

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

NATIONAL EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER • EMMITSBURG, MD 21727



FEMA

## **Course: V-0036 - Virtual Tabletop Exercise Series (VTTX) – The Psychology of Disaster: Managing Behavioral Issues in Disasters and Providing Crisis Support**

### **Exercise Date & Location:**

July 28, 29 and 30 2015, Virtual Exercise – Multiple Locations

*(Note: Three separate offerings to accommodate as many site applicants as possible)*

### **Exercise Length:**

4 Hours. Start time is 12:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (EST) and end time is 4:00 P.M. EST.

### **Exercise Description:**

Communities in general, even when well versed in the principles of emergency management, are poorly prepared to manage the behavioral aspects of disasters. Most emergency managers have never been trained in the Psychology of Disasters. They do not adequately understand the psychological stages of disaster and the acute cognitive, physical, emotional, behavioral and spiritual responses to the enormous stressors associated with a disaster. Without knowledge of the principles and practices of crisis intervention, emergency managers can become quickly overwhelmed, distracted, and they may suffer the loss of clear thinking and rapid decision-making.

This Virtual Tabletop Exercise focuses on crisis intervention with the community members to maximize the operational support being provided by the emergency management system to the community. It also focuses on the needs of the emergency response personnel who have been exposed to the more gruesome aspects of the disaster scene. Finally it describes an effective comprehensive, integrated, systematic and multi-component approach to delivering crisis support services to both the citizens and the emergency response personnel.

Dr. Jeffrey T. Mitchell of the University of Maryland Baltimore County will conduct and facilitate these courses. He teaches courses in disaster management and crisis intervention both at the University of Maryland and at Florida Institute of Technology.

### **Exercise Goals:**

This seminar will use lectures, slides, pen and paper exercises, and discussions to aid the participants in developing a strong foundation for the provision of appropriate behavioral support before, during and after a disaster. Overall goals include:

- 1.) Providing information to assist the participants in understanding the psychology of disasters before, during and after they occur.
- 2.) Assisting emergency managers in understanding the psychological stages of disasters. Support to first responders, EOC staff, schools, military, local governments, State governments, Federal agencies, Tribal, private sector organizations, and non-governmental agencies.

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- 3.) Aiding emergency personnel to establish an appropriate strategic crisis action plan for supporting both the citizens and the operations personnel.
- 4.) Improve emergency management's understanding of an effective crisis intervention program called Critical Incident Stress Management.
- 5.) Support to first responders, EOC staff, schools, military, local governments, State governments, Federal agencies, tribal, private sector organizations, and non-governmental agencies.
- 6.) Provide a virtual, experiential education environment to enhance critical response and recovery tasks.

**Target Audience:**

The VTTX program is designed for a “community-based” group (not individual participation) of personnel from federal, local, tribal or state emergency management organizations with representation from all Emergency Management disciplines - public safety, public works, public health, health care, government, administrative, communications, military, private sector, non-governmental, and other whole community partners.

**Exercise Design**

This VTTX is designed to engage the participants in a no-fault open discussion. The facilitation will occur via Video Teleconference (VTC) from the EMI campus, and will be complimented by a dedicated local agency facilitator at each VTC site.

The VTTX will be supported by an Exercise and Coordination Facilitation Guide, which will include all required logistical information (room layout, connection instructions, etc.), as well as facilitation and hot wash instructions.

The VTTX will consist of:

- Discussion modules presented by Dr. Jeffery Mitchell.
- Brief-outs from each participating location after each module.

**Participation Requirements:**

The VTTX will be limited to approximately 15 locations per exercise. Participants must have an appropriate site equipped with VTC capability (not web-based) that can access the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) VTC site (connection information will be provided by EMI). Participating locations will be responsible for local exercise logistics, and should designate an exercise coordinator to implement the logistical requirements for the exercise. In addition, the location must provide a person capable of facilitating the on-site portion of exercise. Electronic copies of the related exercise materials (Situation Manual) will be provided in advance by EMI.

**To Apply:**

Locations interested in participating in the VTTX series should submit an email request to participate in the seminar to Doug Kahn at [douglas.kahn@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:douglas.kahn@fema.dhs.gov), phone (301) 447-7645, with preferred date of participation. Your email is your program application. When applying, please provide a central point of contact from your organization to work all VTTX issues. Each location will receive a notice from EMI and will be provided with relevant logistical information and exercise materials to set up and facilitate the exercise locally.

**VTTX Program Information:**

For a complete listing of all the FY15 VTTX dates and scenarios please check our homepage at: <http://www.training.fema.gov/Programs/emiVTTX.aspx>

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