**Remote Field Crisis Management**

Session Title: 2.1 Family Support Before, During and After a Critical Incident

Duration: 105 minutes

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| **Aim of the session**  | To provide learners with the tools to effectively plan and implement family support activities during a crisis. |
| **Objectives:**By the end of this session participants will be able to:* Explain the basic principles around family support
* Select an appropriate person to deliver family support
* Differentiate between what family support should and should not do.
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| **Key Learning points:*** Family support is vital to organisations and families in the event of a crisis
* Be clear on the boundaries of your family support
* Be clear with your HQ on who is responsible for family support
* Preparation is very important to delivery of family support
* Interact effectively with the rest of the crisis management response (CMT/IMT/FCMT)
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| **Timing** | **What to do and say *(methodology)*** | **What you need *(resources)*** |
| 20’ | **Introduction: What is family support?**Ask group: “What is family support?’ Take a few responses and use **Slide 2** to discuss, being sure to highlight:* Family support is a way in which organisations communicate with the family of an affected person to ensure they are aware, up to date, pointed in the right direction for additional / ongoing support
* Key is that every family is unique and very situation is different.
* Provides a two way communication channel between the org and the family – reduces complexity
* Creates a single point of contact
* Provides two-way updates: what we know and what a family knows
* Gathering relevant details e.g. DNA, hidden medical issues
* Accompaniment e.g. to formal meetings such as visiting the Police or other authorities.
* Identify support and resources to share with a family
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| 45’ | **Family support activity**Start with a carousel activity. Prepare four flipcharts with the following questions and distribute them around the room. Split the group into four and assign each group to a flipchart:1. Why is family support important?
2. What family support activities should we do before a crisis?
3. What family support activities should we do during a crisis?
4. What family support activities should we do after a crisis?

Give each group two or three minutes at each flipchart before rotating clockwise to the next one (by ringing a bell maybe). The next group will add to the list already begun by the previous group. By the end of the carousel activity, all four groups should have contributed something to each flipchart.When all groups have completed the carousel, explain that you are going to explore these questions in more detail, using the flipchart answers, the PowerPoint slide (might not be necessary) or both.**Why is family support important (slide 3)?*** Moral obligation to staff: they are our responsibility and we have a duty to them (staff can also feel like family)
* We have legal duties and there is a risk of litigation
* The family may know things you don’t. In small instances, the crisis could be resolved by the family before you know about it.
* What are ‘proof of life’ questions: set of questions that serve to identify that someone is alive after being abducted. The family would likely know them or be able to create them?
* Unified actions: If families don’t think org is doing anything, they’ll take their own action, which can be detrimental. Sometimes, family may have more info than you
* Some families work together in orgs
* Etc.

 **What family support activities should we do before a crisis?*** Pre-Identification of family support roles
	+ Be honest about the role
	+ Try to select individuals who have awareness of what is involved in this role
	+ Someone with good listening and recording skills
	+ Can you ensure that they are mentally and emotionally fit for this role?
	+ If the person has a personal relationship with the family, then that’s probably not the right person.
* Guidance pack: Ensure that they have access to materials to support their role; Be aware of how they should work with the wider crisis management team/s
* Practice (practice, practice): as much as possible
* Build and learn from any real experiences that might occur

**What family support activities should we do during a crisis?*** Break bad news (ensure it’s to the right person!)
* Keep the family informed (on news and on what the organization is doing, not doing and why)
* Listen!
* Provide emotional/psychological support and someone to trust
* Provide financial support? What is your organisational stance? You need one.
* Ensure the family is involved in the process
* Keep records (the role is exhausting and my need to be handed over to someone else)
* Empathetic – not sympathetic
* Provide accompaniment
* What other services might be available?

**What family support activities should we do after a crisis – with the family support and with the family?*** De-brief
* Knowing who to talk to about the incident – long term
* Managing return to normal duties, where possible
* Understand local coping mechanisms
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| 20’ | **What you should/shouldn’t say and do**Use **Slides 7 & 8** to discuss….Should do:* Use simple / understandable language
* Keep notes of everything – one set for the organisation, one for the family (if required)
* Consistency in message and approach
* Ask the family what they want
	+ How, what, when and try to meet their requests
* Have patience (understand the family may be angry with you)
* Pass on all concerns, issues, actions of families to the organisation
* You can say, “I don’t know.”

Shouldn’t do:* Do not speculate – facts only
* Do not make promises
* Do not say what you think the family want to hear
* Do not get involved in family politics
* Do not offer support that you cannot provide
 | Flipchart and markers |
| 20’ | **How to Manage Family Support** Ask: ‘How does the relationship with an international organisation change the risk and how can that be managed?’ Discuss.Ask: Is the incident related to the organisation or is it personal, does that affect how the incident is managed? Discuss.Use **Slide 8** to discuss tips for managing family support:* Have a decision making structure
	1. Who can make what decisions?
* Balance between what the family wants and what the organisation can provide
* Do scenario planning
* Have an exit strategy: start planning your withdrawal from the family right at the beginning!
* Be clear on ‘boundaries
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**Supporting information for facilitators:**