

Critical Incident Response Plan

Intended to be a quick reference guide

Customize for your CAC

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS Human Resources Staff, Board, MDT, Clients Partners and Funders	Action Taken	EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS Media	Action Taken
Critically assess the current situation and begin to develop a strategy for recovery. Who needs to be informed of the situation immediately?		Before responding to an incident in the media stop and think! Is a response required? Does it benefit the agency?	
Decide who needs to be at the table to deal with the crisis. 1. 2. 3.		Compose a written media statement, giving precise information without speculation. Practice your statement.	
Before communicating with anyone, write out what you intend to say. Create bullet points that will be easy to follow. This will ensure your message is consistent. If needed, consult with legal counsel about what can and cannot be made public.		Anticipate what questions may be asked and formulate written responses.	
Debrief the situation with key staff. Give them specific instruction about what can be shared with other employees. Consider providing bullet points so there is not confusion on what can be shared.	Key Staff: Contacted:	When responding to questions in an interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer with “just the facts”. • Do not give your personal opinion – it is irrelevant. • Do not assume anything is “off the record”. • Avoid “no comment”. Instead frame a statement such as, “We are not able to respond at this time because of an on-going investigation.” 	
Designate a public spokesperson that will be the voice for the agency. This person should have the following skill set: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of CAC and current situation • Good public speaking skills • Understanding of how to refer questions to appropriate people • Media training 	Designated spokesperson: Contacted:	Do not answer on behalf of another agency. Refer questions to those agencies.	
Transparency is important. As much as possible, have open communication with staff, partners and donors. Be up front with people that there may be information that you are not at liberty to share.		Communicate to the media that you have a responsibility to protect your clients and to provide a child-focused environment. Ask for their cooperation in continuing to do this.	

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Be sure that everyone, staff, board members, MDT partners, etc. know the process for referring media requests to the designated spokesperson.			
Contact funders and apprise them of the situation. Address any concerns or needs they might have.	Funders to contact: 1. 2. 3. 4.		
Depending on the incident, other agencies might enter the picture. Establish a working relationship with these agencies and make sure you are at the table and in the conversations. Understand their role and how you can assist them.	Other Agencies that might be involved: 1. 2. 3.		
Have an “open door” policy so that staff can share their concerns.			
Assess the need for debriefing and/or crisis counseling for staff. Identify who the staff can be referred to or who is appropriate to come in and debrief the staff.	Possible people to help with counseling or debriefing:		
Share with your staff and board words of support and encouragement received from other agencies.			
Get input from staff about what they see as challenges and what they need to move past the event			
At the appropriate time, communicate to the staff that the agency will move forward. Do not stay mired in the crisis.			
Refocus staff on job – not on past crisis.			
Provide opportunities for teambuilding among the staff.			
Keep reiterating the mission of the agency to the staff. Be sure that everyone is still bought in to the mission.			
Anticipate a long healing process for the staff. Depending on the situation, it could take a couple of years to get past an incident.			
Let your State Chapter and Regional CAC know what your status is. They can be great resources and sources of support.			
The National Children’s Alliance requires its members to report certain critical incidents involving local member CACs. Discern if this incident requires reporting.			