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# Deployment Awareness for TERT Team Member

Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission-  
Telecommunicator Program  
APCO/NENA National Joint TERT Initiative  
2014

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## Introduction

- Introductions
- Pre-course reading and assignment
- FEMA IS-144
- IS 100, 200, 700
- Housekeeping

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## Course Objectives

- Provide an overview of WA TERT
- Prepare you to deploy
- Provide you expectations for deployment
- Overview of necessary interpersonal communication skills

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We have 6 main objectives for this course upon which we'll concentrate for today. We want you to have an understanding of:

- TERT History and overview of the WA APCO/NENA TERT Program (Unit 1)
- How to mentally prepare for a deployment – understanding the *philosophy of service* (Unit 2)
- How to physically prepare for deployment (Unit 3)
- Interpersonal communications (Unit 4)
  - Behavioral expectations
- Understanding the disaster environment and your personal safety & security (Unit 5)
- The WA TERT Deployment process (Unit 6) and what you can do to get your PSAP engaged as a Participating Agency

You are being provided an additional resource in this course with the NJTI student manual. In that manual you will find much of the same information here along with case histories and stories from telecommunicators who have been on TERT deployments. That manual is yours to keep and read at your leisure.

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## TERT History

- APCO/NENA Joint TERT Initiative-2006
- Florida used a mutual aid system for telecom since 1992
- NC developed TERT acronym 2001
- TERT is a PSAP-to-PSAP deployment
- WA APCO/NENA achieved deployable status-June 2013

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## Lesson 1 – History and Background

### A Brief History of TERT

The National Joint TERT Initiative or NJTI, established in 2006, is the umbrella organization and board comprised of appointed APCO and NENA members that works to promote TERT around the U.S. The group is responsible for the basic curricula for both the TERT Member and TERT Team Leader courses. For a state to have their TERT personnel be recognized as a deployable resource they must submit an application and information to the NJTI where the application is reviewed and deployable status is granted. The purpose of this process is to create uniformity of operations, deployment standards, and training on a nationwide basis. Their website is: [www.njti-tert.org](http://www.njti-tert.org)

The first large scale, long term PSAP mutual aid was used in Florida following hurricane Andrew in 1992. Florida was devastated by this major hurricane and it became clear that while some parts of the state were operational, others were not. One of the major issues during these types of events is that PSAP personnel are also personally affected by the event. Many Telecommunicators either lost their homes or sustained major damage during this event. Being able to pull Telecommunicators from other areas of the state became the only option.

One of the interesting findings from this and other subsequent hurricanes in Florida was that they could use Telecommunicators from any discipline, law, fire, EMS, and train them in a short amount of time, to assist the affected PSAP, assuming any or all duties. They found police dispatchers could be effective managing fire radios. Likewise, fire dispatchers were put to work managing law enforcement frequencies. All of the out-of-area personnel handled call taker duties.

A TERT deployment is a PSAP-to-PSAP response. This differs from an Incident or Tactical Dispatch Team- which is a PSAP-to-Field response. The two terms are not the same.

The moral of the story: not every Telecommunicator is cross-trained for all disciplines, but all Telecommunicators vetted for a TERT Team have proven themselves capable of working in a major event. *The "discipline" that makes an effective TERT Team Member is the ability to work under pressure to manage a major incident.*

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**WA TERT**

- Committee of WA APCO/NENA
- State Coordinator- coordinates all deployments
- Committee Chair-manages committee that puts the program together
- PARTICIPATING Agency-trains and provides team members
- REQUESTING Agency-makes the TERT request
- WA Emergency Management (WA EMD)- takes the initial requests oversees mission

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### Washington State APCO/NENA TERT

As you know, TERT is a national movement, headed by the APCO and NENA national organizations. In June 2013, Washington State became the 16th state to achieve deployable status.

In Washington, the TERT Program consists of three parts:

- The WA APCO/NENA TERT Committee acts as an oversight panel for the TERT Program in Washington State. The committee puts together the program and program documents, promotes TERT around the state, and heads the after-deployment review panel that will convene after every deployment.
- WA APCO/NENA TERT members, led by the WA TERT State Coordinator (Cory James, Norcom) and consisting of Regional Coordinators for the NE, SE, NW, and SW regions of WA State, and TERT members which include TERT Team leaders. These individuals have the support of their agency which has completed all the required paperwork including:
  - The affirmation that their team members have had the required training courses that make them eligible for deployment. (See Program Guide for details)
  - The Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Emergency Management (WA EMD) Division which will allow for the agency to be reimbursed for the costs related to the deployment of their staff member(s)
- The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) Telecommunicator Program which offers training for TERT.

The Washington State Emergency Management Division takes requests from local or out-of-state Emergency Management Agencies, assigns mission numbers, and provides PSAPS with the necessary agreements such as the Interagency Agreement (IGA) and the Amended IGA necessary for reimbursement.

The [http://: www.APCOWA.ORG](http://www.APCOWA.ORG) website has a TERT button on the front page. If you click on that, it will bring up documents, forms, etc., for you to use. For specifics on how to contact the State TERT Coordinator, WA APCO/NENA TERT Committee Chair, Regional Coordinators or the NJTI, please see the WA State TERT Program Guide

The CJTC hopes to be able to create a password protected portal that can be used only by deploying teams. The vision is to have information on this portal that will give team members information about rendezvous points, the requesting PSAP, conditions at the PSAP, team member cell phone numbers, etc. The portal password will be changed for each deployment. Only deploying personnel are

authorized to access the site. This means if you're deployed, you don't give the information to family members, coworkers, or anyone else. You will be the only person authorized to access the portal due to the confidential information that may be posted there.

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## Types of Deployment

- Intra (inside)-state
  - Federally declared disasters - reimbursable
  - Non-declared emergent needs
  - State declared events
- Inter (outside) state
  - Federally declared – allows for reimbursement

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There are two types of deployments possible:

- **INTRASTATE**- a deployment inside the State of Washington is an intrastate deployment. These types of deployments may include short deployments, for an event such as a responder or staff member funeral, incident all-staff debriefings, major storm activity, etc. They may also include longer deployments to areas affected by events such as fire, flood, or disaster. For the short-term, non-declared disaster types of deployments, unless otherwise negotiated by your agency, this is considered MUTUAL AID and there may be no reimbursement for your time or expenses. This includes state-declared events. The only events within the state that may be eligible for federal reimbursement are those federally declared emergencies or disasters.
- **INTERSTATE**- a deployment outside the State of Washington is an interstate deployment. In order to be eligible for deployment out of state, your agency **MUST** have a signed Interagency Agreement with Washington EMD. Teams may be deployed for 1-2 weeks. The TERT members' agencies are responsible for the initial outlay of costs for travel, etc., but will be eligible for reimbursement for designated costs.

Because the deployment of a TERT Team is a formal process, it is critical for team members to understand that under no circumstances would you ever self-deploy. The authorization for a TERT deployment must be obtained by the appropriate governmental agency prior to the deployment. The team must be part of a mission number under which the event falls. Signed affirmation of training must have been received by the State TERT Coordinator for your agency, affirming that you have had the requisite training. The Interagency Agreement with WA EMD must be in place if the deployment is out of state or if your agency will submit for any type of federal reimbursement.

## **Federal Recognition**

TERT is recognized by the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) as a deployable resource.

The TERT on-line class which you should have taken was launched by FEMA in July 2012.

The NJTI is working on achieving recognition by FEMA & the Department of Homeland Security to become a Tier One Response Entity along with Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, etc.

### Recent Deployments

- May 2011 – Illinois TERT deploys to the State EMA (Emergency Management Agency) regional command post to support communications for flooding along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. 13 team members and 6 team leaders were deployed in three waves for one week. They worked from a communications trailer.
- May 2011 – Illinois TERT deploys to Massac County 911 for flood relief. 4 team members deployed in two waves for one week.
- May 2011 – Missouri deploys to Jasper County & Joplin, MO PSAPs for tornado activity. 20 team members, in two waves, deployed for one week.
- October 2012 – Super Storm Sandy – New York State Deployment to Suffolk Fire & EMS in Yaphank, NY
- August 2012 – Texas TERT Deployed to St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office to augment PSAP staffing after Hurricane Isaac struck Louisiana

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## Scenario

- Wildland Fire
- Loss of homes and missing persons in one community
- Fast moving fire with 0% containment
- Requesting PSAP has a dispatcher missing from the affected town

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### Scenario

Your PSAP is a combined center for 4 law agencies, 12 Fire Departments/Districts and one 911 center for a county that has a population of 35,000.

A wildland fire started 3 days ago due to lightning strikes and is growing quickly. In the past 4 hours a wind storm has arrived and changed the direction of the fire. Due to the sudden change in the weather there were limited warnings for the nearest community. So far we know that approximately 15 homes have been destroyed, and not everyone is accounted for. Evacuations are underway for 3 more communities.

Several of your staff either live in these communities and/or have family members who do. The fire is out of control with 0% containment.

You have been calling in staff but you are unable to reach a dispatcher who lives in the first community. No one can safely access this area.

Your center has requested a TERT team from the State TERT Coordinator.

Take **3 minutes** to write down some thoughts or concerns you might have as the requesting agency dispatchers, about having other Telecommunicators from different parts of the state coming into your agency during this event.

Notes:

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## Mentally Preparing for Deployment

- What might change during our scenario?
- How do you mentally prepare to respond to changes?
- What steps have you taken to minimize the stress from deploying?
  - Actions you take ahead of time?

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### **Lesson 2 – Mental Preparation for Deployment**

#### **Brainstorming Activity – What Might Change?**

Using our scenario of the wildland fire, take 5 minutes working in your groups and make a list of the things that might change over the 7 days of your deployment. What things could change?

#### **Notes:**



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## Physical Prep for Deployment

- What steps do you take to deploy?
- Go bag packing list-what did you forget? What do you not need?

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### **Lesson 3 – Physical Preparation for Deployment**

What did you pack in your virtual “go bag”?

Notes:

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## What to Pack?

- Self-sustaining for 72 hours
- Identification
- Clothing?
- Personal essentials
- Medical issues?
- Cash
- Misc.
- What NOT to pack

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## Interpersonal Skills

- Philosophy of *Service*
- We aren't there to fix things

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### **Lesson 4 –Interpersonal Communication Skills**

As important as the physical and mental preparation is to the mission of a TERT team, the biggest hurdle in our mental preparation is understanding and working within our mission. The philosophy of the Washington TERT program is the *philosophy of service*.

When you arrive at a requesting/receiving PSAP, the question should not be, "What do you want us to do?" The question should be, "*How can we serve you?*" The spirit of service is different than the spirit of "fixing". As TERT members, WE ARE NOT THERE TO FIX THINGS. We cannot fix them. We can support them as they fix themselves, but we are not fixers.

Our mission is to serve them and the communities they serve. We are there to support them in their PSAP's continuity of operations for the good of the community.

It is critical to the success of the team that you understand this philosophy and the difference between serving and fixing. We are here to serve. How may we serve you? Not, how can I fix you or your situation?

Consider as part of your mental preparedness that you examine your reasons for wanting to be a TERT member. Are you a "fixer" or a "server"? Keep an open mind and examine your own philosophy.

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## Communications Challenges

- You may or may not be welcomed by the Receiving PSAP staff
  - It is NOT personal
  - It does not change your mission of service

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### Communication Challenges

Telecommunicators who are deployed to a disaster area may face resentment from resident Telecommunicators. The resentment factor may be challenging and not well understood for the deployed Telecommunicator who is often anticipating an accepting and relieved Telecommunicator reception. However, Telecommunicators must remember many resident Telecommunicators may feel an obligation to remain at their "post" until all calls for service have been resolved, may feel the deployed Telecommunicator does not know the communication (radio/telephone) system, the surrounding area, or the community well enough to assume the position; or the resident Telecommunicator may feel as if he/she is being "replaced" rather than supported. These emotional perceptions are difficult to adequately predict and may not be present in all cases.

Deployed Telecommunicators must first recognize these perceptions may exist and they are not "personal", but rather a common reaction in a disaster situation. Patience, understanding, and a non-defensive response are all key techniques that should be employed as necessary. Most importantly, deployed Telecommunicators should step back and try and view the situation from the other person's perspective in order to gain a better appreciation of the circumstances.

Additional challenges may include Telecommunicators working with little sleep or experiencing a personal loss of property, family, or friends. During a disaster situation, critical incident stress is often pushed aside until after the initial response/recovery phase of the disaster or until the first "down time." The resident Telecommunicator may be reluctant to step aside even when sudden inactivity forces them to focus on the disaster and the impact or effect it may have had on them.

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## Group/Team Dynamics

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Adjourning

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### **Group/ Team Dynamics**

Groups go through several stages of development. In 1965 Bruce W. Tuckman, an educational psychologist now with the University of Ohio proposed a model that described the phases that are necessary for a group to go through in order to become effective.

For TERT teams, there are several groups/teams to consider. 1) The TERT team deployed 2) The group or team on the shift you are assigned to at the receiving PSAP (and these may change) 3) The other TERT members on your assigned shift at the receiving PSAP.

Navigating them all requires knowledge of group dynamics and attention paid to which group is involved.

#### **FORMING**

In the first stages of team building or group dynamics, comes the FORMING stage.

This stage is where a new group comes together (or one or more new persons are added to an existing group) and each individual's behavior is motivated by their need to be accepted by others in the group. This can be a "honeymoon" period identified by avoidance of conflict or controversy.

The group may consist of a new work shift that sees some members leave and other new ones arrive. The group learns about the shift's opportunities and challenges and determines the general flow of work and requirements of the shift.

Team members tend to work and behave independently. Often, they have no formal process for establishing shift or team goals or objectives. Most individuals are on their best behavior, but self-focused.

This is where members of the team get to know one another. This is also where team members watch to see how other members respond to work load, stress, and each other.

## **STORMING**

The next stage that the group will enter is the STORMING stage.

In this stage the group individual's ideas compete for consideration. The group decides on the formal or informal leader or leadership style preference. Team members are more comfortable confronting each other's ideas or perspectives. This stage is where initial conflict arises and through effective interpersonal skills, this is the stage where the team may experience some stressful interactions.

This is a NECESSARY stage for the group to work through in order to come together as an effective and cohesive team. This is also the stage where teams get stuck and never progress to the other phases.

The group will be working more toward an understanding of individual roles and responsibilities. Because conflict can arise, some of the members may attempt to avoid confronting issues, thereby holding the group progress back.

Supervisors, who intervene at this stage with a "no conflict" message, may further delay the team's progress into the next phase of development. This stage is critical for the formation of an effective team.

Be cautious about becoming involved in "storming" with the receiving PSAP personnel. In normal settings, this would be a normal progression. However, in a situation where personnel may be already overworked, overwhelmed, and stressed, taking a more reflective, supportive, or submissive role may create more acceptance and cause less stress for others.

## **NORMING**

In this phase, team members understand the "rules of engagement", individual tasks and responsibilities and are generally in agreement. Effective group members practice tolerance and patience and exhibit supportive behaviors. This is a difficult stage to achieve. Every team member must begin to understand other member's points of view and needs, and generally what the team will or will not accept or tolerate. This is a critical phase in order for a highly effective and successful team to be able to move into the next phase.

Think about when you have shift shake-ups. Maybe it's a new shift bid situation. New shift members are added, others go to other shifts. You may experience the storming phase as everyone finds his or her position within the group. Once you become familiar with behaviors and expectations, there may be less surface or sub-surface conflict.

This is the norming phase – everyone is learning what to expect from their teammates. For some groups, this is as good as it gets. For various reasons, the group "norm" may never move to the next stage, which is performing (as in HIGH PERFORMING).

## **PERFORMING**

This is the phase that good teams work to achieve. Unfortunately, this phase is not reached by all groups or teams. It is characterized by member's being able to work interdependently and flexibly. This group operates effectively as a unit finding ways to get the job done effectively without inappropriate behaviors and conflict. This group tends to need minimal supervision.

Performing teams may revert back to earlier stages. Changes occur in the workplace or among team members that may cause the group or team to go back to storming or norming stages.

## ADJOURNING

This phase occurs when the group's goals are accomplished or there is a disengagement of members or duties. In a communications center, this may occur when new shift bids are put in place and the team breaks up as members go to different shifts, etc.

This phase may include a sense of loss by the group when a highly effective team breaks up.

The new team now goes back to the forming stage and begins again.

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### Interactions with Different Groups

- To which groups/teams do you belong on a deployment?
- Are there different approaches you would take to different groups?
- Interactions with affected persons
- CISM

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Consider as part of your mental preparedness that you examine your reasons for wanting to be a TERT member. Are you a "fixer" or as a "server". Keep an open mind and examine your own philosophy.

Prepare yourself to be a good listener, but think about the value to keeping a polite but professional distance. You may be dealing with PSAP personnel who have had extremely emotional reactions to the event. They may want to use you as a sounding board or as a counsellor. You need to be aware of your role as serving the PSAP and the community, with a healthy distancing from being drawn into the emotional turmoil of others. You should also be aware of when these emotions affect your ability to be effective.

Disasters often have an unpredictable emotional impact on those, including public safety personnel, affected by them.

You may come into contact with personnel who need to be comforted. If time allows, allow the person to talk and vent feelings, without interrupting them.

Use supportive and reinforcing messages acknowledging their situation. Consider paraphrasing or emotion labeling. Support them in continuing their on-going professional efforts on behalf of their communities.

Be cautious about the use of physical contact.

Remember: the agency may have or should have in place CISM mechanisms or support. These are more appropriate resources for emotionally upset or devastated staff.

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## Surviving Vs. Thriving

- Hearing vs. listening
- Timing
- Refer to other resources

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### **Surviving vs. Thriving**

There is an important difference between "hearing" and "listening". A resident Telecommunicator (one permanently assigned to the PSAP) in a disaster area may be stressed, tired, and emotionally drained. They need to know you, as a deployed Telecommunicator, are listening; not simply "hearing" them or letting what they are saying go in one ear and out the other ear.

Active listening requires conscious concentration on the verbal and nonverbal communications of the speaker. Consider the following characteristics of an active and effective listener:

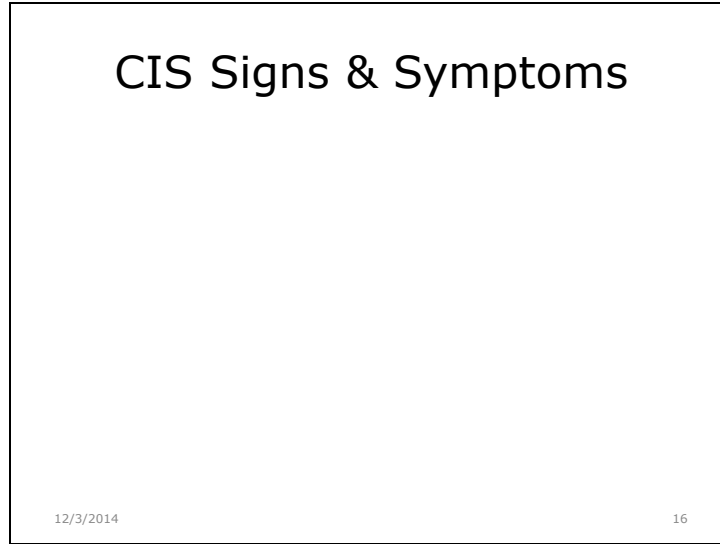
Timing is everything – Choose the right time and listen, carefully and thoroughly.

- Validate their thoughts/fears and let them speak openly- Listen to the person and the message completely. Things or events may be conveyed that are difficult to believe (i.e. working 24 hours a day for three days). If the speaker is mentally closed off, effective communications will not occur. Avoid statements like "it could have been worse" or "Well at least... (whatever)" – Refrain from excessive talking. It is difficult to listen if you talking or interrupting the person talking. Their perception of the event is real to them. Help them get back into a routine.
- Don't take their anger personally – Develop and maintain a positive attitude concerning the information sent by or being received by the other individual. A person's attitude will either facilitate or block effective communication.
- Paraphrase and use feedback – When the speaker has finished talking, paraphrase what was interpreted. Feedback by the listener ensures what was said was interpreted correctly.
- Do not formulate an instant response – Avoid creating a response while the person is talking. When this occurs, listening has stopped and important points to the message are likely to be missed.
- Maintain eye contact with the person – It has been said that "listening is done with the eyes." A great deal of information may be obtained and credibility gained by looking at a person's eyes. Listen, listen, listen.

- Tell them that you want to help and understand what they have just gone through, Help with everyday tasks, but, give them space when needed. Reassure them they are safe.

Don't get in over your head- Encourage them to get professional help if needed using local resources.

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### **Cognitive**

- Sensory distortion
- Confusion (“dumbing down”)
- Difficulty in decision making
- Preoccupation (obsessions) with event

### **Behavioral**

- Impulsiveness
- Restless
- Withdrawal
- Antisocial Behavior

### **Emotional**

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Anger
- Grief/Sadness

### **Physical**

- Headaches
- Hyperventilation
- Fatigue/exhaustion
- Rapid pulse

### **Spiritual**

- Anger at God
- Questioning of faith
- Distance from religion



## CIS Signs and Symptoms

(Excerpted: Behind the Blue Line. Retrieved 07/10/13. URL: <http://www.behindtheblueline.ca/blog/blueline/2009/01/20/critical-incident-stress-signs-symptoms/>):

There is considerable variation in the symptoms of CIS, and more personal reactions may occur based on individual factors. These reactions may be evident immediately after the incident, appear some time later, be precipitated, or reappear following another, less serious experiences.

The following are some signs and symptoms of critical incident stress, and could be immediate or delayed onset. This list is not exhaustive, but a guide to help people suffering from CIS to understand what their bodies are going through, and to assist them with their recovery.

### Take care of yourself!

During a disaster it's easy to forget about yourself when you are sleeping in a strange place, away from home and family, and calm is the last item in the long list of chaos. Remember: It you don't take care of YOU, you cannot take care of anyone else. Look out for yourself so you can be focused and stay the mission. Seek help if you have/are:

- ✓ Hyper vigilance, unable to 'come off duty'
- ✓ Restlessness
- ✓ Intrusive imagery (playing the tape)
- ✓ Extreme changes in your normal ways
- ✓ Fear of experiencing the incident again
- ✓ Looking to blame someone/thing for the event
- ✓ Look out for your partner as well

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## Communication Continuum

- Submissive communication
- Assertive communication
  - Behavior
  - Feelings
  - Effects
- Aggressive communication

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## Communication Continuum

When a Telecommunicator expresses himself, assertive communication techniques can enable firm, yet non-aggressive communication to occur.

This section will define assertiveness, distinguish it from aggressiveness or submissiveness, and discuss the composition of assertive messages.

For those of you who have taken Telecommunicator IV- Survival Communications, you may remember the book *People Styles at Work* by Robert and Dorothy Bolton. We recommend the class and the book as an excellent way to help improve your communications skills.

The behavior of individuals can be described and placed on a continuum of being:

**Submissive** – one who does not express his feelings, thoughts, or impressions and allows others to violate his rights.

**Assertive** – An assertive person expresses her thoughts, feelings, and impressions in a direct and appropriate manner, while maintaining the respect for and of others.

**Aggressive** – An aggressive person expresses her thoughts, feelings, and impressions in a direct and inappropriate manner, while violating the rights and respect of others.

Some key differences in communications to consider.

- There may be times when a deployed Telecommunicator will need to be submissive and say nothing. An example: a deployed TERT member arrives at the receiving PSAP and is told by resident staff, "We have everything under control", "We didn't ask for or we don't need your help", or "We can take care of things ourselves". Do not take an aggressive stance.
  - Consider how you might feel were the situation reversed.
  - How would you react to a stranger coming in to relieve you at your place of work where you are in control of your job?
  - Can this new individual provide the service and responder safety awareness issues that you can?
  - These are normal reactions. Don't take them personally. Allow the resident Telecommunicator to express feelings about the situation. Take a non-confrontational/non-judgmental attitude.

Based on the situation, the demeanor of the receiving PSAP staff, and many other factors, assertive messages may be appropriate or equally inappropriate when confronted with the "we-didn't-ask-for-your-help" scenario.

- Appropriate assertive response: "I can understand how you might feel that way. Your agency made the request, so that's why the team is here."
- Another assertive response: "Your angry and hurtful tone is upsetting to me and I am questioning why I volunteered to leave my family and travel all the way here to help fellow Telecommunicators."

The first response provides empathy and a factual statement

- The second response deals with emotion and feelings (yours) and while it may enable the speaker to review the impact of her statement, it may also alienate her. She may have had many of her own emotions to deal with, and right or wrong, she is now expected to deal with the impact to your feelings and emotions. In a perfect world, it would be great if others took care of our feelings, but in this scenario, it may be beyond the speaker's ability to appropriately manage. Remember the spirit of "service" with which you approach this mission.

### **Assertive Message Components**

The assertive message contains three parts:

- **Behavior** –a nonjudgmental description of the behavior to be changed
- **Feelings** –a disclosure of the asserter's feelings. This may be implied and not always stated directly
- **Effects** – a clarification of the concrete and tangible effect of the other person's behavior on the asserter

Refer to the NJTI student manual for more information on assertive communications with more examples.

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## Role-Play

- At your table, take **10 minutes** to create a role-play interaction between a receiving Telecommunicator and a responding TERT team member, showing assertive approaches to dealing with conflict or resistance

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## Your Role in a Disaster Environment

- Prepare for *change*
- Security & Personal Safety

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### **Lesson 5– Telecommunicator Roles in Disaster Environments**

The biggest factor during a deployment which creates difficult working conditions in a disaster area is: CHANGE.

- Changes in equipment, procedures, etc.
- On-going change in the disaster area, chain of command, expectations, personnel

Equipment, software, and facilities will be different. As time passes, services may be restored and operating conditions may change for better or worse. Priorities, command structures, and the routing of calls may change daily.

Additionally, personal security and safety must be considered.

## **Security and Personal Safety**

The personal security and safety of deployed Telecommunicators is a critical consideration. The community or constituency in a disaster area immediately following the event may range from victims, rescuers/emergency responders, gawkers, and criminals.

Tips for Personal Safety:

- Learn as much as possible about the deployment/disaster area. If the information is available, the TERT Committee will attempt to provide information on the password protected CJTC TERT Deployment portal, along with other information useful to the TERT Team.
- Info may include terrain, conditions, and location of important landmarks
- Dangerous areas, such as those not patrolled by law enforcement, known to have environmental risks, or on-going criminal activity should be avoided
- Do not go out of the PSAP alone
- A buddy system should be used whenever possible.
- Make sure drinking water is safe
- Your team leader may stop and purchase bottled water for the team, if possible
- Do not assume that tap water is safe
- Contamination of public water supplies and private wells after a disaster poses a significant threat of serious illness
- If there is any uncertainty about the water quality, use only bottled water
- Always carry identification and possibly health information
- You should always have your identification (including your agency ID) and deployment documents with you at all times
- If issued an ID card by the requesting PSAP, wear it at all times
- Essential medical information should be carried if you have medical conditions
- Recognize signs and symptoms of stress and fatigue and react appropriately

## Other Considerations

- Use of social media during deployment
- Sightseeing
- Bring concerns to the Team Leader
  - Inappropriate conduct
- Appropriate clothing
- Using required forms
  - FEMA 214
- Track your expenses
  - Keep your receipts

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## Our Recommendations

We recommend that you do not take pictures of the disaster area, PSAP, and PSAP personnel and post them on social media sites with their permission. Even if they were to give you permission, consider the impact of posting pictures of someone else's tragedy or loss. This is someone else's disaster. Be appropriate and respectful. This is probably not the time to upload to Facebook. It MAY be useful, if the Team Leader deems it appropriate, to gather pictures or data of the area that may affect the next incoming team's safety or ability to get to their destination. The information should be given to the Team Leader to post on the secure portal for incoming teams.

- No sightseeing
  - This is work, not a vacation. Remember your spirit of serving.
- Take advantage of down time to relax or sleep.
- You can become injured or lost sightseeing in unfamiliar areas after a disaster. This means you will be consuming resources needed for the community.
- NO alcohol or drug use during the duration of the deployment. You are subject to call back at any time.

Something else to consider: **What team member issues or behaviors should be discussed with the Team Leader?**

- Wear appropriate clothing
- Should be selected based upon the working environment and weather conditions of a disaster area and should be professional at all times.
- Long pants and closed-toe shoes or boots should be worn in all conditions
- The only logos or graphics that should be worn on TERT team members' clothing should be TERT or home agency identification or logos.
- If not available, wear only clothing without any team designation or graphics
- DO NOT wear clothing identifying you as part of another team (USAR, etc.)
- DO NOT wearing clothing that may be considered offensive because of language, images, or cut

TERT members will be expected to keep track of their daily activities on the FEMA 214 form- Activity Log. Further, each member will be required to complete a TERT Member Survey after the deployment

asking specific questions. These forms will be reviewed by the State TERT Coordinator and Chair of the TERT Committee.

The WA APCO site also has a spreadsheet developed for the use of deploying team members who have the ability to download it electronically, to track expenses.

It is imperative that team members understand that expenses may NOT be reimbursable if receipts are not kept. Learn to be a good bookkeeper!

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## Differences in Disaster Type

- Be prepared for frequent *change* in:
  - Work environment
  - Available or unavailable resources
  - Technology
  - Chain-of-command
  - PSAP structure

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## Differences in Disaster Type

The type of disaster will have a direct influence on the working conditions. Catastrophic disasters such as hurricane Katrina essentially eliminated safe drinking water, electricity, and transportation bringing the entire region to a standstill for weeks. Terrorist attacks such as those that occurred on 9/11/2001 started and ended within a couple of hours. A tornado may last minutes, yet the destruction may be widespread over a considerable area.

Depending upon the extent of the destruction, the job duties of a telecommunicator and the length of deployment may vary considerably. Recovery progress from a disaster may change from the time of deployment arrival and as a result, telecommunicators must be able to adapt and change accordingly.

It will be incumbent upon you as a TERT team member to be able to improvise, overcome and adapt as the operating environment will be different from what you are used to.

This is an on-going and continual process. Be prepared to learn quickly and "on the fly" when circumstance demand it.

Watch the receiving PSAP personnel work and ask questions when you need to.

The structure of the PSAP, its technology, and operational protocols are likely to be different and these may change over the time you are there as services are restored or additional workers are brought to the area.

Be prepared to have changes made in the chain-of-command. Your team leader is your first point of contact. This person is responsible for the daily assignment and oversight of the entire deployed TERT team. They act as a liaison between the receiving PSAP and the team. They are responsible for

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checking in with the WA TERT Coordinator on a regular, if not daily basis to update him or her on the team's work. Typically, this person will not change.

The structure of the PSAP itself may change. During the disaster, the center may change its normal operating protocols. It may or may not change back to a more normal way of doing business during your time there.

The classification of job duties may or may not change. Calltakers and dispatchers may have job duties separated or combined.

Be prepared to use different equipment, some of which may not be fully functional. You may be expected to pick up alternative methods of documentation. The type or vintage of equipment should not be of concern to you. Learning to use it effectively is your priority.

Become familiar with equipment, resources, and information and ask as many questions as you need to in an effort to ensure you have the ability to use those resources.

Policies, procedures, and written directives may or may not be in place, depending upon the scope of the disaster. The use of 10 codes is discouraged through the Incident Managements and National Incident Management Systems, so be prepared for the use of plain language. This is particularly true when dealing with other types of emergency responders such as public works, utility companies, or out of the area public safety responders.

As a TERT member, you may be asked to do any number of different job duties. These jobs should be appropriate given the situation. If they are not, discuss this with your team leader.

The type and number of requests coming into the PSAP will vary based on the scope of disaster/emergency and the population of the area. One of the goals of the Team Leader is to attempt to augment, support, and serve PSAP personnel with an appropriate number of TERT team members.

These changes occur in order to maintain a reasonable continuity of operations at the local PSAP.

Changes may occur in the types of callers or calls for service. Quality of information from your callers may be poor. Callers may be emotional, angry, impatient, or very stressed.

When dealing with callers who have experienced disaster or devastating loss, use active listening skills (paraphrasing, emotion labeling, mirroring) and empathy. Be truthful and avoid making promissory statements. Do not give legal advice.

Keep track of information regarding a lack of service or resources and route the information to the appropriate department.

In ongoing disaster situations, be prepared to have limited response resources. There may be situations where there are no resources to send or resources have difficulty accessing areas. Seek guidance from the receiving PSAP staff as to how to deal with an inability to respond to calls.

When assigned to a task at the receiving PSAP, attempt to determine what limitations may exist for public safety or other responses. When in doubt, always ask and confirm.

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## Deploying in WA State

- Request for TERT initiated by EMA
  - Interstate requests require a “package” set of costs be worked up
- State Coordinator(SC) contacts Regional Coordinators
  - Contact Participating Agencies
    - Available Staff
    - IGA in place
    - Obtain costs
  - State Coordinator picks the team & works up/submits the costs
  - Requester accepts or declines the WA State team costs

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## Lesson 6 – Deploying in Washington State

This is a quick overview of how the deployments in Washington State will work. It will also give you information to take back to your PSAP to help us populate our database with deployable personnel.

When a request for TERT comes in either intra- or inter-state, it will almost always come from either a local (intrastate) or state (interstate) Emergency Management office or department. For interstate deployments, another state sends out a request to multiple states for specified resources. If the WA State Emergency Management Division (WA EMD) sees the request for a TERT team on the request, they will notify the Washington State TERT Coordinator, Cory James, or his backup.

The State Coordinator then contacts the Regional TERT Coordinators in WA State (there are 4 of them). These Regional Coordinators then contact any PSAPs in their region that have submitted to them, their signed form, listing all of the PSAP personnel whom the agency supports and who have had the requisite training. The Regional Coordinators will also confirm that the PSAP with deployable personnel has a signed Interagency Agreement (IGA) in place with WA EMD. The Regional Coordinator confirms the hourly cost of salary and benefits for each deployable telecommunicator. The PSAP will provide information to the Regional Coordinator about which of you is able to deploy. They do this after checking staffing, schedules, and your availability. This is when you may get a call from your agency asking if you can tentatively deploy.



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## Deploying In WA

- SC contacts the Requesting/receiving PSAP & gets the skinny
  - Participating agency files an amended IGA with the state
  - Contacts the Team Leader for rendezvous/ logistical decisions
  - Contacts team members
- Team members
  - Your agency pays initial travel expenses (airfare, meals, lodging, etc.)

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This information is then passed on to the State Coordinator (SC) who will look over the list and compare it to any specific information in the request. He or she will pick team members and a team leader. The State Coordinator may have a list of deployable individuals that far exceeds the number of team members needed. Looking at experience, personal knowledge, skills, disciplines, equipment, etc., the State Coordinator will make his/her choices. Initially, if we have enough deployable personnel, we may take only one person from any Participating Agency.

The State Coordinator will then contact each agency whose staff member has been chosen to make up the team. He will ask the agency to file an amended IGA with WA EMD. He confirms salary and benefit costs for each team member. He compiles an estimate of the travel or other costs that will be incurred during the deployment. Once he has an estimate of total costs, he submits these to WA EMD that, in turn, submits the package to the requesting state. The requesting state then looks over all "bids" or cost packages and chooses which team or teams they want to request for assistance.

ONLY after Washington State's package has been accepted by the other state will team members be notified that they have been chosen to deploy.

- The Team Leader is notified and provided the contact information for his/her team.
- The CJTC will issue to each team member, a password for the web portal where information about the deployment will be posted for their eyes only.
- EACH AGENCY with a deploying team member, is responsible for making the travel arrangements & costs (and initially paying for) for its team member.
- The State Coordinator and Team Leader will probably make recommendations for a rendezvous point, and travel information, including flights, vehicle transport, etc.
- Team members are expected to follow the guidelines set up in the APCO standard and the WA State TERT Program Guide.
- There are individual "packets" up on the WA APCO site for Team Members and Team Leader. These packets are shorter versions of the WA Program Guide with specifics for each assignment (member or leader).
- Team members must keep receipts for expenses and submit them to their agency at the end of the deployment

What types of expenses do you think you would be submitting to your agency when you return home based upon our Eastern WA wildland fire scenario?

How many of you know if your agency has completed its IGA with the state or if they have turned in their Affirmation of Training document that lists all eligible-for-deployment personnel? This is something you may want to check on when you get back to your agency.

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## Deploying in WA

- CJTC web portal activated
  - PW provided to team
  - Info uploaded re:
    - Travel plans
    - Rendezvous
    - Phone numbers
    - Initial conditions at the scene
    - Other necessary info

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## Team Leader

- Refer to your Program Guide
  - Leader is in charge of the deployment
    - Members are expected to support and follow the directions of the leader
  - Leader liaises with the requesting PSAP
    - Sets work schedules & expectations
    - Assists the team with its needs
    - Gathers & completes paperwork & reports
    - Does an evaluation on each team member
    - Participates in the after-deployment review panel for WA TERT

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## Summary

- Pre-planning
  - Mental
  - Physical
- Philosophy of service
- Follow your leader
- Carefully read the Program Guide
- Read the NJTI TERT member guide
- Get your agency on board!

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### Summary and Wrap Up

- Prepare, well in advance, to deploy
  - Take care of business! Family, job, financial, pets, etc.
- Mentally prepare
- Physically prepare
- Adjust your philosophy to a *philosophy of service*
  - You are there to serve the community, not fix the situation
  - Be a server, not a fixer
  - This is not your disaster, it's theirs
  - It IS all about them not you
- Follow the leadership of your Team Leader
  - Complete forms (FEMA 214 – your daily activity log, TERT Team Member review form at the end of deployment)
- Read and re-read the program guide about the duties and responsibilities of being a team member
- Read the NJTI manual we've provided. It will give your first-hand accounts of TERT members and their deployment experiences