on. Writing things down makes it possible to undertake consistent action over the long haul. (p. 202)

Obviously, our government recognized the importance of note taking, since Laura Bush took extensive notes during meetings between President George Bush and his advisors over the early and critical hours of this national crisis.

Two main problems developed during the university closing. First, the childcare personnel could not leave until parents picked up children. However, due to the confusion about closing, traffic problems, and assorted ambiguities, the staff was one of the last groups to be freed to leave campus, even though several staff had their own loved ones to care for off-campus. Response teams here were supportive and assisted the staff as they prepared to close while also keeping the children calm. Second, at this time, there were concerns about getting students to off-campus housing, and in a few cases students with disabilities were left waiting for transport caught in the massive traffic jam that tied up midtown. The response teams aided these individuals and worked to get students sorted out and residence managers informed regarding the developments in student housing.

A critical failure in communication occurred at this phase. All crisis response teams were equipped with at least one cell phone to inform the crisis leaders as to the on-campus situation and the response team's status. We anticipated that "land lines" would be too busy and generally unavailable, but exactly the opposite occurred. As expected, cell phone networks were overloaded and busy, making contact with the response teams impossible. Since there was fear of more attacks, maybe even in the city, the crisis team leaders were extremely concerned about the response teams. For approximately 30 minutes, the crisis team leaders were out of touch with the crisis response teams, and contact was not reestablished until land line connections were made or individual response team members were sent back to the counseling center to report. At the same time, the contact via cell phone with the counseling center Director was lost, making the counseling center crisis team isolated from developments with the university crisis management team. The Associate Director then had to assume extensive responsibility and key

decision making in the absence of a Director now pulled into higher-level administrative procedures just as Bishop (1990) had warned. While membership in university-wide crisis teams allowed the administration to keep abreast of more local crisis efforts, it also fragmented the counseling center leadership in the time of utmost need. As cell phone contact was lost, this fragmentation was exacerbated, but eventually, a landline was designated as the one for contact, and the Director and crisis team became reintegrated.

By mid-afternoon, the campus was cleared, and most of the crisis team was released for the day. The leaders of the crisis team remained, planning the next day's activities and anticipating needs. The Director met with the Division Crisis Team for end of the day review and coordination for the rest of the week. Meetings were established at the Division-wide level at 8:30 and 4:30 every day until the crisis was considered over. A Community Gathering for the university was planned by the division crisis team and coordinated by the Dean of Students with the Counseling Center assuming responsibility for follow-up student support group offerings.

Stage 4: "Later Responses"

This stage lasted for the next two and a half weeks. On September 12, the university reopened, and based upon the previous day's discussion, the crisis team identified three main needs:

- a. Training of crisis team for unknown demand upon services.
- b. Intervention with affected individuals, and
- c. Outreach and consultation to university administrators, faculty, and students via classroom presentation.

The main concern beginning the morning of Sept. 12 was that student demand for crisis services would quickly outstrip resource availability. Thus, a staff training session for Crisis Incident Stress Defusing or Debriefing was scheduled so that if CISD was required, all professional staff and trainees would be prepared. Later that day, advanced graduate students working at the counseling center completed similar training.

In order to assess student need, an open "group processing room" was established for students who wanted to come and talk about the recent events. The room was staffed with advanced graduate students and/or faculty to facilitate conversations and triage need. The group processing room was used on a sporadic basis, with some students using the resource to vent. Other students in obvious crisis were immediately sent to individual counselors for debriefing and crisis management work. During this period, several students sought assistance and were given individual crisis management. It was noticed that a significant number of existing clients went into crisis in these early days, but found assistance from their current or previous therapists. Overall, the Center noted a dramatic increase in students with sexual abuse histories seeking services for personal counseling in the nine months after September 11. In fact the number one student concern reported for this past year was sexual abuse, with the second most important concern being stress.

As recommended by Pruett & Brown (1990b), faculty and students in the counseling and psychological services department and the counseling center then began to attend classes where faculty had requested assistance regarding stress management, crisis debriefing, etcetera. Also, at major student gathering locations (especially at the student commons), crisis team members staffed a table and handed out flyers on stress management, trauma symptoms, and resources for

assistance on and off campus. These materials included "the emotional response fact sheets" similar to that used by Archer (1992). Of the diverse interventions tried during this period, the "help table" on the commons reached hundreds of students and disseminated a vast amount of informative material. The crisis management team also contacted all student activities groups to inform them of available services. All of these outreach activities, besides serving as interventions, assisted the crisis team in gaining visibility that would make further action possible, as advised by Pearson and Clair (1998). We saw over 1200 students in some kind of service in the early aftermath of September 11.

As outreach and consultation to the university community, the crisis management team worked with university personnel to answer questions and to organize a campus wide community forum meeting on Thursday September 13. A growing concern on campus was harassment and adverse reactions toward students of Arab descent. The community forum was seen as an opportunity to facilitate open discussion while also educating students about tolerance. Approximately 200 university faculty, staff, and students attended the forum where faculty spoke on a variety of topics including terrorism and trauma response. Then the audience was offered the opportunity for "break out" discussions led by members of the crisis teams. Approximately 20 students participated in these support groups. Outreach to residence hall assistants was also conducted, so that RAs knew how to handle students distressed by the recent events.

Finally, that afternoon crisis team members met for a debriefing session where their unique concerns were discussed. The debriefing was necessary, as Pearson and Clair (1998) indicate, that a crisis can shatter the meaning and assumptions people have about their world, and it was clear the terrorists' attacks had done so for the staff. During the debriefing, it became

obvious that some of the crisis team were angry about the attack, and the insecurities bred by it, and were grappling with how to cope while continuing to manage the crisis. Many of the team members reported that the crisis response activities served as an effective release of their fears and gave them "something concrete to do, when little else seemed possible."

By Friday afternoon, September 14, it was determined that the Group Processing room was no longer needed, and most Counseling Center personnel returned to more normal duties. Outreach programs continued to assist faculty in their efforts to deal with student concerns. On Thursday, September 20, a *Rally for Peace and Speak Out* was organized for the university community where people could express themselves in a public forum. The rally went well with crisis team members speaking about self-care and the availability of student services. This marked the end of the main crisis management efforts. Yet, for several months, crisis team members still were asked to participate in a variety of outreach activities, including TV appearances, additional community forums, and faculty/class diffusings and debriefings.

Stage 5: "Review"

The Review Stage involved a detailed examination of the crisis log and interviews with response team members to assess the effectiveness of the response and need for further developments. As Smiar (1992) states, "The best crisis management plans provide for a postmortem..." (p. 147). Archer (1992) discusses that, within six months of a major crisis, it is possible for crisis response team members to gain perspective of the crisis and to assess the lessons to be learned from the response. The present authors would concur with that, but it is important to remember that in the present situation, the consequences of the crisis continued to ripple through the university and the nation. During the six months following September 11, the

counseling center received a 6.5% increase in student utilization of individual counseling services, and a 68% increase in student emergencies, much of which could be attributed to direct and indirect effects of September 11. Such increases, reflected in counseling centers around the country, may illustrate the more pervasive and enduring nature of September 11 and the new war on terrorism. In general, we surmised that already vulnerable or stressed students were pushed beyond their coping resources as the September 11 and post-September 11 events unraveled. Furthermore, student misbehavior had reached such levels that the university senate amended student behavior guidelines due to faculty reports of unruly classrooms and other disruptive student behavior. In general, the underlying tension on campus remained high throughout the academic year.

Yet the fears of crisis team leaders that foreign nationals might be targeted for harassment did not materialize beyond a few isolated cases. One reason is undoubtedly the President of the university's strong statements against such action, and the faculty monitoring and reporting any incidents. Further, the initial actions of the crisis response teams defused several particularly explosive situations. The forum and rally also sought to offset any momentum that might develop around specific groups.

By June 2002, the counseling center staff reported extensive exhaustion from meeting the high demand, and several non-client service days were scheduled as staff attempted to regroup. In retrospect, the events of September 11 had only added to the usual stressors of the campus, but the enduring threat and repeated terrorist warnings kept faculty, staff, and students on edge throughout the year.

Conclusions

Overall, the Strategic Method worked as a viable framework for the response plan. Darling (1994) states that one of the main functions of university crisis management is to assist the university to continue day-to-day activities with as little disruption as possible. Clearly, the university's crisis response allowed such to be the case, since some students were expected to and did take exams on Sept. 12th. The university resumed normal class activities less than twenty-four hours after the entire city was shut down. Yet numerous weaknesses in the crisis response plans were identified from communication loss among the response team members, to confusion about how the response team was linked to inter-organizational members throughout the university.

At the Counseling Center interdepartmental level, a review of the September 11 crisis response generated a specific list of improvements that the crisis committee used to revise the campus-wide crisis plan. At both division and university-wide levels, similar reviews occurred and recommendations were made to revise current plans and coordinate the various levels of crisis management. In general, serious crisis preparation and practice of existing crisis plans began in earnest for the first time in the university's history. The over-riding challenge at all levels of campus-wide crisis management appears to be how to sustain motivation to work on refining crisis management plans when the crisis is abated and other issues appear to take priority in a culture of limited resources. Although the good news is that due to these extraordinary events, a university-wide cross-functional team met at the beginning of the fall semester of 2002 to review continuing needs. Unfortunately, many of the recommendations from various university review groups had yet to be implemented, almost a year after 9/11.

The present study represents an empirical assessment of the strategic method in a counseling setting and offers other college counselors lessons learned during a period when America was said to have lost its innocence. Debriefing of crisis response members and intense appraisal of the notes kept during the response have served as the data for evaluating the response and constructing recommendations for the improved future response plans. In retrospect, it is difficult to capture the sheer stress and fear of those early hours after the attacks. Later, of course, more fear would return with the anthrax laced letters that paralyzed the postal system. Milburn, Shuler, and Watman (1983) stress that counselors who manage such crises must be able to perceive the emerging crisis and realistically accept it. This was a most difficult task on September 11 and on into the fall. In those initial hours, anything seemed possible, and even rumors of a "military takeover" circulated. The crisis response team had to decipher rumor from fact and act in a way that ensured the safety and security of the university community. In the heat of the crisis, this was far from easy and not nearly as linear as this article might suggest. Crisis team leaders reported that one of the most stressful periods was when the initial crisis response teams were sent out to gather information and assist students, but quickly lost communication. At that time in a city under Red Alert, anything seemed possible, and assessing the risk to the crisis response team was impossible. For the half hour it took to reestablish communication with the crisis response teams, crisis team leaders worried and fretted about the safety of the crisis response team members. Crisis team leaders said that during this period they felt a terrible responsibility for the safety of their teams, but unable to ensure that such safety was available. At that point, all assumptions about what was possible had been shattered and once the crisis team seemed "lost" to the emerging threat, anxiety grew. Of course, such fear proved

groundless, but in the moment, that was not apparent. That is the nature of crisis response especially with events like September 11. Only in hindsight does the reality appear. Truly the "fog of crisis" exists and impedes effectiveness.

The Pre-crisis interactions of the various team members certainly facilitated the emergence of the crisis team response. As Pearson and Clair (1998) write, "Those organizations building alliances and achieving coordination by sharing information and plans with external stakeholders prior to a crisis will experience greater success outcomes and less failure outcomes in crisis management than will those lacking such alliances" (p. 59). Further, the coordination of departmental and counseling center faculty, staff, and students allowed the creation of a truly multidisciplinary crisis response team as recommended by Cornell & Sheras (1998). Hopefully, the future will not require similar responses, but in the new world of the twenty-first century, strategic crisis response may offer the best way of dealing with turbulent and dynamic world.

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