

Three Perspectives on Preparedness Brief

Three perspectives on disaster preparedness were presented in select interviews with professionals or experienced persons on the goals and key aspects of preparedness at different levels. All have crucial points on preparedness using different perspectives and approaches in achieving mutual level of preparation.

Community (Individuals): An individual's perspective on disaster preparedness relies on the role of preparedness of an individual as: knowing who to turn to, and how to decide what to do and what not to do¹. As Miller explains in his interview, his previous experience with the 1993 bombing lowered his preparedness in thinking he was more prepared if it happened again, because he had already been through it¹. Others on his floor and within the building waited for instructions, or were calm, wanting to go back to work because they didn't know what to do. Individual preparedness is achieved through a more influential role for education in the face of an emergency or disaster¹. Denial is the first human reaction, and the goal of the community is to educate people so they know what to do and overcome initial feelings of denial. Basic knowledge of fire routes and building layouts to be prepared for future disasters of this nature.

Business: Business perspectives on preparation are specific to the planning and preparation for a disaster. Preparation techniques are developed based on previous events to best prepare for future events². According to Hindertaker, while it is not essential to go through events to adequately plan for future ones, planning and practice drills implement a level of knowledge that makes a huge difference in disaster outcomes². Working across different departments is essential as the combination of different perspectives can result in the most developed plan². The goal of preparation and planning is virtual preparedness for any and all disasters through the country and eliminating all imminent threats with a thoroughly developed disaster plan².

Government: Governmental preparedness is achieved through management of a city by a team during a disaster³. Government level preparation is a team task, as other life events can occur in and around different disasters. It is important for duty officers and city managers to work as a "tandem pair" with the unified goal of responding to the emergency effectively³. Preparedness and mitigation are just as crucial elements to a local or federal government's preparedness and ultimate disaster relief success³. Warning/pre notification to residents is a goal of the government to help increase overall preparedness for all persons in the face of a disaster³.

Each of the interviews made key points on disaster preparedness as related to their experiences and career roles on the disaster preparedness levels. Governmental key points, per Thomas Chin, focused on the unity of multiple city groups working together as a cycle while Carmela Hindertaker emphasized the necessity of planning and disaster preparation, using the lessons learned from previous disasters. These are completely opposite approaches but both mirror the experience of Peter Miller who emphasized the need to prepare for such an event but also relying on oneself and the community to get through the disaster.

References

1. Gordon E. What we learned about disaster response from 9/11. WHYY.
<https://whyy.org/segments/what-we-learned-about-disaster-response-from-911/>.
Published September 11, 2015. Accessed March 15, 2023.
2. Interview with Carmela Hinderaker, Director of Business Continuity
3. Interview with Thomas Chin, Response Coordinator, SF Dept of Emergency Management