

Crisis Communication

72 Hours of Hell:

Managing Crisis from a Manager's Point of View

PANELISTS



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Crisis: Neighborhood
Collapse



CARA PAVLICEK
Village Manager
Oak Park, IL

Crisis: Car Jackings



TIM GLEASON
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Crisis: Tornado



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

*72 Hours of Hell:
Managing Crisis Communication from a Manager's Point of View*

ILCMA Winter Conference 2020
February 6, 2020

Managing a Crisis. Not a One Size Fits All Approach.

- Every crisis is unique
- There are different types of crisis
- Loss of life, public health scare, natural disaster, negligence, financial, malice, workforce violence, etc.
- Internal/external



DID THAT ACTUALLY HAPPEN?

BIZARRE CRISIS AND EMERGENCY PLAN RESPONSE

BRAD TOWNSEND ICMA CM, NIU MPA



BIZARRE CRISES CAN AND DO HAPPEN!!!

QUICK EXAMPLES...

- CO2 Migrates into Neighborhood
- Natural Gas Pipeline Breach
- Tire Pile Fire and Rodent Scramble
- Green Slime in Buried Barrels by River
- Deep Tunnel Blasts and Cracks
- Metal Shards and Slime Fall from Sky

Common Denominators?

All Manmade Incidents!

***All Required Great
Communications.***



START OF DAY AND MOST OF DAY...



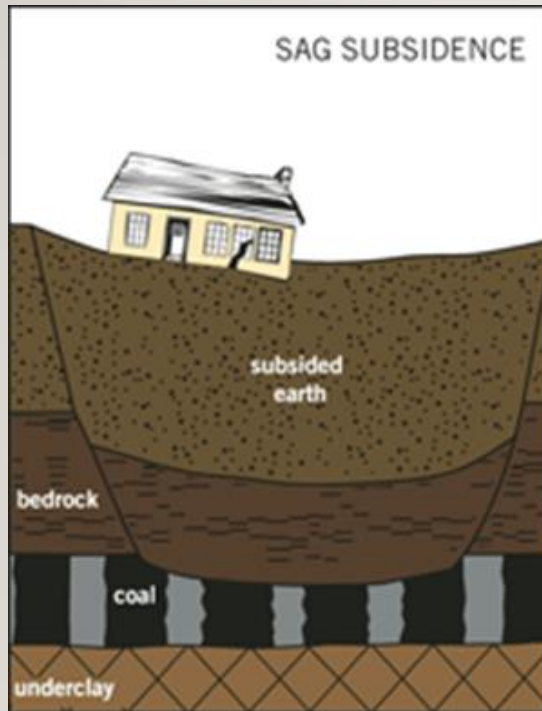
**...END OF DAY
THIS
HAPPENED**



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

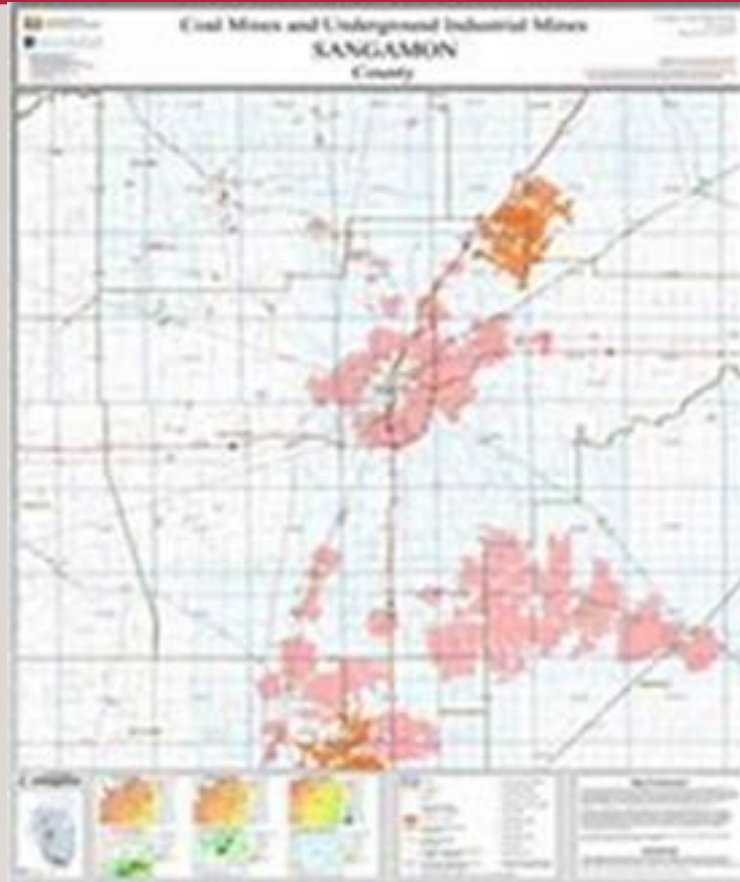
- **Location** = Grants Ridge Subdivision (north of West Washington Street and west of Veterans Parkway). About a dozen improved lots impacted.
- **Incident Command Post** = Firefighters
- **Perimeter Control and Utilities** = Public Works Crew
- **Evacuate** = Sangamon County Sheriff Deputies, Springfield Police Officers
- **Inspect and Evaluate** = Building Inspectors, Engineers

WHAT CAUSED THIS DISASTER?



Pillars supporting the roof of an underground mine tunnel collapsed. In turn, homes, utilities and streets collapsed. Not an earthquake, sink hole, or other event.

SUBDIVISION BUILT OVER UNCHARTED MINES



COMMUNICATIONS / ASSESSMENT/ HELP

- **Public Information** = For TV, Radio, Newspaper reporters
 - News conferences, releases, interviews (**social media, web*)
- **Direct Information** = Families, friends, employers
 - Phone, in-person (**e-messaging*)
- **Coordinate Information** = Public Information Officer
- **Document Losses** = Insurance Adjusters, For FEMA \$
- **Shelter** = Human Services and Faith-based Agency Teams

PLANNING FOR THE INEVITABLE CRISIS

- EOC = Emergency Operations Center
- ICS = Incident Command System
- NIMS = National Incident Management System
- *Training, Table-Top Drills, In-Field Exercises*
- *Multi-departmental and Multi-jurisdictional*

FEMA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

[HTTPS://TRAINING.FEMA.GOV/NIMS/](https://training.fema.gov/nims/)

On-line and On-site series training and testing opportunities:

- Executive/Elected Officials = ICS 100, 200, 300, 400, 402, or 191
- Executive/Public Safety Leaders = NIMS 700 to 800
- All = EOC G 775
- Local Agencies can train on ICS 300/400, G 191, G 402, and G 775

TAKE AWAYS

- *CRITICAL TO TRAIN AND PRACTICE*
- *HAVE AND QUICKLY USE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN*
- *COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL IN ERP OR A COM PLAN*
- *DESIGNATE A PIO AND COORDINATE COMMUNICATIONS*
- *DECLARE EMERGENCY ASAP*
- *GET BACK TO BASICS AFTER THE HOOPLAH*

DID THAT ACTUALLY HAPPEN?

BIZARRE CRISIS AND EMERGENCY PLAN RESPONSE

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Managing Crisis Communications from a Manager's Point of View

Presentation by
Oak Park Village Manager Cara Pavlicek



February 6, 2020

An *urban* suburb



Density

- 4.5 square miles and 52,000 residents
- 11,000+ residents per square mile
- The Village's 23,000+ housing units include:
 - 10,029 single-family homes
 - 759 two-flats
 - 116 three-flats
 - 375 townhomes)
 - 441 rental buildings (6,400 units)
 - 251 condo buildings (2,373 units)

Walkable *and* Bikeable

We share with *Chicago* the highest “Walk Score” of all Illinois cities at 78





Resident Beat Officer Program



Bike registration at block parties



Thrive Counseling Services



Carjackings

September 2017 through January 2018

- more than a dozen carjackings in Oak Park
- surrounding communities of Chicago, River Forest and Forest Park also experienced

Social Media focus

News coverage

OAK PARK.COM

FOREST AGENCY
INSURANCE


708.383.9000 | forestagency.com


AUTO • HOME • BUSINESS • LIFE

Two armed carjackings in three days in Oak Park

Both incidents took place around 6 p.m.

December 4th, 2018 3:12 PM

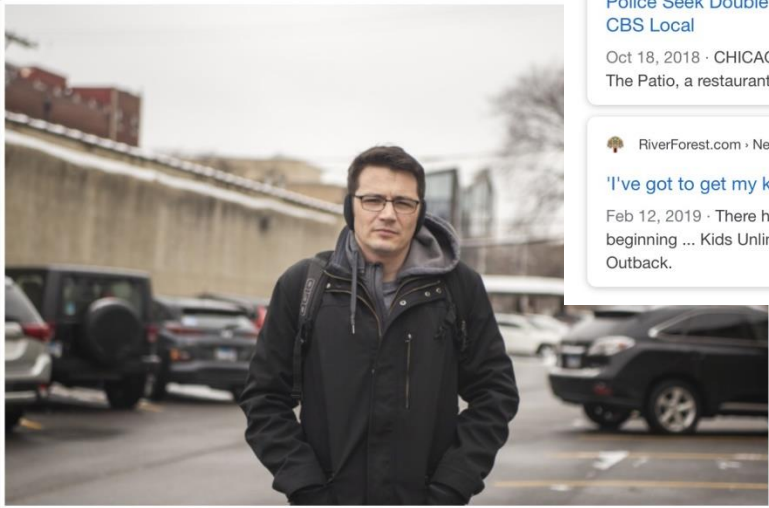


 By [Timothy Inklebarger](#)
Staff Reporter

'I've got to get my kids'

River Forest resident tells his story after carjacking in Oak Park

February 12th, 2019 12:52 PM



Another victim: River Forest resident Jon Reith was carjacked at gunpoint in the parking lot of Kids Unlimited Therapy Services, 820 North Boulevard. He had to get his two small children out of the vehicle before carjackers could take the vehicle. | Photo by Alexa Rogers

[aroundoakpark.com](#) • man-prevents...

Man Prevents Attempted Carjacking In Oak Park - Around Oak Park

May 21, 2018 · A man prevented two would-be carjackers from stealing his vehicle Sunday morning on the 1100 block of South Taylor Avenue in Oak Park.

[Forest Park Review](#)

Carjacking suspect arrested in Forest Park | Articles | News

Apr 3, 2018 · Carjacking suspect arrested in Forest Park. Police from Forest Park, Oak Park, River Forest, Berwyn and Maywood converged on the 8200 block of Roosevelt Road on April 1 about 4:15 p.m. ...

[WGN-TV](#) • 2018/07/04 • chicago-b...

Chicago boy charged in 2 attempted carjackings in Oak Park, police say | WGN-TV

OAK PARK, Ill. — A boy from Chicago has been charged with a pair of attempted carjackings in Oak Park last month. ... Posted 10:00 AM, July 4, 2018, by WGN Web Desk, Updated at 10:20AM, July 4 ...

[CBS Local](#) • chicago • 2018/10/18

Police Seek Double-Carjacking Suspect Who Ran Over Oak Forest Police Officer – CBS Chicago - CBS Local

Oct 18, 2018 · CHICAGO (CBS)—A man and a woman were carjacked by a man with a gun as they walked into The Patio, a restaurant in south suburban Orland Park, Thursday morning setting off a chain of ...

[RiverForest.com](#) • News • 'I've-got-t...

'I've got to get my kids' | Articles | News | RiverForest.com

Feb 12, 2019 · There have been at least six carjackings or attempted carjackings in Oak Park since the beginning ... Kids Unlimited and strapped them into their child seats in the back seat of his 2018 Subaru Outback.

Communicate

Communicate

Communicate

Elected Officials

- Provide facts & quickly
- Share arrest information quickly
- Provide written information they can share with constituents
- Cook County and Chicago support and Task Force
- Police Facebook

Village Staff

- Provide facts & quickly
- Give all staff – front line and management information they can share with the public
- Let them be part of the solution



Fleet Watch enlists municipal workforce

Residents

- **Multiple Community Meetings**
(successive days with both a.m. and p.m. options)
- **Resident Beat Officer Meetings**
(command and front line officer communications)
- **All meetings were opportunity for shared stories as well as providing information “about what to do” aka safe practices**
- **Enhanced Social Media platforms**

Victims and their families

- Personal contact with Chief
- Thrive Counseling Services
- Special Watches

Lessons Learned

- Speed of getting information out to public
- Accuracy of official information
(versus social media based upon scanners and rumor)
- Age of residents groups had different reactions
- Information about law enforcement infrastructure
(why can't officers tweet what is happening)



We  **Oak Park**
ILLINOIS



72 HOURS OF HELL

MANAGING CRISIS COMMUNICATION
FROM A MANAGER'S POINT OF VIEW

TORNADO: WASHINGTON, IL

PRESENTATION BY: TIM GLEASON

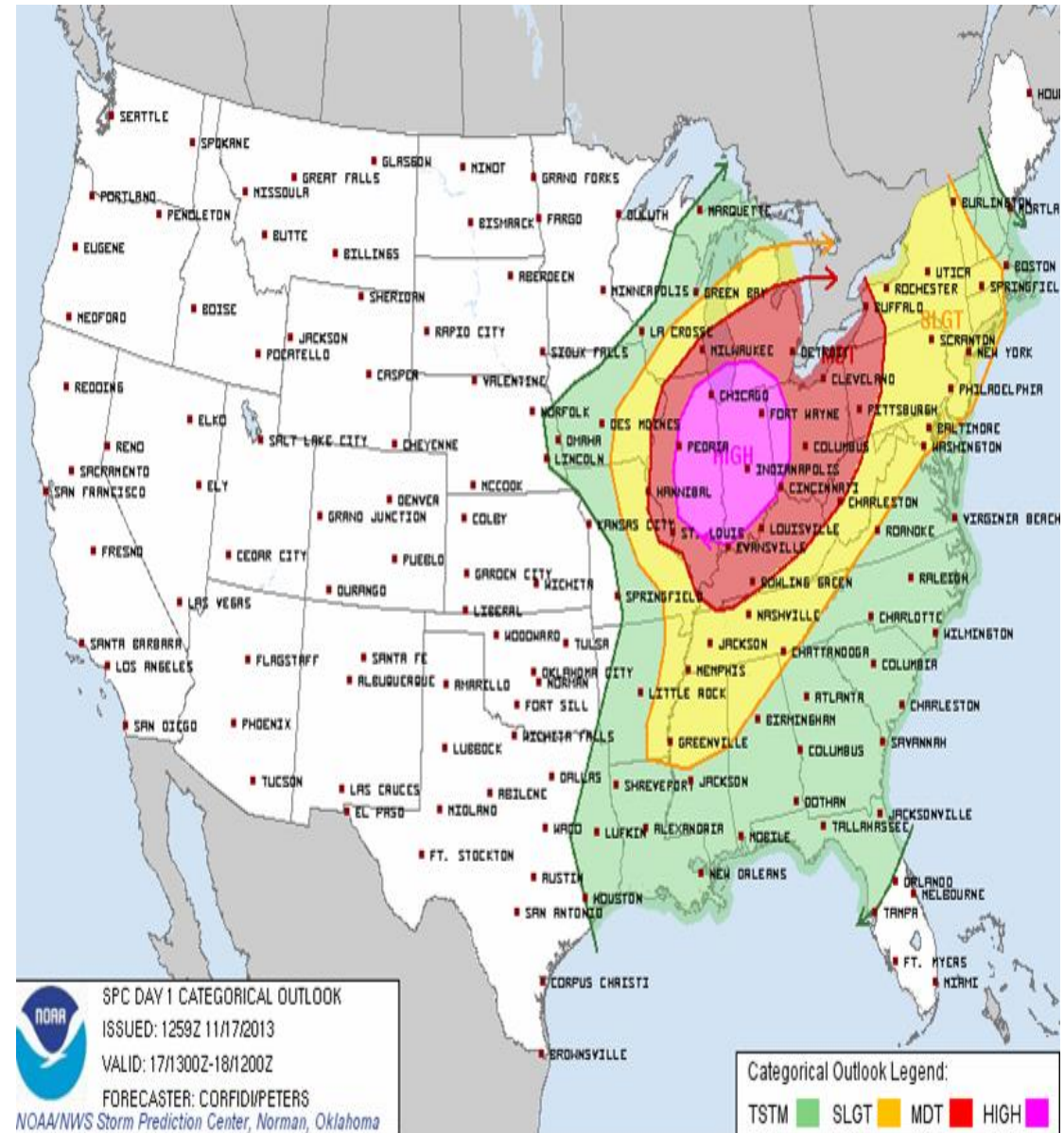
ILCMA WINTER CONFERENCE 2020

11/17/2013

70 tornadoes touched
down in 7 states

25 tornadoes confirmed in
Illinois

25 tornadoes ranks fourth
highest in Illinois history.



TORNADO PATH



NEIGHBORHOODS



NEIGHBORHOODS



NEIGHBORHOODS



GEORGETOWN APARTMENTS



GEORGETOWN APARTMENTS



NEIGHBORHOODS



THE RESPONSE

LET THE EXPERTS DO WHAT THEY DO BEST!

Police, Fire & Public Works Response

- Search & Rescue
 - Treat & transport victims
- Secure the affected area
 - Police checkpoints
 - Entry permitted with photo identification (residents) and placards (contractors / volunteers)
 - Establish a curfew
 - Road blocks
- Damage Assessments
 - Turn off utilities
 - Emergency debris removal

Mutual Aid is a Wonderful Thing!

- ILEAS (law enforcement)
- IPWMAN (public works)
- MABUS (fire service)

THE RESPONSE

INCIDENT COMMAND

Establish an Emergency Operations Center

County Emergency Management

- Responsible for other impacted communities

Incident Management Team

- This will include volunteer responders throughout state

IEMA

FEMA

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE

Key people must have excellent communication, coordination and organization skills

Teamwork is a beautiful thing, use it often and well

- Check “egos” at the door!

Utilize a scribe to record history

Daily Briefings

- Initially held 3 a day for Incident Command Team

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

AmeriCorps St. Louis

- Handled volunteer component
- Attended all briefings
- Located outside of the community

Expect overwhelming church support

Restrict access for approved volunteers only

- This lasted several days
- Concerned about vandalism & looting

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Information Team

- All information “vetted” through this team
- Everyone must speak from a prepared script / fact sheet

KEEP ELECTED OFFICIALS INFORMED

- They are the preferred choice to deal with the public and dignitaries
- Allows staff to focus on the disaster

The local media was/is a valuable asset

- Get the word out: What you need. Instructions. Assistance

Social Media

- City website
- Police Department Facebook page
- Caution – Must be capable/prepared to manage/update as needed and that is likely very often

Community Meetings

Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.

SUPPLIES MANAGEMENT

Designated Drop off areas

- Regional sites located outside of Washington by design

Distribution Centers

- Regional stores

Warehouse Space

Know when to say NO Thank You!

- Clothing becomes the disaster within the disaster!

DEBRIS IS A HUGE ISSUE I MEAN HUGE!

Assume there will be no federal or state monetary assistance

But, just in case there is:

- Follow Illinois Procurement Standards
- All government contracts should include consideration of an emergency and/or disaster

Have a Debris Management Plan in place and plan for overwhelming amounts of debris

Clock began ticking on debris removal as soon as the tornado left Washington – We just didn't know it! TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

MONETARY DONATIONS

Great organizations receive very generous monetary donations

- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Rotary
- Churches
- Many more...

HOWEVER, the City of Washington had absolutely no say in how the funds were/will be used

Washington created a 501C3 (Washington Foundation with a Tornado Relief sub fund) to directly receive monetary donations

Excellent resource even in the absence of a disaster

TRANSPARENCY IS MANDATORY

THE RECOVERY THE TORNADO IS OVER...NOW WHAT?

Emergency Assessments

Repair vs. Demo/Rebuild

- Are your ordinances up to date?

Plan review & inspections

- Ongoing use of volunteer building inspectors from other communities

Permit fees

- Washington waived all fees except for complete rebuilds

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Disasters are stressful for everyone involved. Realize the implications that stress will have on your staff. Consider:

- Recognize outstanding service
- Additional staffing
- Recognize outstanding service

No two disasters are the alike. They are unpredictable and continually change. React accordingly...

YOU WILL MAKE MISTAKES

Successfully handling a disaster requires a TEAM

You have to take care of yourself

- I hear myself say that and know that I didn't take my own advice, but YOU have to find a way to decompress!

FEMA

Understand who/what FEMA is

- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act

Participate in FEMA training opportunities

- Including with your local EMA

Valuable Resource!

Do not expect FEMA will arrive and save the day

- This is your disaster and you know what is best for your community!

LOOKING BACK

The November 17, 2013 Tornado Disaster was a learning experience

To go through a disaster and not learn anything is impossible

To ignore the lessons you learned from a disaster is both unacceptable and unforgiveable

Lessons learned should be shared

I did not ask for this tornado to happen, but it did. Day 1 – started making decisions about recovery with the perspective “what opportunities do we now have” “blank canvas”. I can say that I am amazed at my community, my elected officials, my staff and find it a true honor and privilege to be apart of this!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

Review your city insurance policy

Know the procurement standards that apply to your community

Review existing contracts

Emergency Interim Executive Succession - Ordinance

Emergency Powers of the Mayor - Ordinance

Debris Management Plan / annual review

Waste Hauling Franchise Agreement / ensure an emergency and/or disaster component

Training...

Get to know the likely members of your Incident Command Team prior to an emergency

- Understand their role
- Introductions complete / can hit the ground running the day of...
- Encourage your staff and elected to attend local EMA training - A MUST!

Consider creation of 501C3

Know your community

- Large paved areas for staging, resource deployment, etc.
- Alternate routes through community
- Walk through this exercise yearly (staff and elected)

WASHINGTON TORNADO FACTS

Total Debris Estimate – 620,000+ cubic yards

University Contribution (review & analysis)

- Northern Illinois University – Graduate level
- Western Illinois University – Undergraduate level
- University of Illinois @ Springfield – Undergraduate level
- Bradley University – Undergraduate level

Volunteers

- 14,000+ volunteers
- 77,000+ volunteer hours

WASHINGTON TORNADO FACTS

Emergency Services

- 60+ Fire Departments
- 95+ Police Departments
- 110+ Public Works (state, county, municipal, township, park district)

As of today:

- 98% return rate
- \$13,000,000 received from State of Illinois (IL Disaster Relief Fund & IL Jobs Now)
- Other new development continues!

FINAL COMMENT (TIM)

I continue to be active with all things related to Emergency Management as my “payback” to all those I owe (and will never know their names)

- An area I am participating in is the new FEMA training program called “Just-In-Time Recovery Management Training”
- Anticipated rollout early 2020
- I can provide contact information if you are interested in learning more

How do you know when you're in a crisis?

- Stakeholder safety and well-being is at risk
- There is no easy or immediate solution
- The situation is time-sensitive or urgent
- It's become the topic of conversation and you've lost control of the narrative
- It's in the News



What should I do next?

1. Establish your core team
2. Develop a communications plan
3. Analyze your vulnerabilities and risks
4. Map out your stakeholders—examples on next slide
5. Identify Engagement Opportunities
6. Know the Resources Available
7. Engage your stakeholders
8. Keep lines of communication open—evaluate and modify the response



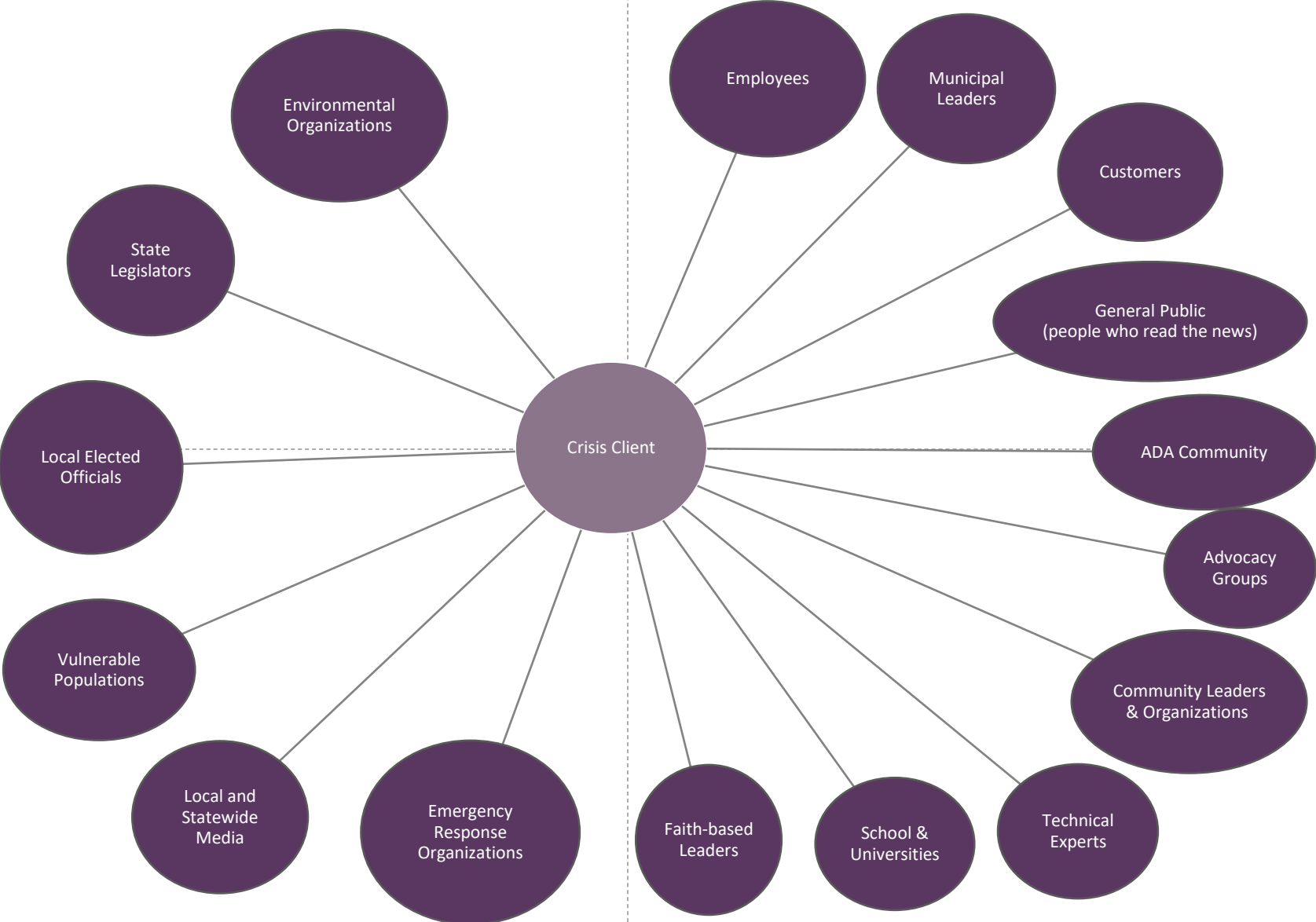
Stakeholder Map

Build Support

Address & Inform

Monitor & Inform

Engage & Partner



What can I do proactively *before* a crisis hits?

- Evaluate and Define Potential Crisis Scenarios
- Create a Crisis Communications Plan
 - Assign specific roles to your team
 - Train Spokespersons
 - Rehearse Crisis Management
- Know your audience and their Pain Points
- Cultivate media relationships
- Build a digital toolbox



**“By Failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”
– Benjamin Franklin**

Questions?