Developing a Strategic Plan/ Roadmap for Your MRC Unit

Objectives:

During this session, you would learn the following functions to inform your MRC unit's strategic plan/roadmap;

- The planning process
- The required sections and information to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap
- And why is it important to conduct periodic re-evaluations of your MRC unit's strategic plan/roadmap.

Factor of Success:

Factor 9: Develop Policies and Procedures for Unit Administration.

Developing a Strategic Plan/ Roadmap for Your MRC Unit

- "Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." Dwight Eisenhower

- "In the face of uncertainties, planning defines the particular place you want to be and how you intend to get there." Peter Drucker

- "A goal without a plan is just a wish". Larry Elder

Activity

- Imagine aliens have landed on Earth and a disaster has been declared, do you have a strategic plan to prepare your MRC unit for successful deployments to support the needs of your communities?

- Do you have a plan for your family, pets and yourself?

What is a strategic plan/roadmap?

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Preparedness Goal defines planning as "conduct[Ing] a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or tactical–level approaches to meet defined objectives," (p.6, 2015).

- Strategic planning is a disciplined and creative process of gathering information, exploring future scenarios, and thinking about how decisions will affect the future.

Developing a Strategic Plan/ Roadmap for Your MRC Unit

- In other words, strategic planning is the process of determining your unit's long-term goals and identifying the best approach to achieving those goals.

- The process of planning is just as important as the resulting document.

- Plans are not scripts followed to the letter but are flexible and adaptable to the actual situation.

Why

- **Why is it important for an MRC unit to have a strategic plan or a Road Map?**
  - It guides decisions and actions that shape what an MRC unit is, what it does, and why it does it. It is the foundation for program planning, tracking progress, and evaluation.
  - It brings unity of purpose through coordination and integration of plans across all levels.
  - The Plan contains opportunities for partnership, leverage, and focus to enhance impact.
  - Provide the framework for program evaluation and performance improvement.
  - Strategic Plans are intended to be **"living documents".** Updates to reflect organizational or environmental changes can and should be incorporated over time.

How

- One of the most important characteristics of successful planning efforts is the use of a defined planning process.

- There are several different planning processes used by Government entities and by the private sector. Some examples of Government/public-sector planning processes include:
  - Federal Plan Development Process (FPDP)
  - Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101

How

- Regardless of the planning process you use, the fundamental common activities/tasks for these planning processes are to:
  - ✓ Determine the problem you are trying to solve
  - ✓ Develop an analytical approach to determine as much about the problem as possible
  - ✓ Develop alternative options on how to solve the problem
  - ✓ Complete the writing of the plan, involving as much of the community of interest as possible
  - ✓ Conduct periodic testing and reviews of plan

How

Planning Principles:

- ✓ Planning must be community-based, representing the whole population and its needs.

- ✓ Planning must include participation from all stakeholders in the community.

- ✓ Planning should consider all hazards and threats and be flexible enough to address both traditional and catastrophic incidents.

- ✓ Plans must clearly identify the mission and supporting goals.

- ✓ Planning does not need to start from scratch.

- ✓ Planning includes senior officials throughout the process to ensure both understanding and approval.

Federal Plan Development Process (FPDP)

Regardless of the planning process you use, the fundamental common Federal Plan Development Process (FPDP) are:

- **Phase 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team.**

- **Phase 2: Understand the Situation.**

- **Phase 3: Determine Goals and Objectives.**

- **Phase 4: Plan Development.**

- **Phase 5: Plan Preparation, Plan Review, and Plan Approval & Dissemination.**

- **Phase 6: Refinement or Execution.**

Federal Plan Development Process (FPDP)

In Phase 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team, there are two tasks

- Identify Core Planning Team

- And Engage the Whole Community (stakeholders, volunteers, responders' partners etc.) in Planning.

❖Products developed at the end of step one:

Format of collaborative planning team

Activity (10 Minutes)

Your state is looking to start new five regional Behavioral MRC units to support all mental health requests within the state, you have been tasked to identify a core planning team from your jurisdiction? Please list five potential planning team members?

Federal Plan Development Process (FPDP)

In Phase 2: Understand the Situation:

When assessing the situation take the inventory of the following issues:

✓ The community and people your unit serves.

✓ The situation (needs) in your community.

✓ The types of services your MRC unit can offer.

✓ The environment in which your unit operates and how it connects to other programs.

✓ Support requirements (e.g., funding, by in)

Federal Plan Development Process (FPDP)

In Phase 2: Understand the Situation:

Conduct Research to develop awareness of the community and jurisdictional needs that the MRC unit serves Information needed can be find in these assessments;

- A demographic assessment and gap analysis of MRC volunteers (SWOT).
- A community health needs assessments (produced by state or local health departments)
- A Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)-(produced by the state emergency management agency)
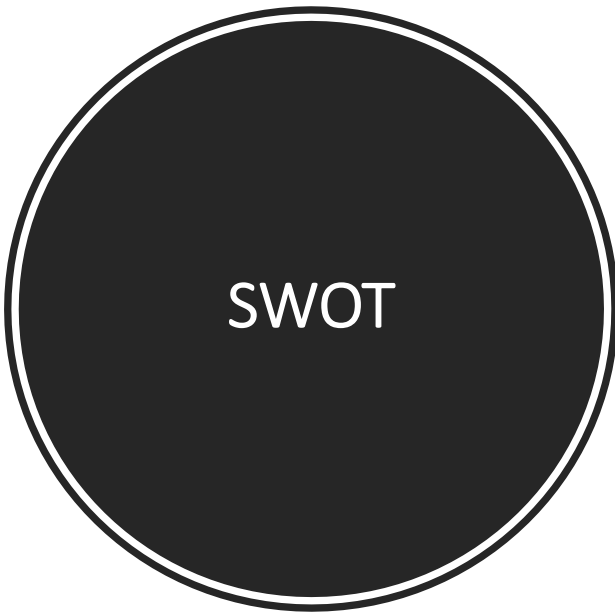
SWOT

S W O T – Crucial elements

- **Strengths** are positive assets **within** your MRC unit (e.g., committed volunteers or participation in training activities).

- **Weaknesses** are negative aspects **within** your MRC unit (e.g., shortage of volunteers or lack of equipment).

- **Opportunities** are positive elements **outside** your MRC unit (e.g., strong partnerships with other local agencies).

- **Threats** are negative elements **outside** your MRC unit (e.g., lack of community interest or loss of funding support).

Example SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

Commitment of volunteers

Support of local public health

Diverse volunteer skill sets

WEAKNESSES

No formal training program

Limited management support

Lack of supplies, equipment

OPPORTUNITIES

Support of local government

Establish local partnerships

Demand for public health support

THREATS

Limited financial support

Other programs competing

Inadequate integration in community plans

Activity (10 Minutes)

Your state is looking to start new five regional Behavioral MRC units to support all mental health requests within the state, leaders at the state level are requesting SWOT analyses from MRC existing unit leaders?

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

In Phase 3: Determine Goals and Objectives.

- The planning team uses previously identified requirements to establish priorities, goals, and objectives.

- Priorities indicate a desired end-state, often based on the vision communicated by senior officials.

- Goals are broad, general statements that indicate the intended methods for achieving the mission, meeting priorities, and specifying desired results.

- Objectives are more specific and identifiable actions carried out during the operation.

In Phase 4: Plan Development.

This step involves generating courses of action, identifying required resources, estimating capabilities and shortfalls .and obtaining approval from leaderships.

In Phase 5: Plan Preparation, Plan Review, and Plan Approval & Dissemination.

In this step the planning team develops a draft of MRC plan using the courses of action developed in Step 4.

 In addition, the team reviews the plan, obtains official approval, and shares the plan with community partners such as first responders, local emergency management officials, staff, and stakeholders.

Phase 6: Refinement or Execution.

This step closes the loop in the planning process. It focuses on adding the information gained from exercising the plan to the research collected.

Questions

Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101

Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101

(CPG) 101 provides guidelines on developing emergency operations plans (EOP). It promotes a common understanding of the fundamentals of risk-informed planning and decision making to help planners examine a hazard or threat and produce integrated, coordinated, and synchronized plans.

The goal of CPG 101 is to make the planning process routine across all phases of emergency management and for all homeland security mission areas. This Guide helps planners at all levels of government in their efforts to develop and maintain viable all-hazards, all-threats EOPs.

What to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap?

1. Background and Introduction

- **Introduction and background**
  - The introduction to the MRC Strategic Plan should explain the importance of strategic planning to the MRC unit and why the MRC unit is developing a strategic Plan. It may also discuss the background for planning, referencing recent events that have led to the increased emphasis on the importance of a strategic planning for the unit.

- **Mission Statement**
  - A mission statement is a brief description of the MRC unit's jurisdiction served and the needs of that community.
  - The purpose of the mission statement is
    - ✓ To distinguish why the unit exists
    - ✓ To define the population(s) served and goals of the unit
    - ✓ To explain the principles or beliefs guiding the unit
    - ✓ To inform and promote the MRC with community partners
    - ✓ To provide direction to leadership and volunteers

What to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap?

- Mission statements should be a collaborative effort and can include people from any of the following groups:
  - ✓ Sponsoring agency
  - ✓ Community stakeholders
  - ✓ MRC volunteers
  - ✓ MRC Advisory Board
  - ✓ Local public health board
  - ✓ Local emergency management
- Develop a mission statement that clearly states your MRC unit's purpose and scope.
- The mission statement should be accurate, concise, and unambiguous.
- All MRC units should have a mission statement to reflect their role within the community they serve.

Activity (10 minutes)

Please develop a mission statement for the new Behavioral MRC Unit that describes the MRC unit's jurisdiction served and the needs of that community.

Activity

Example mission statement: The MRC program seeks to improve the mental health and safety of communities across the state and to ensure that the state is equipped with sufficient medical and non-medical volunteers to support the existing public health infrastructure and mental health needs during both public health emergencies and routine community activities.

Continue number #1

1. Background and Introduction

- **Objectives of your unit**
  - Develop objectives that support your MRC unit's mission and purpose. The objectives will help you achieve your goal.
  - Develop realistic, measurable, and achievable objectives.
  - It is important to determine the goals and objectives of a unit for the below reasons
    - Provide a roadmap for the MRC unit
    - Enhance decision-making
    - Improve resource allocation
    - Improve communications with external partners
    - Provide the framework for program evaluation and performance improvement

Continue number #1

Background and Introduction

o **Objectives of your unit**

- Draft SMART objectives that are:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable, attainable, or agreed upon
  - Realistic or relevant
  - Time bound
- Involve response partners or your sponsoring agency to ensure alignment with response requirements.
- Obtain approval if the unit is sponsored by an agency.

Activity (10 minutes)

Draft three specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives that support the new MRC unit's mission and purpose.

Examples

Example objective #1: Recruit and train 100 mental health professionals volunteers by the end of year 2023.

Example #3: Provide at least one training and an activity per quarter for volunteers for the next 2 years.

Example #2: Participate in annual at least one training and one exercise with response partners by end of year 2024.

- Continue number # 1
  - **Scope & Purpose of the unit:**
    - Develop a scope of the unit which is a description of area served by the MRC unit and the types of services it can provide.
  - **Situation**
    - In this section MRC units should verify pieces of information, such as laws, regulations, terrain maps, population statistics, resource inventories.
    - Initial resource availability and capabilities are key facts that should be included.
  - **Planning Assumptions**
    - Determine facts and assumptions in order to provide a framework or establish expected conditions of an operational environment so that planning can proceed.
    - Assumptions are used as facts only if they are considered valid (or likely to be true) and are necessary for solving the problem.

What to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap?

Example of a Scope Statement:

This plan is applicable to Smith Department of Health and all 35-health districts, including the private sector, volunteer organizations. It guides support agencies and mutual aid partners that respond within the Smith County and that have responsibility for volunteer recruitment, processing, assignment, training, and/or management of volunteers.

What to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap?

2. Organization and Unit Composition

- **Organizational structure**

    - An MRC unit should determine and document its organizational structure in accordance with its unit composition, purpose and scope, the jurisdiction's hazards and health concerns, and any housing organization policies and practices.

    - MRC unit will include current organizational chart in this section.

- **Unit composition**

    - An MRC unit should determine its composition in accordance with its mission and purpose, the region's hazards, health concerns, community capabilities and resources, and the organization in which the unit is established.

3. Daily operations

This section should give an overall picture of how the MRC unit accomplishes a mission or set of objectives to reach a desired end state.

A. Recruitment

In this section to include Volunteer recruitment procedures.

- Volunteer Screening and Selection Procedures Volunteer Criteria

- Processing and Credentialing

- Volunteer Classification (Groups, Roles, MRC levels)

- Procedures for Volunteer Utilization

- Resources for both non-medical and medical recruitment

What to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap?

3. Daily operations

This section should give an overall picture of how the MRC unit accomplishes a mission or set of objectives to reach a desired end state.

B. Volunteer Retention and Recognition:

In this section to include retention and recognition procedures and strategies for your unit.

C. Track and Manage Volunteers:

In this section to include system or processes on how track and manage Volunteers.

- How to review volunteer performance
- How to update MRC unit profile

D. Non-emergency activities :

In this section to include opportunities and activities for volunteers within their communities to participate in.

Please draft one recruitment, one retention, and one recognition strategy for the new Behavioral MRC Units?

4. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

This section should include responsibilities and assignments for not just the unit leader but for each key staff position in the department or outside supporting agencies.

5. Deployment and Demobilization of Volunteers

In this section to include the procedures for the below functions:

- Emergency Activation
- Deployment Procedures
- Out-of-area volunteer deployments
- Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteers (SUVs)
- Demobilization

6. Training and Exercises

Training

In this section to include the Volunteer Training Plan

- Training Needs Assessments
- Required trainings
- Recommended trainings
- Training sources
- Training Records

Exercises

In this section to include the exercises that volunteers might be involved in.

7. Direction, Control, and Coordination

This section describes the framework for all direction, control, and coordination activities.

It also provides information on how the Plan fits into similar plans horizontally and how higher-level or subcomponent plans are expected to layer on the Plan vertically

8. Communication

In this section to include guidelines, contact information , policies and procedures for the MRC Unit on how information should be shared during all phases with volunteers internal and external partners.

Examples of sub-sections to include:

- Processes to Notify Volunteers

- Processes to Notify internal & external stakeholders

- Recruitment materials

- Advocacy strategies and materials

- Media Policy

- Social Media Policy

What to include in your unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap?

9. Administration, Finance and Logistics

In this section to include unit's administration, financial and logistics needs to operate and function.

10. Authorities and Legal References

In this section to include volunteer legal authorities and protections .

Examples of sub-sections to include:

- Workers Compensation
- Non-emergency Liability Coverage
- Emergency Liability Coverage

11. Plan Development and Maintenance

This section describes the process the organization uses to maintain a current plan. It identify who is responsible for plan currency, how often the organization will review and update the plan, and how coordination will occur.

Functional Annexes/Appendices & Attachments

- Functional Annexes and attachments add specific information and direction to the MRC base Plan and should clearly describe the policies, processes, roles, and responsibilities.

- These Annexes focus on specific responsibilities, tasks, and operational actions, and checklists.

  Examples Functional Annexes to include in your plan:
  - Emergency Contact Information List
  - Equipment Checklist
  - Deployment Checklist
  - Demobilization Checklist
  - Safety Checklist
  - Maps and directions
  - Paper copy of Emergency Volunteer Application
  - Liability Coverage Polices
  - Volunteer Job Action Sheets
  - Mission Sets
  - Incident Command System (ICS) Forms

Periodic Re-Evaluations of the MRC Unit Strategic Plan/Roadmap

Why is it necessary to conduct periodic re-evaluations?

- Changes in leadership structure, shifting community needs, and ongoing emergencies, etc. can alter the situation that unit leaders are presented with. By periodically re-evaluating the unit's core dynamics, unit leaders will be better prepared to effectively respond to their community needs.

How often should you conduct a periodic re-evaluation?

- Every 2-3 years
- After an emergency, large event, or an exercise
- After changes in leadership
- After changes in public health priorities, community needs, and/or emergency response plans

How does one conduct a re-evaluation?

- Evaluate the internal volunteer needs as well as an updated community needs assessments, etc.
- Collect and review After Action Reports and Volunteers' Surveys
- Engage stakeholders, leadership, and response partners for additional input
- Adapt and modify the unit mission statement as needed

References

- Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans.

- **https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf**

- How to conduct SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=JXXHqM6RzZQ&feature=youtu.be

- How to conduct a gap analysis:

- https://www.uclahealth.org/nursing/workfiles/Education%20Courses/ContinuingEducation/ce-GapAnalysis-052016.pdf

- Community Health Assessment and Health Improvement Planning:

- https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/cha/index.html

- https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf

- https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/17/2020/03/FairfaxMRC_Handbook_V2-_final.pdf

Unit Leader Training Series

- **Developing Unit Leadership-(MRC-TRAIN 1101198)**
  - This course guides MRC unit leaders through:
  - Structural development and organization of the unit
  - Implementing risk management strategies
  - Understand the community they serve
  - Develop a mission statement and unit goals and objectives
  - Plan and conduct non-emergency activities and events

- **Developing Unit Administrative Requirements- (MRC-TRAIN 1102994)**
  - This course promotes common standards for MRC unit administration policies and procedures and includes:
  - Developing a strategic plan or roadmap for the unit
  - Determining unit financial needs and identifying funding sources
  - Writing grant proposals and planning for financial sustainability
  - Developing policies and procedures for unit administration

Questions

Thank You!

Lean Abdelaziz

Sr. Program Analyst - Preparedness

E-mail: LAbdelaziz@naccho.org