2007 Advanced Practice Centers Training Conference
Tarrant County Advanced Practice Center

A Lateral Thinking Approach to Regional Planning – Resolving Differences in Regional Pandemic Flu Plans

Instructors: Bill Stephens, Megan Bush-Knapp, and Manisha Maskay

Overview: Much of the work in public health preparedness requires special planning, careful decision-making, and collaboration with outside organizations. This session will introduce a problem-solving methodology that encourages holistic, lateral thinking, which can facilitate productive discussions and collaboration among diverse regional stakeholders. Simply stated, lateral thinking solves problems with an indirect creative approach rather than head-on with traditional argumentation. Participants will experience the positive effects of applying lateral thinking to a pandemic flu planning activity involving regional stakeholders in hospitals and other neighboring municipalities.

Goal: Demonstrate the benefits of problem-solving that encourages lateral thinking and can enhance multi-agency decision-making for projects requiring collaboration – using regional pandemic flu planning as a sample application.

Learning Objectives:
1. Identify several directions of lateral thinking.
2. Apply lateral thinking processes in the context of a regional pandemic flu planning scenario.
3. Identify some common gaps in pandemic flu plans and some common barriers to effective community or regional planning.
4. Identify the benefits of using a lateral thinking approach to solve problems and plan in a more effective, collaborative manner.

Emergency Preparedness Competencies addressed in this session:

- Describe the public health role in emergency response in a range of emergencies that might arise.
- Describe the chain of command in emergency response.
- Identify and locate the agency emergency response plan (or the pertinent portion of the plan).
- Describe his/her functional role(s) in emergency response and demonstrate his/her role(s) in regular drills.
- Demonstrate correct use of all communication equipment used for emergency communication (phone, fax, radio, etc.).
- Describe communication role(s) in emergency response: Within agency, Media, General public, Personal (family, neighbors)
- Identify limits to own knowledge/skill/authority and identify key system resources for referring matters that exceed these limits.
- Apply creative problem solving and flexible thinking to unusual challenges within his/her functional responsibilities and evaluate effectiveness of all actions taken.
- Recognize deviations from the norm that might indicate an emergency and describe appropriate action (e.g., communicate clearly within the chain of command).
- Other: Enhance partnership and collaboration skills for emergency response planning with agencies and jurisdictions outside the local health department.

Emergency Preparedness Competencies can be found at www.nursing.hs.columbia.edu/institutes-centers/chphsr/btcomps.pdf
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Instructor Bios

**Bill Stephens, MS**

Mr. Stephens has managed the advanced practice center at Tarrant County Public Health working in the area of public health preparedness and new product development for over 2 years. His areas of focus have been in exercise design and analysis, partnerships and collaboration, and syndromic surveillance system development and evaluation. Prior to joining Tarrant County Public Health, Mr. Stephens worked in senior management roles in the scientific/biomedical imaging industry and in several defense systems programs. He contributed to product development for the first commercially available digital mammography systems, and for image sensors used in the Human Genome Program. He holds an MS degree from Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

**Megan Bush-Knapp, MPH**

Mrs. Bush-Knapp developed a passion for public health during her college years while working for Williamson County and Cities Health District on educational projects related to childhood immunizations, nutrition, and community gardening. This passion took her into graduate school at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health, Atlanta, Georgia, where she focused on health education. While living in Atlanta, she worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion conducting research pertaining to antimicrobial resistance, nosocomial infections, and phlebotomy-related injuries. Currently, she develops emergency preparedness training materials and curriculums for Tarrant County Public Health’s Advanced Practice Center.

**Manisha Maskay, PhD**

Dr. Maskay has worked in multiple public health forums for over 30 years. She has significant experience in academic medicine, health care and local public health. She has developed and implemented successful collaborative approaches to complex public health problems in a range of communities. She was responsible for setting up an Office of Emergency Preparedness at Columbus Public Health, Columbus, OH where she directed the Division of Planning and Preparedness for over 5 years. Most recently, she has been responsible for completing the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan for Tarrant County Public Health.