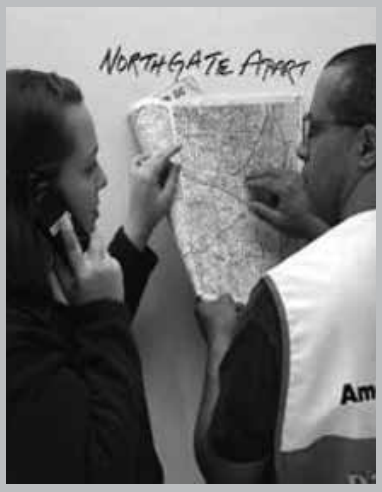
Collaborating Essentials

Disaster Services

Participant Packet



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American Red Cross

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Disaster Services

Collaborating Essentials

Course Purpose

Prepare the Disaster Services workforce to establish and maintain collaborative relationships, ensuring inclusive and effective service delivery.

Definition of Collaboration

Collaboration is working with others to achieve a shared goal.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Define collaboration consistent with the mission, vision, values and fundamental principles of the Red Cross.
- Explain the value of collaborative relationships among constituents and how these relationships contribute to an effective and efficient disaster response.
- Describe and identify actions that promote and strengthen collaboration and the development of effective partnerships.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills such as active listening, which foster a collaborative and cooperative work environment.

mission

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

vision

The American Red Cross, through its strong network of volunteers, donors and partners, is always there in times of need. We aspire to turn compassion into action so that…

…all people affected by disaster across the country and around the world receive care, shelter and hope;

…our communities are ready and prepared for disasters;

…everyone in our country has access to safe, lifesaving blood and blood products;

…all members of our armed services and their families find support and comfort whenever needed; and

…in an emergency, there are always trained individuals nearby, ready to use their Red Cross skills to save lives.

values

We reaffirm our commitment to the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and add to these principles five values that are essential to our continued success in meeting our mission.

Compassionate: We are dedicated to improving the lives of those we serve and to treating each other with care and respect.

Collaborative: We work together as One Red Cross family, in partnership with other organizations, and always embrace diversity and inclusiveness.

Creative: We seek new ideas, are open to change and always look for better ways to serve those in need.

Credible: We act with integrity, are transparent guardians of the public trust and honor our promises.

Committed: We hold ourselves accountable for defining and meeting clear objectives, delivering on our mission and carefully stewarding our donor funds.

Global Red Cross and Red Crescent Network

Fundamental Principles

humanity The Red Cross, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors—in its international and national capacity—to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

neutrality In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Red Cross may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

independence The Red Cross is independent. The national societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with Red Cross principles.

voluntary service The Red Cross is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

unity There can be only one Red Cross society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

universality The Red Cross is a worldwide institution in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross is part of the global Red Cross and Red Crescent network, which works to prevent and alleviate human suffering around the world. This network includes national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies like the American Red Cross in almost every country; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which coordinates international assistance; and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which focuses exclusively on areas of armed conflict. The network is united by a shared commitment to the fundamental principles listed above.

Constituents

Definition of Constituents

The people and groups with whom we work that have an interest in, or are affected by our actions.

Our Constituents

- Clients
- Partners
- Donors
- Co-workers
- The Public

Questions to Ask Constituents

- What do you need from me (or the Red Cross)?
- How can I (or we) help you?
- How can we work together?
- What resources can you provide?
- What information do you need?
- What is the most effective way for you to receive it?
- From whom, or where can I get the information I need?

Scenario 1: “No Notice” Event

Massachusetts – Apartment Fire
The apartment is located in a low to middle income neighborhood known for its diversity. The fire chief indicates the building will be uninhabitable for the foreseeable future.DAT responders noted many children were displaced.

Instructions

Share your point of view with your table group to answer the following questions:

- How should the chapter prepare to make this a successful response?

- What role does collaboration play in this type of response?

The Value of Information

To be valuable, information must…

- Be accurate
- Bring people together to solve a problem
- Shape decision-making
- Produce resources
- Create opportunities that may not otherwise have existed
- Allow us to learn more about our clients' needs
- Allow us to learn more about our partners; and they learn more about us

Information Sharing

- Brings people together to solve a problem
- Shapes decision-making
- Produces resources
- Creates collaborative opportunities that may not otherwise have existed
- Helps us learn more about our clients' needs
- Helps us learn more about what services our partners offer; and they learn more about our services

Information We Do Not Share

- Our clients' personal information when we refer them to our partners
- Red Cross financial information about our fundraising, expenditures and funding gaps

Best Practices of Information Exchange

Seeking and Collecting Information

- Be proactive. Do not wait for information to come to you.
- Be interactive. Use open-ended questions to expand discussions and closed-ended questions to get specifics.
- Be alert for information. Listen, listen, listen!
- Find information from Red Cross reports. Also read reports generated by agencies, organizations, groups and others with whom you are not directly working.
- Review bulletin board postings or newsletters.
- Attend scheduled briefings.

Best Practices for Evaluating Information

Make certain the information is:

- Accurate
- Relevant
- Timely
- Clearly stated
- Communicated in a usable format

When looking for specific information, be alert for other related information that could be valuable to you or your constituents.

Best Practices for Communicating Information

- Consider your constituents' needs and how they intend to use the information.
- Never assume that you can be casual or less than professional with your remarks.
- At all times, refrain from unnecessary editorial remarks.
- Be particularly sensitive to the possibility that your constituents are likely to share information with others, including their superiors.
- Identify the best channel(s) for the information you are sending.
- Whenever possible, package or format the information to make it relatively easy for the receiver to use.
- Verify that the information you sent was received.

Newspaper Editorial

Red Cross Response Leaves Neighbor Concerned
March 2, 2012

As a neighbor and close friend of several residents left homeless by the fire that occurred four nights ago, I want to share my observations of the Red Cross response. It seemed the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing. Yes, the Red Cross took care of temporary housing for my neighbors. However, many of my friends complained that they did not have enough food for everyone in the shelter the day after the fire. And the next day, they were promised prepared meals and were only served bananas and cold cereal.

As an immigration attorney and long-time resident of this diverse neighborhood, I am also worried that the Red Cross did not have workers available who speak the multiple languages of this neighborhood. I know for a fact that two families were not spoken to directly for 48 hours after the fire. With so many organizations in our community that work directly with our immigrant populations, this is unacceptable.

This morning, the Red Cross announced that the shelter is closing soon and the fire chief confirmed the apartment building is uninhabitable. Where does this leave my friends and neighbors who escaped the fire with only the clothes they were wearing? The Red Cross continues to ask for donations to support this disaster, but I do not feel confident making a contribution until I know communication and coordination are improved within the organization.

Collaborating through Conversations

Conversations help to…

- Accomplish work
- Convey feelings
- Clarify problems
- Determine actions and solutions
- Achieve mutual goals
- Build relationships

Types of Conversations

Conversations for Context

Help us build or reestablish understanding of each other, the situation and expectations between parties in the relationship.

Conversations for Possibilities

Allow us to consider *how* things could get done and *what* conditions will satisfy each party. We continue to build understanding, but now we make sure to clearly manage and resolve expectations.

Conversations for Action

Allow us to create the plans required to accomplish our work and identify the conditions that confirm the work was accomplished. These conversations include:

- *Planning* for action
- *Requests*, or asking for something
- *Offers*, or the willingness to provide something
- *Promises*, or a commitment to do something

Scenario 2: Event with Notice

Texas – Wildfire The Texas National Guard has two helicopters in use for the fire. The local chapter is coordinating with emergency management, conducting disaster assessment, opened an evacuation shelter and is working to meet the needs of those affected.
Arkansas – Winter Storm The updated forecast includes a precipitation event that will most likely culminate in at least 3" of ice followed by significant snowfall and temperatures hovering around the zero mark. It is feared that the combination of ice and snow will create a wide-spread power outage as a result of power lines being compromised by ice and falling trees. The National Weather Service confirms the high probability of a massive precipitation event beginning with freezing rain, transitioning to snow. Power outages are expected, and could potentially last for several days. All participating agencies are directed to activate their portion of the city's emergency operations plan.

Scenario Details:

- In this scenario, the local government emergency manager has invited your chapter's emergency services director to a series of planning meetings to prepare for a response to an impending event.
- The emergency services director has a conflict for this first one and asked you to attend in her place.
- Your regular work with the chapter is in Mass Care.
- Keep in mind the Red Cross is "at the table," but is not leading the conversation.
- There will be other community organizations in attendance to discuss the event.

Instructions:

Your table group will discuss this scenario from the emergency services director's point of view. Refer to the *Types of Conversations* on page 10 for ideas.

As the emergency services director:

- Discuss your goals for the meeting.

- Decide how you will use the three types of conversations:

Active Listening Techniques

Pay Attention.

- Give the speaker your undivided attention.
- Make appropriate eye contact and look at the speaker directly.
- Nod your head, smile and encourage the speaker with supporting statements (e.g., "mmm hmmm," "Okay" or "I see").
- "Listen" to nonverbal communication. Use body language and gestures to convey your attention.
- Avoid environmental distractions and side conversations in a group setting.

Ask Questions.

- Use who, what, when, where, what and how questions to get the broad story. Use yes or no questions to get specifics.
- Ask questions that confirm your understanding and clarify specifics. For example, ask questions such as, "Is this what you mean?" "What is your understanding of the information I just shared?" or "How did that sound to you?"

Paraphrase and Summarize.

- Repeat what the speaker said, as accurately as possible, using your own words.
- Tell the speaker what you heard. Use phrases such as, "What I'm hearing is..." or "It sounds like you are saying...."
- Share your impression of the conversation and important points based on the sender's verbal and nonverbal communication.

Communicate Empathy and Understanding.

- Do not interrupt the speaker.
- Identify with the speaker and show your understanding of the conversation.

Remember and Evaluate.

- Take notes, as necessary, without impacting your ability to listen attentively.
- Bring a co-worker to help you remember details from the conversation.

Observer Form

Did the listener…	Yes/No	Notes about the conversation
Pay Attention?		
Ask Questions?		
Paraphrase and Summarize?		
Communicate Empathy and Understanding?		
Remember and Evaluate?		

Barriers to Effective Listening

- Preoccupation or inattentiveness
- Judging instead of learning
- Filtering, hearing what we want to hear based on preconceptions, biases or prejudices
- Listening to just the facts and not the emotional or personal message
- Formulating a response while someone is talking

Communicating by Phone

- The conversation starts without you when someone leaves a message! Be sure to evaluate the message, prepare accordingly and return the call promptly.
- Determine that this is the right time for you and the other person to have the conversation.
- Smile when you speak.
- Actively listen and validate.
- Do not only listen to what is said, but pay close attention to how it is said.
- Ask questions as necessary.
- Make sure you are having the same conversation (context, possibilities or action).
- Do not multitask.

Communicating by Email

- Write clearly and concisely, making your purpose clear.
- Return email promptly.
- Ground your messages with evidence supporting your assertions or assessments, as well as how you interpreted previous messages.
- Ask questions as necessary.
- Use email to set up more robust lines of communication (i.e., telephone call or face-to-face meeting).
- Provide your contact information at the bottom.
- Remember that your written documents are on behalf of the Red Cross and are reproducible.
- Before sending, proofread and use spell check.

Professional Preparedness Checklist	
Key 1: Update your knowledge of your specific role(s), responsibilities and policies, both generally and specifically to the current situation.	
Checklist	**Notes**
❑ Review the most up-to-date Disaster Services Program Guidance documents. ❑ Establish your operational goals and objectives. ❑ Determine how your roles and responsibilities apply to your constituents. ❑ Determine what you need to (and are authorized to) accomplish in your relationships.	
Key 2: Assemble and organize the necessary tools and resources to support your work.	
Checklist	**Notes**
❑ Gather up-to-date Disaster Services Program Guidance documents, other group/activity references and relevant contact information. ❑ Make a list of basic supplies and personal items needed on a disaster relief operation.	
Key 3: Find out all you can about the relationship(s) you're managing.	
Checklist	**Notes**
Find out: ❑ Name and job title/assignment ❑ Contact information ❑ Who they represent; What they are about ❑ The nature of the relationship; Their needs, concerns, expectations ❑ History of the relationship and action(s) taken ❑ Any other information that may jog your memory or is relevant to the relationship or constituent	

Key 4: Determine who else in the Red Cross should be involved.	
Checklist	**Notes**
❑ Ask yourself and others, "Is this my relationship to manage?" If so, "For what purpose?" ❑ Decide who else needs to be connected to or included in this relationship, and to whom might this relationship be transferred in your absence.	
Key 5: Prepare to make the best impression.	
Checklist	**Notes**
❑ Project a positive and genuine attitude that reflects the fundamental principles, mission, vision and values of the American Red Cross. ❑ Consider what strategies you might use to establish credibility and build trust. ❑ Think about how you might speak in terms of your constituents' interests and concerns. ❑ Ask yourself what you hope to achieve in the relationship and how you might convey your expectations. ❑ Anticipate possible outcomes of your meetings. Be prepared, but don't cling to your assumptions. Anything can happen and often does!	

Self-Awareness

- Having an understanding of yourself.
- Knowing what you need, want, like, dislike, etc. It also includes being **aware** of the impact that you have on other people and other things.
- Self-awareness helps you:
  - Anticipate possible interpersonal differences.
  - Avoid the use of ineffective behaviors.
  - Avoid imposing your personal values.
  - Achieve some objectivity.
  - Identify things to improve.

Three Keys to Maintaining Relationships

1. **Demonstrate appreciation**
   - Immediately and through follow-up, sincerely acknowledge, through the spoken or written word, how the Red Cross and our clients have benefited or will benefit from someone's assistance or cooperation.
   - Convey our appreciation to the right people in a timely manner and, when appropriate, be of benefit to them by recognizing or promoting them to others.
2. **Seek to contribute and add value**
   - Ensure that those in a relationship with the Red Cross benefit from the relationship.
   - Take initiative to find out how we may assist them. The intent should be that we make contact based on "their" needs—not just our own.
   - If someone has done something for us, go beyond showing our appreciation and determine if there is anything we can do for them.
3. **Care for the relationship**
   - Maintain consistent contact; in-person visits when possible
   - Be a good listener.
   - Ask for feedback; it is an opportunity to improve the relationship.

Scenario 3: Long-term Event

West Virginia – Flooding
The 200 residences under water are mostly rental properties, typically rented out to low-income, migrant workers. The additional homes that might be affected are largely second-home structures that are only occupied a few months each year. The floodwaters are predicted to reach this area within 3-4 days. Water levels are expected to remain in the impacted homes for at least three weeks before receding. The chapter continues to monitor the situation.

From your personal point of view, discuss the following question with your table group.

- What is the difference in terms of collaborative efforts, if any, to responding to a long-term event, as opposed to events that have a relatively short duration like the apartment fire and the chemical spill?
    - Consider the operation and the relationships with constituents.

My Action Plan

To build a more collaborative American Red Cross, we must all build our personal knowledge and skills in collaboration.

Course Topics	
Working as One Red Cross Family	
Working with Constituents	
Establishing and Maintaining Relationships	
Effective communication skills (conversations, active listening, etc.)	
My Goals | How can I be more effective at collaborating?	
Personal and Professional Development | Why do I want to do it?	
Action Steps | How will I do it?	
Timeline | When will I do it?	
Resources What do I need? Who can help me?	**Evaluation** How will I know I've met my goals?

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