

BEST PRACTICES

USE NO FEAR OR THREAT-BASED MESSAGES.

A growing base of scientific, empirical and anecdotal evidence indicates that using fear and threat motivations to achieve sustained behavioral change is ineffective, and produces negative consequences. Preparedness can and should be a positive thing: protecting the people and things you love; strengthening your ability to handle crises AND opportunity; or building teams, leadership economic health. CARD has eliminated the use of disaster threat messages as the “motivation” or context for preparedness and planning actions. Our philosophy is *Prepare to Prosper*.

ACTIVELY ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE

It is all too easy to fall into the trap of teaching emergency preparedness in the “lecture” style – assuming that the audience will be a willing, passive recipient of advice delivered by official representatives. To really reach the audience – to address their needs and to motivate action – CARD shapes our curriculum to capture the knowledge and contributions of those attending, and to meaningfully engage the audience in sharing and creating appropriate solutions to the unique preparedness and response issues they face.

CHAMPION JARGON-FREE, SIMPLE, INTUITIVE, ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS.

Anything that makes preparedness more difficult, confusing or intimidating will prevent people from taking action. CARD works to make disaster preparedness, planning and response accessible, empowering and sustainable for nonprofits and service providers. This requires removing jargon and unnecessary acronyms, as well as making the concepts and content more intuitive and relevant to agencies lacking disaster services resources, funding and formalized responsibilities.

CREATE AND TAILOR INFORMATION SPECIFICALLY FOR THE AUDIENCE.

In the years following the Loma Prieta earthquake, hundreds of agencies participated in “visioning sessions” on what works and what doesn’t work in furthering their preparedness. They continue to provide further understanding of their needs and priorities, and CARD works with this valuable feedback to create original content, materials and presentations styles that address the current needs and goals of the agencies we serve.

PROVIDE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS.

Too often, the preparedness message people hear is to get ready because of vague, future, potential problems. CARD emphasizes the short-term advantages of taking on preparedness, and classes and material are designed to be of immediate value: leaving each participant already more prepared and better able to accomplish preparedness goals just from attending. As part of this philosophy, CARD works on building the leadership capacity of participants.

(CONTINUES)



CARD AND THE PREPARED TO PROSPER MODEL

BEST PRACTICES

(CONTINUED)

PLAY TO STRENGTHS.

While local government responders and the American Red Cross address “mass care” issues, trained nonprofits are the best equipped to address “special care” and the needs of vulnerable communities. Rather than dabbling in basic preparedness, we help agencies to define specialties and hone unique skills. The CARD approach encourages agencies to focus on their strong suits and develop their preparedness strengths in their own niche market.

FILL A NEED/CLOSE A GAP.

There is rarely enough time and funding available for preparedness, and reinventing the wheel uses it up without benefit. CARD was founded as an organization not to duplicate existing services, but to address the unmet preparedness and response needs of vulnerable populations and the local nonprofits who serve them. Each class, product and initiative developed by CARD is scrutinized to ensure that it fills a gap, addresses a need or otherwise meaningfully contributes to the nonprofit and special needs preparedness movement. This includes, but is not limited to: creating solutions for poor and low-income communities; creating a safe and neutral setting for anyone unable or disinclined to engage with traditional response agencies; and developing alternative contexts and motivations for preparedness actions.

MAKE IT VISUAL.

Experts in adult learning dynamics tell us that adults learn visually. CARD incorporates these principles into our curriculum, and we take extra effort to make tools, resources and presentations visually memorable and engaging.

ACKNOWLEDGE HISTORY AND THE EXPERIENCES OF THE COMMUNITY.

Hurricane Katrina – and the funding it has generated – has prompted many groups to embrace vulnerable population preparedness and planning. Many well-intentioned groups are now reaching out, using methods that have never worked, even when millions of dollars were invested. By not knowing history and not acknowledging the past experience of the communities, these initiatives stand little chance of success, and it leaves communities unprepared. Every community need not go through their own disaster to benefit from the lessons learned by others. CARD endeavors to capture and share lessons – both successes and failures – and leverage our collective knowledge.

STAY ALIGNED WITH YOUR VISION AND MISSION.

No-one can be all things for all people, and it’s important to keep a clear understanding of your priorities, your resources, your mission, and your vision of what you want to achieve. At CARD, we take on only projects that are in keeping with our vision of a community where all people are safe and prepared in a positive way, suited to their own needs and abilities. Being prepared to prosper in the face of crisis sometimes means saying no to certain pressures, projects and even certain “opportunities.”