

Influenza Pandemic Scenario-Based Group Exercise – 6/22/05 – PM **Facilitators' Guide**

Overview: The afternoon exercise will present situations and challenges, and allow the participants to work in groups to identify the impact of an outbreak on their organizations and communities. Facilitators will be present, but the challenge is directed at the participants to emphasize that they are critical to responding to an influenza pandemic.

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to review the impact of an influenza pandemic on their community. During the exercise, as in a real event, participants will address overwhelming situations and be expected to work with their colleagues to identify problems, propose solutions, and prioritize actions. Questions and discussion should focus on how response partners in a community must work together to deal with the issues effectively.

Scope: This exercise will look broadly at a global influenza pandemic and ask participants to address general issues and local events related to the pandemic. The exercise will *not* practice a specific plan nor ask participants to make official, public representation of their agency and its preparedness status.

Goals:

1. **Review** the impact of an influenza pandemic on their community, organization, partner organizations, and professional activities;
2. **Identify** problems and potential solutions that are appropriate to the unique conditions of their agency and community;
3. **Share** the identified problems and solutions with their peers;
4. **Document** and share the proceedings and recommendations made by the groups in order to recognize the unique perspective of public health in planning efforts.

Logistics: The conference attendees, approximately 150 in total, will be divided into five groups. Participants will be assigned to one group for the whole exercise based on their preference indicated on the registration form. All groups will use a common influenza pandemic storyline presented in PowerPoint slides, but each group will be tasked with focusing on a certain aspect of the response. They will each receive a tailored set of questions.

Groups (1 per room, approx. 30 participants each):

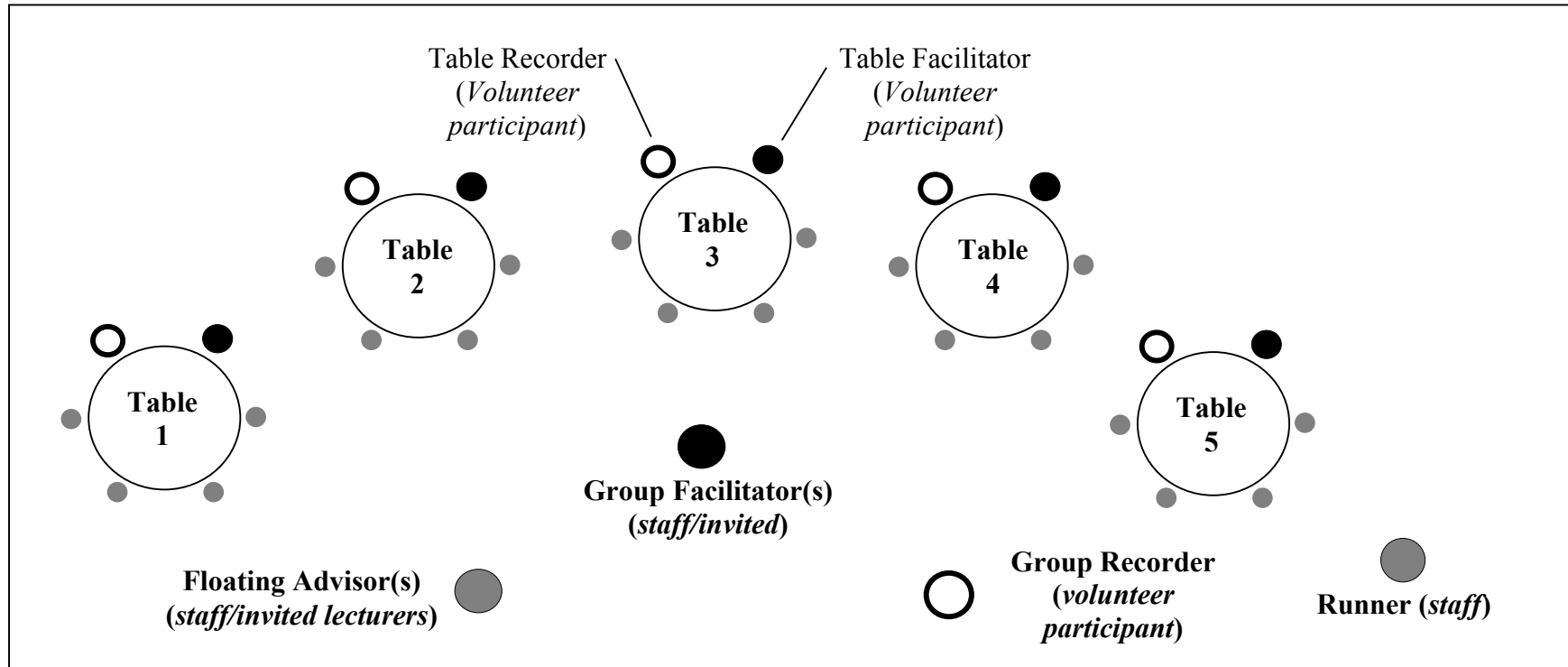
Crisis & Risk Communication	Surge Capacity Issues	Inter-agency Issues	Resource Distribution	Operational & Implementation Issues
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Within each group, there will be a facilitator and floating advisors (content experts who can answer technical questions that arise in any of the rooms), as well as a runner (to aid facilitators, get other content experts from other rooms, etc). Participants in each of the five discussion groups will be further divided around tables into approximately five groups of six, each nominating a facilitator and a recorder. The purpose of each of these small groups is to allow them to address different questions for each module of the scenario, so more questions get

addressed and so each person can participate in a discussion, which is easier to ensure in very small groups.

Note that actual attendance on the day of the event is not fixed, so the number, size, and composition of the groups will vary. Also, participants will not be intentionally grouped geographically or with their regular partner organizations. This introduces a degree of artificiality, but it makes organizing the event simpler and may also allow participants to avoid existing problematic partnerships and get to know new potential partners.

Each group's room would look something like this:



Schedule:

Time

12:30 **Participants arrive** in their assigned room, and break into smaller groups of about 6 people at their tables.

Individual introductions around each table.

Overview of exercise: Review of the purpose and format of the exercise and each module.

- 12:45 **Module 1**
(25 min.)
- **Situation updates for Module 1:** Advance the PowerPoint slides of the pandemic scenario.
 - **Assign questions to tables:** Each table takes responsibility for one question. Either let them read them and pick one, or assign them arbitrarily. Note that in some cases there will not be a unique question for each table. Questions are below, with a separate list for each topical group and a short list of questions for each module of the scenario.
 - **Assign facilitator and recorder roles for each table:** The table facilitator should keep the table's discussion moving. The table recorder needs to write down the table's responses to the questions to help when reporting back to the group. One quick method for assigning the roles is to ask for a volunteer at each table who will do nothing. The person to their right is the facilitator and the person to their left is the recorder.
 - **Table discussion (5 min.):** Each table takes 5 minutes to discuss their initial responses to the question they're assigned.
 - **Tables report back & Discussion (20 min.):** Each table shares with the rest of the group the question they were assigned and the initial responses they came up with. Others in the room are encouraged to share their thoughts and pose questions.
 - **Identify key concerns:** The group should identify about 3 key concerns about their focus area for this module that they will share with the other groups back in the auditorium. Write them on a large pad of paper to aide presenting them to the large group.
- 1:10 **Module 2**
(25 min.)
- Situation updates for Module 2
Assign specific questions to tables
Table discussion (5 min.)
Tables report back & Discussion (20 min.)
Identify key concerns
- 1:35 **Module 3**
(25 min.)
- Situation updates for Module 3
Assign specific questions to tables
Table discussion (5 min.)
Tables report back & Discussion (20 min.)
Identify key concerns

2:00 **Module 4** Situation updates for Module 4
(25 min.) Assign specific questions to tables
Table discussion (5 min.)
Tables report back & Discussion (20 min.)
Identify key concerns

2:25 **Conclusion** of scenario

Wrap-up discussion for room:

- Overarching issues identified after working through all modules
- Prepare to report back to other groups in the auditorium. (Make sure key concerns are ready to share, and identify two people to get up and read them aloud to the larger group.)

2:50 **Break** – Head to auditorium

3:00- **All groups report back** to each other: The facilitator will walk the whole group through
4:00 the 4 modules of the scenario quickly and ask each group to share their key concerns for each module. Discussion among the participants is encouraged, but the facilitator will keep it moving and on time.

Discussion Questions

For each room and for each of the four modules there are approximately five unique questions, one for each table to take the lead on. If a table is finished with one question before the rest of the tables are finished and ready to report back, they should go on to other questions and issues of their (or the facilitator's) choosing.

Key points to remember when guiding discussion:

- The pandemic is very long compared to other emergencies that are being planned for.. Most events that are presented do not happen at one point in time, but are phenomena that develop over weeks or months.
- The participants are “in charge”. They are the pandemic response community. The facilitator is not the expert or authority.

Note on pace: The scenario updates and the questions are timed artificially. In an actual pandemic, all the issues would arise immediately. However, for the sake of this group activity, they issues and challenges are spread out of the length of the pandemic so that the group does not need to address every issue right away and can keep moving on.

All groups report back (auditorium)

For each module, each group should present the 3 key concerns they identified earlier. The guiding questions of the discussion are:

- What challenge did your group face?
- What problems did you identify?
- What solutions do you recommend?
- What remains unresolved?

Additionally, consider:

- What steps can be taken now, in the planning phase?

Acknowledgements

Questions for the exercise informed directly by:

AHRQ, Evidence Report 96: *Regionalization of Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response*

Albert Camus, *The Plague*

Suggested citation of this document:

University at Albany Center for Public Health Preparedness, Albany Medical Center Regional Resource Center, and Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital Regional Resource Center.

Proceedings of Avian Influenza: Preparation and Response Regional Workshop, Rensselaer, NY, June 22, 2005. Available at: <http://www.ualbanycphp.org>.