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Transition and Transformation of Service Agencies Following an Emergency Response

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A project based upon an independent investigation,
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Abstract

This study will focus specifically on the transforming effects service agencies experience as they respond to the highly increased need in the surrounding community. A review of the literature reveals that recovery efforts cannot elicit the needed response and support without a sense of urgency that stems from the event(s) being considered an "emergency." The lack of longevity of the initial urgency threatens the resiliency of the agency as the availability of funding and necessary attention is not maintained. A qualitative, exploratory study was conducted by interviewing ten individuals involved in the Rhode Island emergency winter shelter crisis and five involved in recent Gulf Coast emergencies, all of whom had participated either as employees at a service agency or through other in-depth involvement in the recovery efforts. The findings from this study confirm that the emergency response is demanding not only on the community but also on the service agencies as they are challenged to maintain general operations and service as funding and attention are redirected to newly arising demands. Transformation and changes take place in the internal structure of service agencies, personnel in both numbers and assigned tasks, and overall areas of attention the service agency provide, leading to either more effective practice or the downfall of the service agency due to unmanageable demands. Implications of this research study encourage further collaboration between service agencies and community partners working to respond due to the vastly limited resources available and the frequent and superfluous duplication of services.

Transition and Transformation of Service

Providers Following an Emergency Response

Introduction

Emergencies create massive disruptions in the livelihoods of people, organizations, and communities, creating a desperate need for increased resources and support within the affected society. As this great need presents itself, communities must scramble to respond and provide for that which the community has lost in an attempt to regain stability and well-being. With the vagueness that comes about with the definition of "emergency" and other related terms, society has had trouble determining *what* qualifies an event as an emergency and *who* holds the power to deem a situation an emergency.

Emergencies fall on a wide spectrum, differing in degree of impact and damage, the population(s) affected, and numerous other variables. The looseness of definition of what an emergency entails requires that emergencies be self-defined by not only the communities involved, but also members of the media, politicians, and the other systems holding the power to solicit a response. With the wide range of service providers, individuals, and governmental agencies included in many response efforts, the interaction and communication between these systems must be fully functioning in order to ensure swift and effective response.

Definition of Topic

Two definitions for "emergency" are provided by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: "1. An unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action; 2. An urgent need for assistance or relief" (2010). As made

clear by the definition, emergencies not only bring an unexpected set of difficulties but also require that a response be made to regain a sense of cohesiveness and normalcy for those impacted by the emergency. As many “unforeseen circumstances” present themselves every day, those with a high degree of chaos and disruption call for extreme responses, taxing any service providers involved in the recovery efforts. How, if, and by whom these emergencies are defined is a determining factor in the type of response, or lack or response, that the situation calls forth.

The recovery and aftermath of communities and individuals affected by emergencies differ due to the size and impact of the event. The transitions of communities affected by emergencies have been studied. Recommendations have been made in an attempt to improve and ensure for a smooth transition for those communities affected as they adjust from one set of circumstances to the new present conditions following the emergency situation. The organic processes that take place through community organizing and mutual support between community members display the tendency of groups to band together to respond to the emergency in ways that better all of those affected. Communities can either grow and transform or, in some cases, be broken apart as a result of this experience. Commonly, resiliency is evident as members work closely together to rebuild what has been lost.

Receiving little attention and study, service agencies are one system heavily involved in the response efforts. Service agencies, as used in this study, are those organizations that are responding to the needs of the individuals, businesses, and communities that are negatively affected by the emergency situation. They must mobilize

quickly, think on their feet, and cope with time pressures and scarcity of resources as they work to fill the gaps and restore balance and harmony to the area affected.

Social systems theory dissects the dynamics of individuals, organizations, communities, and other determined systems, drawing helpful parallels between the similar functioning of these systems. Systems, regardless of size and type, all have parameters with regards to how much interaction and support they need, determined by the specific characteristics of each system (Dale, Smith, Norlin, & Chess, 2009). It is easy to recognize the vast differences between the system of a service provider and the system of an individual. However, a few similarities between these systems' functioning can be drawn. This theory will be applied throughout the study to assist in understanding the role of service agencies in their communities and in response to emergencies to predict possible outcomes.

These service agencies are called upon not only to maintain their current output as they serve the community, but also to increase their output to redress the loss felt by the community that they serve. This call to action is not only taxing to the organization, but also very revealing of strengths and weaknesses. The experiences of emergency relief can therefore offer impetus and guidance for transforming the mission and purpose of the service agency post-emergency.

Relevance of Project

Emergencies present unique and daunting problems to be solved. As social workers provide service to individuals, they are continuously challenged to take on new problems, mastering techniques as they are introduced to what can seem to be an endless number of new circumstances. As social workers continue to grow in knowledge and

skills to meet the rising demands, emergencies present a complex web of many varying conditions that must be attended to. As Kreps notes in his study *Sociological Inquiry and Disaster Research*, “most researchers would agree that disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery reveal basic dimensions of social order” (Kreps, 1984, p. 324). The uniqueness of disasters, emergencies, and other intense disruptions can prove to be both a test and a significant learning experience for our profession.

Service providers play an integral role in responding to current emergency situations. As emergencies present themselves, providers must put forth more energy and resources in an attempt to provide for their previous commitments in addition to these recently added demands. As they are presented with new challenges, they must find a balance between their current mission and goals and the necessary adjustment and improvisation that is needed to assist the population they serve during and after the emergency situation. Individuals, businesses, and communities affected by the emergency all need time for recovery, finding themselves changed as a result of the emergency, for better and worse. The service provider, as a system very intimately involved in this emergency, is inevitably transformed by this experience as well.

Social work must continue to provide for those in need. However, in doing so, the social work profession must keep in mind the necessity for upkeep and balance within those organizations that are providing these services. Just as the profession encourages social workers to monitor and maintain their own well-being, the service providers, as organizations and systems in and of themselves, must do the same. This study will explore the role of the service providers, their response, and the effects of the demands of the emergency on their future functioning and capabilities as agencies.

Overview of Project

Concentrating on two vastly different emergency situations, the BP Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the emergency shelter crisis of the homeless in Rhode Island, this study will examine the effects these emergencies have on the regular functioning of service providers and the transformations and change that occur within these organizations as a result. Emergencies have been declared as a result of natural and man-made disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and oil-spills, all of which take a huge toll on the population and solicit a massive response and recovery effort. The BP Oil spill is a recent disaster that impacted the Gulf Coast region. The media, politicians, and other macro level responders were compelled to respond to this emergency as the extent of devastation was progressively made known due to its monstrous disruption and threat to the well-being of the Gulf Coast population (Devi, 2010, p. 503).

There have been an extensive number of disasters experienced in the Gulf Coast region that have elicited response efforts. This region, as it recovers from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, is now faced with an even greater man-made disaster following the BP Oil Spill in the gulf waters. This study will reveal the transformations that vastly different organizations underwent in their complex, taxing, and seemingly endless response efforts to this disaster-ridden area. Various service providers, including the international service agency HOPE WorldWide, the Louisiana Department of Human Services, and local direct service providers within the Gulf Coast region will be interviewed. Their roles and capabilities during the response and recovery have been vastly different. Parallels will be drawn to note the similarities in transformation that

comes with the intensive services provided as service providers look to fill gaps with services that are within their capabilities.

The response differs greatly for those emergencies that are not as visible. Reported by Paul Davis (2010), the point-in-time count, taken in October 2010, revealed that 282 Rhode Island residents will be without a bed in the winter of 2010-2011 due to the enormous jump in the number of homeless individuals. This alarming number, gathered by the RI Coalition for the Homeless and its collective service agencies, has been deemed an “emergency winter shelter crisis,” leaving service providers scrambling to get the funds and resources necessary to respond to this situation. (p. A2) This emergency has required service providers not only to increase significantly the amount of resources made available to those in need, it has also consumed time as steps to advocate for further services has been made a great priority. Due to these effects felt by the currently rising numbers of homeless, service providers must make an extra effort to reach out to state and media sources to stress the importance of an increased response, taking time and attention away from their work in other areas that need attention. Organizations involved in responding, including the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless and its member agencies, will be the focus of this study.

While emergencies generally bring about the discomfort that give them their negative connotation, this study will look to reveal the strengths that can come from emergency response as individual employees reflect on the experiences. Despite the disruption caused by these emergencies, the response efforts on the part of agencies and communities can bring communities together, leaving them more resilient and better prepared to handle the challenges they encounter in the future. These emergencies, in also

transforming the service agency, can leave it better able to serve in its respective community, increasing its capabilities and performance in the future.

Literature Review

Studies of emergencies have expanded in recent years, drawing attention to emergency and disaster response as methods and practices have continued to develop. Quarantelli and Dynes said it best in their 1977 study on *Social Crisis and Disaster*: "if codification of research findings is one indicator that an area of inquiry is maturing, the recent sociological work on disasters marks the coming of age of the area" (p. 25). The literature reviewed in this study dates back to 1961, with works that dissect the meaning of a disaster. The generalizations of emergencies and related terms have exhibited similarities over those decades. These provide ample background to what circumstances qualify as an emergency and how its definition as an emergency determines the response.

Much literature touches on the effects of instability on the population as a result of emergency situations. Allen and Toder focus on the systems of organizations as they attempt to recuperate from the aftermath of an emergency (2004, p. 41). Service providers are organizations. They look to ensure the continuance of their organization, while continuing to provide service to the community affected. There is a lack of research available on the best methods for these service agencies to sustain both themselves and the population around them during and following emergency response.

Social systems theory will be applied to the study of the service providers in this study, as comparisons are made between these service providers. Dale, Smith, Norlin, and Chess (2009) have dissected the social systems theory, introducing terms defined as a

part of the social systems theory, such as “role” or “social organization” (p. 46-47). Recognizing service providers as systems in and of themselves, one can apply the systems theory to understand the inevitability of transformation within the agency following an emergency response.

Studying the operation of organizations, a search for balance within the system is a common theme throughout the literature. Dale et al. (2009) explain how “social systems theory is premised on the position that all forms of social organization are linked to their social environments through input/output exchanges” (p. 56). These interactions must strike a balance as they both maintain structure and encourage the organic flux that comes with being a part of the respective society. In order to endure, these systems must maintain a degree of homeostasis.

The theorist Talcott Parsons developed the “functional theory … [which] held that social systems were open systems and were functionally tied to the social environment in which they were found” (as cited in Dale et al., 2009, p. 33). The balance within these organizations can be challenging as they maintain their role as “open systems” required of them if they hope to be members of the community. Different theories and ideas are proposed throughout this literature in an attempt to define and specify the different characteristics that must find this equilibrium, or “homeostasis” (p. 28). Between the open systems interacting, unexpected groups come together to form support systems as they run into imbalance. Yardley described how after the Exxon Valdez Spill, “a new industry took hold: environmental groups, scientific organizations, experts in the psychological trauma of oil spills. A network of fishermen is now trained and paid by the oil industry to respond if another disaster strikes” (2010, p. 22).

Comparing and contrasting emergency responses, one must first look to how the emergency is viewed by those outside of the community. The vast differences between the two emergencies explored in this study require different steps to recovery, drawing on the service providers to be resourceful, creative, and flexible while maintaining a sense of structure as they seek out this desired balance. The many organizations, individuals, and governmental units responding to the recent oil spill and the still present aftermath of Hurricane Katrina had the challenge of working together in this clearly defined emergency and call for action. The response must, first and foremost, give attention to the immediate need of saving people's lives, while also attempting to save the culture of the people from a threat so immense that it could put an end to its very existence (Boylan, 1999, para. 2). In contrast, the organizations created to battle homelessness in Rhode Island must work not only to continue to provide for the already established needs of the homeless but also to raise awareness about the significant needs presented by the emergency winter shelter crisis. While both are emergencies, they are perceived very differently by those who hold the resources necessary to provide response.

Quarantelli and Dynes further attempt to define emergency response as they dissect the term "*disaster*" (1977, p. 24) in a unique way. Acknowledging the always fluctuating definition of this term, they compare and contrast various perspectives about what exactly a "disaster" entails. They identify the differences in disaster relative to the context and area of the world as presented by Westgate & O'Keefe in 1976. They also review Brown & Goldin's analysis stating "disasters are inherently political phenomena and should be so conceptualized" (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977, p. 24). The political influence on the definition of disaster has forced service providers and others to put in

time and resources to advocate to politicians as they fight for their support in the response and recovery. From this piece of literature, one can see how an emergency is self-defined, determined by the groups involved and response these groups are hoping to solicit.

Birkland (1998) also attempted to conceptualize the idea of emergencies. He introduced the concept of a “focusing event” (para. 1) in his article about the man-made environmental disaster that evolved following the massive Exxon Valdez oil spill off the coast of Alaska. As defined by Birkland, “focusing events are critical because they are rare, sudden, harmful, and they directly or indirectly affect many people” (1998, para. 2). Picking apart the chosen terms, these “rare” events are seen in many contexts. The 282 beds that Rhode Islanders are without for the winter has been brought to the attention of the media by homeless advocacy groups because these alarming numbers call for immediate action. The level of “harm” is not surprising, as the increase in numbers of homeless will be detrimental to their well-being which includes health in every facet of their being.

Birkland separates types of emergencies, differentiating between “concentrated harms… [and] slower-onset events” (1998, para. 3). This important difference can be a variable in how the occurrence is defined. The events that draw a great deal of attention have much disruption during a time period that is more “concentrated” as an onslaught of events and damages are experienced, bringing these events to the forefront of the media as well as those in positions of power. Concentrated events, such as the 9-11 terrorist attacks or the BP Oil spill bring much attention, forcing quick responses as the general public expects it due to the clear devastation. The “slower-onset events” as termed by Birkland bring less attention, because the damages and harms are not felt on the same

grand level as the concentrated harms. The slower-onset of the economic crisis that has left Rhode Islanders in a desperate search for 282 beds this winter season has served as the root cause of the emergency winter shelter crisis, calling homeless service providers across the state into action. A collection of all of these defining factors has created the meaning of "emergency" as a complex construction that combines attributes of events with social factors of attention and power.

The systems approach allows different types and scales of systems to be compared. Stress disables individuals in their normal day-to-day tasks, causing mental and emotional harm. Stress takes a similar toll on communities and larger-scale systems. Kaiser, Sattler, Bellack, and Dersin state that "natural disasters are cataclysmic stressors … and may disrupt [the] sense of safety, control, predictability, and trust" (1996, para. 3). Such stress brings a great deal of disorder to any and all systems affected by these emergencies, inhibiting individuals, communities, businesses, and other systems as they look to function in their once familiar environment. (1996, para. 3). As responses to the emergency are enacted, service providers are called upon to fill the gaps. However, one must keep in mind that these stressors also cause interruption in the normal functioning of the service providers. The transformation during and following the recovery efforts of any and all systems involved is inevitable, whether it be for better or worse. While literature continues to focus on the mental state of individuals, families, and communities, social workers must ensure that the service providers are able to continue to function in the capacity that is needed followed their experience with these "stressors."

Many pieces of literature refer back to Fritz's 1961 study of disaster. His analysis "points to four core properties: (a) *events* that can be designated in time and space, which

have (b) *impacts* on (c) *social units*. The social units, in turn, enact (d) *responses* (or adjustments) to these impacts" (as cited in Kreps, 1984, p. 311). Each of these properties is present in the two case studies of the study, but the responses differ due to the vastly different nature of the event. Fritz's analysis of "disaster," in addition to the other definitions, has confirmed the great vagueness and flexibility with which we define emergencies. Despite flexibility allowing for organizations and individuals to use this to their discretion, there are downfalls. With such poorly defined parameters for what qualifies as an emergency, not all situations that are determined by one group to be an emergency are seen by others in the same light. Those holding the power in society ultimately choose whether the situation can be deemed an emergency on the grand scale.

Focusing on group functioning during a response, a look into the past functioning of a system can reveal much about its ability to cope with the chaos of an emergency. Quarantelli and Dynes (1977) noted the shift of focus of the research performed on emergency response, as it moved from the individuals to the groups as the primary system being studied. They went on to deduct through the previous research of Fritz and the commonalities in focus of emergency response that "the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster response is dependent more on the viability of the emergency organizations involved in the crises than it is on the psychological state or readiness of individual victims" (Dynes, 1975, p. 8 as cited in Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977, p. 30). This led to their theory of the "'principle of continuity,' that is, pre-disaster behavior is probably the best indicator of trans- and post-disaster behavior" (Quarantelli 1977 as cited in Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977, p. 34). The functioning and recovery of the system post-emergency can be predicted based on past recovery techniques creating possible steps for

stability as the recovery efforts are coordinated. Despite the structure and plans put in place, the service provider must have the ability to be flexible to ensure that adjustments can be made as unforeseen circumstances arise.

Harrald (2006) takes a similar approach to this study, as he examines the past research that has been done to analyze lapses in emergency responses. In his study of *Agility and Discipline: Critical Success Factors for Disaster Response,* he reviews past studies, expanding on the prior suggestion about the need for a balance between flexibility (agility) and structure (discipline). As Harrald states, "designers of organizational systems for emergency response … must ensure both discipline (structure, doctrine, and process) and agility (creativity, improvisation, and adaptability)" (p. 257). Harrald agrees with the concept of this balance as he "argues that these two streams of thought are not in opposition, but form orthogonal dimensions of discipline and agility that must both be achieved" (p. 256).

Harrald introduces a typology of organizations on a continuum from agile to disciplined: "d*ysfunctional, ad Hoc/ reactive, balanced/adaptive, bureaucratic/procedural*" (2006, p. 267-268), each of which attempts to strike a different balance in agility and discipline. Research conducted through observation and evaluation of the response method of the organization can give insight into the organization's ability to find a balance between two extremes. The dysfunctional typology, with a lack of structure and inability to adjust, is unable to elicit any type of sufficient response, while the bureaucratic/procedural typology can maintain a structured organization but has much difficulty adjusting. The ad hoc/reactive typology elicits an immediate response as large

gaps in service must be urgently filled, while the balanced/adaptive typology finds a balance whose maintenance is contingent upon the organization's leadership.[i]

While organizations involved in emergency response must exhibit a great deal of flexibility as open systems, they also need structure. Comfort (1985) discussed the tendency for systems to fall back to the security found in structure, noting "the advantages of hierarchical decision making in simplifying action procedures remain strong during the actual response phase when time is urgent" (p. 158). With little time for adjustment, the structure that is established is put into action. Therefore, lapses in structure are felt at the micro or direct service level. Oftentimes, a less than sufficient plan is put into play, as the nature of emergency response is multifaceted and complex, resulting from the interplay of the numerous systems.

Comfort stresses the need for a constant flow of information, only possible in an open system. In striking the balance between structure and flexibility, the service provider must resist falling into overtly structured functioning. As Comfort (1985) states, "the most serious barrier to overcome is the classic resistance to change characteristic of already established bureaucratic organizations. Paradoxically, the most effective means of overcoming such resistance is through the use of concurrent information search processes which facilitate organizational learning" (p. 163). Information continues to change as the effects of an emergency are felt. Established and effective communication between the open systems that are working together is essential for productive collaboration between these service providers.

Gaertner, Gaertner, and Devine (1983) discuss the complexities of the changeover of a political party in the higher offices. Despite these changes not being deemed an

emergency, the disruption and transition results in similar changes within affected systems. They focus on the added stress that federal agencies experience as a result of changes in political party leadership. Through their research on changes in two governmental agencies, these authors find evidence about the reactions of organizations as they respond to the disruption:

> Efforts at change may provoke both reactions which increase rigidity . . . and disruptions in the agency's internal and external relations which, in turn, compromise ongoing agency adaptation and change. The result is an increasing number of problems to solve at the same time that there is decreasing capacity to solve them. (430)

The system described above draws inward to maintain a sense of security as a result of its lack of equilibrium. With the lack of output, the once open system begins to close, removing itself as a viable part of the society in which it once was an active member. Systems work together in emergencies and the hierarchical approach takes hold, as depicted by Comfort (1985). The possibility of this same reaction described by Gaertner et al. is one that service agencies must be wary of as the quick and sudden needs presented by emergencies can severely threaten the service provider.

Quarantelli & Dynes (1977) provide a unique perspective that society should be "taking a step away from the assumption that disasters are unreservedly bad … perhaps the more important point is that current research is tending to look for functional as well as dysfunctional aspects of disasters for both individuals and groups" (p. 36). As social workers, it is important to refocus energy on the positives, building upon the momentum that comes from any of these glimpses of hope. Despite the desperate circumstances presented, it is very possible that an increase in strength and coherence can be found for systems involved, leaving them better able to cope with an emergency in the future.

Resiliency is a characteristic that is present in both individuals and communities. The resilience exhibited by the Gulf Coast region following the onslaught of emergencies has been vital for realizing their wish to continue to function as a society. Harrald (2006) sees positives in past defective responses concluding that “resilient systems avoid catastrophic failure by ‘failing gracefully’, allowing time to adapt to unanticipated conditions and to recover system functions” (p. 270). The natural supports that open systems share between them can effectively respond to the lapses in service of these graceful failures that are very likely in emergency responses. Kaiser, Sattler, Bellack, & Dersin (1996) touch on the person’s ability to cope with disaster noting that “because people with a high sense of coherence may have a strong sense of mastery, hardiness, optimism, and view of an orderly, predictable and explicable world, they may find positive and constructive meaning in the wake of the disaster” (para. 37). Applying the systems theory we can conclude that reflection and evaluation have the ability to bring about fruitful results for any system, from people to service providers.

Allen and Toder, in their study on organizational recovery, do discuss the high likelihood of growth following the lows of the emergency. Noting the parallels between individuals and organizations when viewed as systems, these authors state that “like individuals, organizations can become stronger and even function better as a result of traumatic incident” (2004, p. 42). Following great disruption, the system is challenged to regain its sense of balance and homeostasis. Successful attainment of this balance brings about a new found strength and ability to cope with new challenges in the future, leaving systems, whether they are individuals, organizations, or communities, better off than they were before.

The collection of research on emergency response focuses on types of emergencies and the emergency response structure and efficiency. When an emergency response is needed, support from federal agencies and the type of collaborative efforts between the various types of organizations are determined by how the media and politicians define, or do not define, an emergency situation. Society's ability to recover from the emergency has been researched in great depth with the intention of allowing organizations to use this information to shape response efforts to be as effective as possible.

The focus of this research study first determines how the different emergencies were defined by the organizations interviewed, with responses being analyzed in relation to past literature that has explored the methods and ways used in the past of classifying emergencies. The response efforts will then be described by the interviewees to determine the balance between agility and discipline within the organization and how this shaped the response efforts. The study will focus on the changes that occurred within the organization as result of the response effort as interviewees describe the interworking of the organization prior to the emergency and then during and after the response takes place. Research on the effects of these organizations' responses will assist organizations as they plan for effective responses during an emergency while also ensuring that the transition into and out of response efforts leaves the organization improved in its functioning and service to the community.

Methodology

This research will be conducted as a qualitative and explorative research study through a question and answer methodology. The focus of the questions will be to

determine any notable changes that took place within the organizations being studied. Just as each organization and emergency is unique, the questions used during each interview will be adjusted to the type of service the organization provides, while focusing on the general areas of research: type of emergency, organization's pre-emergency functioning, organization's post-emergency functioning, perceived shortfalls in response, and outside organizational support. Through the questionnaire and questions that are formulated depending upon each individual's response, the interviewer will use prompting and clarifying questions to find further detail in these answers.

In addition to gaining knowledge for the research study, the interviews could potentially provide a means by which the individuals within these organizations can properly reflect upon the experiences they had during and after the emergency situation. The questions will bring the focus of the participants to the interworking of their organizations as well as their roles within the organization. They will also be able to reflect on the hardships and successes that came with the response which is difficult to do in the hectic environment oftentimes experienced during and after emergency situations.

Participants

The population being studied includes those who have been heavily involved within emergency response efforts. All but one individual serves within a service agency providing direct service. To specify, the two emergency areas in focus are: (a) the organizations assisting the homeless of Rhode Island during the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis, and (b) the Gulf Coast region and this population's two most recent damaging emergencies, Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill. As certain connections with organizations are made, the method of snowball sampling and convenience sampling

will be used. The interviews also lead to other names, opening the door to other services agencies and participants in the recovery efforts.

The individuals interviewed will be those who have been employed with the organization at least three months before the emergency. Interviewees will have had to have participated in aspects of the response effort, serving the community affected and experiencing additional responsibilities in their position as a result of the response efforts. Additional responsibilities will include tasks not previously fulfilled within their role, potentially causing additional hours. These employees will be able to provide insight on the operational changes in the organization, reflecting on any notable variations in service as a result of the response efforts. When available, more than one employee from each agency will be interviewed, to gather a more well-rounded sense of the organizations. The questionnaire (Appendix A and B) will serve as a general outline for every interview, leaving the option of asking additional questions for clarity at the discretion of the researcher.

The researcher will search for changes in the organization's approach to service, as well as any extended responsibilities that are acquired as a result of its role within the recovery efforts. One question will ask for the individual to define and describe the emergency as seen in his or her eyes. Bearing in mind the effect that the definition of a particular emergency has on the response efforts, the researcher will analyze how actions of response align with how the participant and organization defined the emergency. While keeping in mind the position of the employee, the researcher will account for the limits in the perspective of the person being interviewed while drawing from answers a sense for the transformation. Applying the systems theory, the researcher will analyze the

journey of the service provider as it is faced with significant demands during and following the emergency situation.

Further, the researcher will compare employee responses as more than one employee will be interviewed, ideally, from each agency. Finally, the growth of the organization and the current perspective the employee holds of the service agency will reveal the successes of this agency as well as the areas for improvement. It is with hope that the questions will solicit useful self-reflection for all involved.

The emergency winter shelter crisis: participants. Interviewees focusing on the emergency winter shelter crisis will include employees from a number of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless's member agencies. In all, there are currently thirty-two "service agency members" and seventeen "supporting agency members" (rihomeless.org). In addition, the 1070 Main Street Collaborative is a partnership of four large-scale housing-focused organizations within Rhode Island that, together, are looking to focus their energies on creating affordable housing across Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless is a member along with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Housing Action Coalition of Rhode Island, and the Housing Network. Together they are furthering the efforts of the Coalition and its member agencies by advocating for affordable housing with their variety of tools, resources, and connections.

The RI Coalition for the Homeless is committed to using this study to gain knowledge on its functioning during an emergency situation in two ways: (a) allowing for its own employees to be interviewed, and (b) assisting in outreach efforts to member agencies, suggesting that their employees participate in the interview. The RI Coalition for the Homeless will use this research to aid them as they gather feedback on the

effective and ineffective approaches to response during the current emergency winter shelter crisis.

The individuals interviewed to capture the response efforts of the emergency winter shelter crisis include the following: the Administrative Assistant of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless (RICH); the Outreach member and founder of the Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project (RIHAP); the co-founder of RIHAP and current director of the Mathewson Street Church emergency winter shelter; the program director of WARM Shelter; the program director of ACCESS-RI; the two AmeriCorps members of the Housing Advocacy Coalition (HAC); the Director of Outreach and Engagement of HAC; the Project Manager of Community Investment at the United Way; and the director of policy at the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Gulf coast recovery efforts: participants In order to grasp the recovery efforts of a vastly different type of emergency situation and population, interviews will take place with individuals who have been involved in responding to emergency situations within the Greater New Orleans area. These participants will have been heavily involved in the emergency response efforts. Participation can include, but is not limited to, employment at a service organization already serving the affected population, personal effort to respond to the emergency, or employment at an organization created as a result of the need created by the disaster. Community organizing, direct service, and policy work specific to emergency response all qualify as appropriate participation.

The following individuals were interviewed for this study: the National Director for Disaster Response in the Gulf Coast of Hope WorldWide; the Director of Operations and Health and Language Access Program Manager of Reach NOLA; the CEO of

Motivatit Seafoods; the Deputy Director of Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation; and the Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness and Management for the Louisiana Department of Social Services.

Findings

Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis: Rhode Island

In the qualitative research conducted, ten of the fifteen individuals interviewed are currently working within service agencies that focused on the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis in Rhode Island. These interviewees hold very different roles within their agencies. From direct service to grant distributors, the diversity of the participants in these interviews is evidence of the amount of variety of service agencies that experienced the effects of the homeless crisis and participated in the emergency response efforts.

To focus first on the emergency itself, all participants in the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis agreed upon what exactly the emergency entailed. The increase in the amount of homeless on the streets was evident simply through observation, further confirmed through outreach workers' results. Described by the founder and outreach worker for RIHAP, outreach workers from the various homeless service providers created a system of communication to ensure that they were all able to work together to bring the homeless on the streets into a safe shelter. This was formed "organically" as outreach workers were working out in the streets together to get to know the homeless and bring awareness to them of services while ensuring their safety. This system of communication between these outreach workers was used most when gathering the number of homeless and during the cold nights as shelters were filled to the brim. These outreach workers

truly serve on the front lines and were an essential part of gathering the numbers and information necessary to identify the impeding emergency.

Service providers serving and working with the homeless community did foresee the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis. Regardless of their uncertainty of the extent of homelessness, the planning efforts and discussions had started following last winter season. The program director of the WARM Shelter confirmed how difficult *each* winter season is. His position as program director has not only put him on the front line of service but has also brought him to the planning table with other agencies and participants in emergency response efforts. The program director described the southern Rhode Island community he works in to be one that lacks jobs in the winter, sending more individuals into hard times. ACCESS-RI, a service provider in Pawtucket providing case management to the chronically homeless, felt the effects of the winter shelter crisis. Described by the program manager, they have had to open another emergency winter shelter in Providence on Mathewson Street in addition to the shelter they already oversee in Pawtucket. Further, she has been involved in the state efforts and discussions to quell the emergency organized by RICH. This has kept her abreast of the similar issues other service providers are experiencing, identifying similar struggles and working to pool resources and ideas as they search for a solution.

While homelessness is not the main issue for the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Director of Policy identified the emergency to be the same: a lack of beds and increase in the number of homeless. Set up in a structure similar to RICH, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV) has had to provide for additional homeless women and their children. Some women *not* experiencing

homelessness have sought out beds within the Domestic Violence Shelters as they find themselves in desperation. Additionally, RICADV frequently works with many women who become homeless as they are escaping domestic violence by leaving their home.

The United Way, a fundraising and philanthropic agency, distributes money to different service providers and initiatives donated by the state and private funders. They have contributed a great deal of money to the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis response efforts and have stayed very involved in the discussions between the homeless providers. As the United Way determines those deserving of funding, the urgency of this issue has moved this organization to put efforts and financial support into this desperate situations. The current Project Manager of Community Investment at the United Way has been able to sit in on Emergency Winter Shelter Task Force meetings serving as a liaison to the United Way. She has advocated for any and all funding that is allocated for the emergency winter shelter crisis from the United Way. Ever since she began in her position at the United Way a year and a half ago, she has been heavily involved in responses to emergency situations.

During the Rhode Island floods in the spring of 2010 the governor deemed the United Way as overseer of the funding for the relief efforts in the state. Taking on these large responsibilities, the project manager of Community Investment has seen her role develop as the organization of the United Way change due to varying need. While the work had previously been divided into policy funding and community investment funding, the staff now works together, bringing programmatic and systems issues together to the table. This has brought “rich discussion now that everyone’s together on

one team." The United Way team has found success in this new model as they have tackled short-term emergencies while not losing sight of long-term policy goals.

Observed through the great variety of responders, affected parties, and urgency of the response methods, it is quite evident that the emergency winter shelter crisis was identified as a major issue within Rhode Island. The program director of the WARM Shelter described the planning that had started immediately following last winter, anticipating similar shortfalls and difficulty to come. Further, the founder and outreach worker of RIHAP vehemently advocated to state officials. These two individuals, in addition to RICH and its member agencies that had actively participated in the discussion, all met to discuss and plan for the potential winter shelter crisis they anticipated. However, were unable to act due to the lack of response and financial support from the government. The co-founders of RIHAP both described the disconnect between state officials and the problem of homelessness in general. The legislators' lack of understanding of just what homelessness entails coupled with the lack of personal observation have resulted in these policy makers' insufficient response.

Funding has had a direct effect on the tasks assigned to the various interview participants. The program director of ACCESS-RI, mentioned the amount of time she takes filling out grant applications, most of which will not be successful. The time spent in filling out these extensive applications takes away from the direct service work she is able to provide. The Administrative Assistant of RICH, has spent a great deal of time processing checks and overseeing the funding streaming in to support the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis. As a result of this increased work load, she has fallen behind in her other tasks that she assumed when not overseeing this funding. While she made clear in

her interview that she enjoyed playing a large role in this facet of the response, she mentioned that the Coalition for the Homeless did not take any money from the donations for the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis.

One does not only observe positions and organizations transforming, but also organizations being created in response to an identified need. The Director of Outreach and Engagement of HAC described how the current executive director had been working within a few community organizations. She recognized the residents and tenants in this housing had no one advocating for them. As a lawyer, she took her skills and the recognized need, working with her former place of employment to create the Housing Coalition to fulfill this need. With the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis affecting all efforts surrounding housing, many of the efforts have been focused on outreach surrounding increased foreclosures and taking steps to prevent homelessness.

Two AmeriCorps volunteers and the Director of Outreach and Engagement of the Housing Action Coalition of Rhode Island described their role. HAC communicates with Rhode Islanders across the state to inform them of the ongoing foreclosure crisis, as numerous homeowners and renters are losing their place of residence due to increased foreclosures. The AmeriCorps positions are unique as they are only filled for one year, providing short-term workers that are financed by the federal government. These volunteers are common in nonprofits, making it feasible for such organizations to increase their number of employees while not further financially burdening them. These short-term employees outreach to communities, sharing with them various resources available to them as they try to stay housed and make ends meet. They both stated their ability to participate in new projects that were ready and waiting for them as they arrived.

As resources are limited and staff overworked, sacrifices have had to be made. In order to keep the effectiveness of the services they provide, program director of the WARM shelter describes how its programs in Rhode Island had to maintain a caseload of the same number of homeless. Referring those that they are not able to assist to other services is sometimes the best they can do in these situations, in order to ensure the agency can continue to be successful in its mission. They can continue with their quality and effective service to the homeless community in the surrounding area, without biting off more than they can chew.

One of the co-founders of RIHAP teamed up with ACCESS-RI as they sought out an individual to run their homeless shelter during the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis. While Megan took on this role, she found herself unable to serve in the capacity she had in her recent role in RIHAP. As she stated, she is “not completely comfortable with being a service provider. I used to work with ‘Bob’ [outreach worker and co-founder of RIHAP], not against him. A lot of my energy has been devoted to the shelter.” Her role as an employee of the service agency puts her in an opposite role the one she held as an advocate and outreach worker. As RIHAP works to advocate for the homeless needs in the community, they are often at odds with service providers if they believe they have not properly served the homeless individual.

Gulf Coast Emergencies

There were five total individuals interviewed on the Gulf Coast. The variety of roles they played also provided for a well-rounded understanding of the emergency situation. Program directors, state employees, a fisherman and CEO, and other response participants, shared their insight into the responses. Each agency had a different mission

and purpose, serving the community based on the new and previously existing needs. Additionally, a few of these organizations arose as a result of the great deficit in services within the Gulf Coast.

The Gulf Coast region has experienced constant emergencies within the last five to ten years. From natural disasters such as the infamous Hurricane Katrina to the more recent BP Oil Spill, service agencies within the region have been hard-pressed to meet the increasing needs throughout the Gulf Coast region. Views of the emergency depended upon the nature of the agency. The CEO of Motivatit Seafoods was completely shut down during the moratorium in the Gulf waters, preventing his company and employees from participating in normal activity for over eighty days. His company coordinates many fishermen throughout the Gulf Coast, dipping its hands in one of the major sources of income for Gulf Coast residents and the industry experiencing the most negative effects of the BP oil spill. The director of emergency response for HOPE World Wide in the Greater New Orleans area broke the emergency down, mentioning “safety first” in his emphasis on meeting the basic needs. Overall, however, the main emergency he had to respond to was the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Each individual interviewed did feel supported financially following the emergency situation. Mr. Voisin spoke highly of BP upholding its promise to provide ample funding to provide for the loss in tourist revenue, interruptions in the jobs of the people, and other identified needs. While he did note the amount of negative feedback from community members and sympathizers within the United States, he felt that many observers were playing “Monday morning quarterback” using hindsight bias to criticize the response and relief efforts.

All individuals interviewed described how their service agencies and each employee had to have a significant degree of flexibility in their roles and tasks. Created to respond to the needs of the community, all of these service agencies must work directly with the community to gather their voices as creatively and efficiently as possible. Involving the community in the efforts also ensures longevity in any community improvements that take place while identifying leaders within the population to not reinvent the wheel or try to introduce an outsider.

The Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness and Management for the Louisiana Department of Social Services found herself in the Gulf Coast approximately six months following Hurricane Katrina. Due to the highly negative attention given to these response efforts, she stepped into her role as the Department was preparing to reevaluate its response policies. Her tasks included coordinating response efforts while also rewriting these policies. Taking on the National Response Plan, the Deputy Director worked with her colleagues to begin to implement the ESF, or Emergency Support Function bringing together all state departments to coordinate the relief efforts. While the ESF was not prepared following Hurricane Katrina, the Deputy Director was able to learn from the shortfalls of the response to Hurricane Katrina and create a policy that fulfilled the gaps in response. This ESF framework has been applied to response ever since. The interviewee described the magnitude of hurricanes following the ESF implementation, noting that despite the size and power of these hurricanes (i.e. Hurricane Ike), the policies and plans create a comprehensive and effective response system.

The Deputy Director described how Louisiana is a unique state in the number of emergencies that must be responded to. Additionally, most states within the country have

more financially stable and upper-class residents located near the coastal areas. Interestingly enough, many impoverished folks live near the Gulf coast, presenting the state with unique and intensified needs, making the initial response a shelter focus. Working in conjunction with the Department of Health and Hospitals and Department of Transportation, for example, is vital as the state coordinates those with health needs, transportation issues, and much more. When an emergency is declared, the state departments must begin to respond and relocate a number of their higher up personnel to the physical base of emergency response efforts. Working from one location, all the different departments are able to maximize their communication and collaborate to address the relief needs. Despite this effort, general operations *must* continue. The next in command at each of these state departments steps up to fill this need.

Asked about the changes within the state departments when an emergency hits, the Deputy Director describes:

> The emergency response changes the entire face of what an agency looks like. After the sheltering part is over and we send them to some sort of emergency shelter, then starts the huge issue of the human services part. After shelters are closed, we still have to keep disaster services center open so people can come apply and figure out the shelter system. Our people stay in disaster activation a lot longer because we help people pick up lives after emergency, so we're still very much there after it all. You already have social workers who make $22,000 a year having to work so many more hours. It's a really hard situation for our agency, but they love what they do.

All involved in the emergency response put in a massive number of hours. The Deputy Director remembers spending the entire day at work, sometimes taking a quick nap after a long day, and starting off on a new day. During the emergency response, the Deputy Director commented how she saw her husband for all of twenty minutes over a

two week span. The position itself was extremely demanding at this time, requiring her to continue to be on her toes and responding.

With the nature of the emergencies the Gulf Coast has experienced, there is only a certain amount of preparedness that can be done beforehand. The Deputy Director at the Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation (MQVCDC) is "responsible for the day to day issues of the office," while overseeing financial supervision and work force development. However, as an emergent need presents itself, he and his other staff members must deliver the most basic services while planning for the long term response ensuring that the community's voices and requests are being met. Following Hurricane Katrina, the MQVCDC first responded to the immediate needs of the community, working closely with FEMA and other governmental agencies. Looking long term, the MQVCDC held "community forums with elders and youth to capitalize on rebuilding opportunities." The BP Oil Spill increased the number of forums they had as well, as they realized their lack of familiarity with some of the fishermen's needs, holding their insight to be vital to any effective recovery efforts.

The CEO of a company that sells oysters based in the Gulf Coast had a great deal of insight into the recovery efforts as his role took on a great deal of new responsibility following the BP oil spill. After the moratorium was implemented, halting all fishing on the Gulf waters they used, his business had to temporarily shut down. His role as CEO transformed into that of advocate and voice of the Gulf Coast. He has conducted "over 1100 interviews since the spill, conducting 31 on one given day" with various news sources.

Funding was the source of concern and problem for all service agencies. There was not one interview that did not mention the lack of funding and the time spent to identify and secure funding sources. The National Director for Disaster Response from Hope WorldWide lost his job due to a lack of funding. The initial urgency of the emergency, which in his case was Hurricane Katrina, brought a great deal of funding and support allowing him to serve in his position up until 2010. As the urgency and attention surrounding the emergency waned, so too did the funding. The director struggled to juggle the demands of his position in coordinating relief efforts as he attempted to fit in ample time to secure grants, other sources of funding, and additional support.

Each agency interviewed, in addition to Motivat Seafoods, continues to be heavily dependent upon volunteers and interns in their work. The National Director for Disaster Response in the Gulf Coast began coordinating volunteers immediately following his move to the Gulf Coast region. He oversaw temporary volunteers and longer term AmeriCorps volunteers. He saw the volunteers as a great strength and absolutely essential to Hope WorldWide's response efforts as he had a staff that at one time numbered two in total. Engaging the community, as described and done by the Deputy Director of MQVCDC, is essential when ensuring success. Community forums provide feedback and help to identify potential community leaders who can take the lead in community initiatives, furthering success as they organize and motivate the residents. The CEO of Motivat Seafood is also a member of the community significantly affected by the BP oil spill. He participated in and coordinated many cleanup efforts. In doing so, he served as a motivating force and optimistic voice in the community following the devastating spill

while gathering and sharing vital insight and perspective with government agencies and media.

As mentioned earlier, agencies do not only transform in the response, but they also are created. This is especially true in the Gulf Coast region. Hope WorldWide, as the National Director for Disaster Response in the Gulf Coast described, has also been performing service internationally. With a great deal of the funding for this service organization comes from the International Church of Christ, a request from a local church in the New Orleans area influenced Hope World Wide to expand its efforts to the Gulf Coast region following Hurricane Katrina. This new-found need is the reason behind the creation of this extension. The lack of funding and attention to the still present issue was the reason behind Hope WorldWide's removal in the Gulf Coast years later. The Director of Operations and Health and Language Access Program Manager of Reach NOLA described how her agency was created to network between different health services. The disconnect was identified after and as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Created in response to an emergency, Reach NOLA has been able to respond to the needs of new emergency situations coordinating "to improve community health and access to quality health care in New Orleans through community-academic partnered programs working with neighborhood organizations, faith-based groups, clinical service providers, academic institutions, and other health stakeholders." Identifying the lack of communication between all of these entities, the organization has worked to increase the dialogue between these many programs to ensure they are able to pool resources and work together following the breakdown after Hurricane Katrina.

Many service agencies provide similar services, creating challenges in securing funding as many different agencies seek out funding. Duplication of efforts, as observed by Frank Dowd following Hurricane Katrina, can disperse funding to numerous different agencies performing the same tasks. When concentrated efforts would be most effective, different groups independently were working towards the same goal, lacking effective communication allowing for these agencies to pool together resources.

Discussion

The Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis is unique in that participants pre-planned response efforts, to the best of their abilities, the spring before the winter season in an attempt to quell some of the biggest concerns and issues for the winter to come. The deficit in response lies within the Rhode Island government, as officials did not provide ample support to the response efforts. Many state officials did not identify the lack of shelter and increase in number of homelessness as an emergency. With a lack of cohesiveness between the state's perspective on the issue and those providing the service, insufficient funding and attention were provided to the emergency, leaving many response efforts in the hands of these nonprofit service providers. This takes a great deal of time and resources away from these agencies as employees must use their time to fill out grant applications and advocate more intensely for increased and necessary funding.

The Gulf Coast received much support, financially and morally, from the surrounding reason and nation as a whole. Unlike the Rhode Island emergency winter shelter crisis, Identifying the BP Oil Spill, Hurricane Katrina, and other Gulf Coast catastrophes as emergency situations was not the problem. The initial urgency surrounding the emergency brought with it funding and ample support necessary for

response. However, as the aftermath of these emergencies is still ever-present, the community and service providers have not received the continued attention and resources necessary to uphold all of these responses, taking attention away from the direct service as they look to secure funding they had once had. This task is increasingly difficult, leaving some organizations unable to maintain their operations, as Frank Dowd and Hope World Wide experienced first-hand.

The number of hours that the Coalition put into overseeing these efforts was not financially rewarded, taking away from their limited resources and personnel. Additionally, some of the funders who normally give to the general efforts and work of the Coalition for the Homeless specified that their money in this calendar year be used to respond to the emergency. While the response efforts benefit from this funding, the Coalition has lost money from some of the money they had previously received on an annual basis. With long-term goals to end homelessness in Rhode Island, emergency funding draws from the already limited pot of resources designated for homelessness in Rhode Island.

With the primary source of funding for many projects comes from the government, agencies must come up with creative ways to have the vastness and depth of the issue resonate with policy makers as they make funding decisions. RIHAP's outreach position and history serve as a model of effectiveness. This outreach member is a formerly homeless advocate who has spearheaded numerous efforts throughout the state of Rhode Island. Living among the homeless, knowing many of them by name, and being able to clearly articulate their concerns and needs to service providers and policy makers, John is the quintessential example of how to include and properly represent the

community within any and all service efforts. His involvement with outreach work and membership in committees at the Coalition for the Homeless and the state house has provided superior insight to policy makers.

In an effort to conserve funding, volunteers are extremely common and frequently used within all service agencies and response efforts. The many interviews all mentioned volunteering or working extreme amounts of overtime was essential to meet the needs of response. From AmeriCorps volunteers to interns to those passionately giving their time to the efforts, these individuals are a huge asset to the efforts and to organizations as a whole. Requiring little to no funding, volunteers and interns are instrumental to the operations of so many of these agencies.

Transformation within service agencies was commonly observed, as the needs within the community changed with the emergency situation. Individual positions continued to transform and the importance of outreach efforts to gather the community's perspectives and needs continue to be vital. The United Way completely revamped their internal structure, creating new roles and dissolving old and ineffective roles after facing lesser funding and various emergency situations. The Deputy Director acted and focused the MQVCDC's efforts based on the information that was gathered at the many community forums he held following Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill. The RICADV has had to reevaluate their response to the many women and children seeking shelter within their shelters. Designating one room for those seeking their services immediately, they have allowed flexibility for some of these unclear cases. They have been able to respond to the needs of the individual seeking help, reassessing the situation the day following to relocate her elsewhere if determined appropriate.

Service agencies also were created in response to a great need. However, as observed through Hope WorldWide's discontinuation of service within the Gulf Coast, sometimes the number of service providers serving within the area results in a duplication of services. The lack of funding and resources causes these service agencies not to be able to serve to their fullest and sustain their operations if there is a lack of collaboration in the efforts.

Conclusions & Implications

It is important to bear in mind the vast differences between the two emergencies that have been studied. The Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis was partly anticipated. The only factor of uncertainty was the number of homeless and lack of shelter for these individuals. The government did not respond early enough to implement a great deal of preventative measures. The Gulf Coast, on the other hand, has not been able to anticipate the emergency situations. Additionally, the variety of the type of emergencies the region faces presents an even more complex and challenging set of circumstances. Hurricane Katrina relief efforts served as a catalyst for change as the nation's outcry at the poor response resulted in a complete revamping of the current response methods.

The common issue of insufficient funding creates a sometimes hostile environment and an overwhelming feeling of instability for the efforts that the service agencies are looking to provided. Founded to serve the community, these agencies must exhibit flexibility and practice sufficient outreach to ensure they are responding to the needs of the identified population. This is necessary if they are looking to fulfill their mission as nonprofits.

Emergencies present a new host of issues and needs, as was discussed and explored. While planning for emergency response is necessary, sufficient and adequate planning is simply impossible. Emergencies are never planned and often not anticipated. Proper preparation for emergency response when simply sustaining a nonprofit make it vital that nonprofits working towards the same goals collaborate and communicate closely together. As simple as this may seem, communication and collaboration can be extremely difficult to achieve and even more difficult to create. Various personalities, different approaches to service, and the difficulty of communication serve as roadblocks when continuing with conjoined efforts.

Different personalities and varying missions can make agreement difficult. However, the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless serves as a model of collaboration that has created effective means of communication between these various nonprofits working to end homelessness throughout the state of Rhode Island. They have combined street outreach and communication with policy makers, enhancing the understanding of the issue in the statehouse. Including policy and direct service, they have kept the pieces of the puzzle together, coordinating their combined efforts

The emergencies and agencies in the Gulf Coast have numerous differences, yet identifying a channel of communication between the like-minded service providers when relief efforts or general human service efforts are implemented can increase the effectiveness and results of these funds. Connection with funding within the state and various other funding sources has been a constant battle that these agencies have found success in. However, the model of the “coalition” can be modified with specifics being tailored to the area, need, and service providers in the area.

Unfortunately, even the work RICH is conducting is not being sufficiently supported. The term “emergency” is a very strong and effective one when trying to elicit response. It instills the necessary sense of urgency to push the community and service agencies to put a great deal of attention to the identified problem area. However, if those in power with the money are not identifying the situation as an emergency as well, the response efforts must scramble to identify funding sources and other resources. The emergency winter shelter crisis is not going away if more attention is not given to the issue. As the crisis reignites itself in the upcoming winters, it will be important to take note of just how significant the response seems to be and if the term “emergency” is still used. If homelessness is not deemed worthy of response by policy makers, the crisis could likely continue and potentially be exacerbated as the termed “emergency” is given little attention.

The Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness and Management for the Louisiana Department of Social Services used the policy and plan created following Hurricane Katrina on many similar emergency situations that struck the Gulf Coast area. Implementing one plan created through the National Response Plan, the Emergency Support Function (ESF) allowed Louisiana governmental departments to have a protocol for any and all large-scale emergency situations. Recognizing and responding to the many ineffective methods of relief that were unsuccessful following Hurricane Katrina, the governmental departments created the current response protocol while also responding to the emergency. The new protocol, bringing together all departments to one room, has further supported the need of communication and collaboration following these

disasters. All of this relief is possible due to sufficient funding from the national government.

The loss of the National Director for Disaster Response in the Gulf Coast of Hope WorldWide position within the Gulf Coast is an example of the frequency of how many agencies holding similar goals hurt one another as they are vying for the same resources and funding. Spreading the funding out to the many nonprofits looking to perform similar service, the response is subpar at best. Receiving lesser funding than needed, agencies are not able to function at their very best without sufficient funding. Time is spent trying to identify funding, taking away from the necessary direct service efforts. In an effort to preserve nonprofits and the necessary direct service work that they do, the government or nonprofits themselves should create a system of communication in order to ensure the funding is being used to its fullest potential decreasing the duplication of services and maximizing the effectiveness of every dollar.

This study has drawn parallels between two different emergencies to provide concrete examples of transformation within service providers. Flexibility due to funding and the ever-changing needs of the community have consistently been the over-arching influences on the establishment of many of these service providers and relief efforts. Going forward, awareness of the inevitable transformation within these service agencies can assist these agencies and employees to plan for flexibility and anticipated adjustment in their approaches and efforts.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Note: The questions will be delivered by the researcher to correspond with the agency, emergency, and position of the interviewee.

Name:
Position:
Agency:

I. The Emergency

A) Define and describe the emergency/crisis/disaster that your agency responded to
B) How soon after the emergency presented itself did the response efforts begin?

II. Agency Role
A) What services did your agency provide during the service
B) Which of these services had your agency *not* provided in the past
C) Which of these services had your agency provided in the past
D) What changes in personnel, departments, and funding did your agency experience in order to respond to the need presented during this emergency
E) What other agencies, organizations, governmental units did your agency work with during the response efforts

III. Position
A) What was your position/responsibilities prior to the Emergency
B) How did your role change during the response efforts
C) What is your position/responsibilities now

IV. Emergency Response Reflection
A) What were the shortfalls of your agency's response, if any
B) What were the strengths of your agency's response
C) What changes have you observed or experienced in your agencies mission and service as a result of the emergency

Appendix B

Name:
Position:
Agency:

Focus: This study will further explore the role of the service providers, their response, and the effects of the demands of the emergency (in this case, emergencies that have hit the Gulf Coast) on their future functioning and capabilities as agencies.

V. The Emergency or Emergencies you have experienced

C) Define and describe the emergency/crisis/disaster that your agency responded to
D) How soon after the emergency presented itself did the response efforts begin?

VI. Agency Role
F) What services did your agency provide during the service
G) Which of these services had your agency *not* provided in the past
H) Which of these services had your agency provided in the past
I) What changes in personnel, departments, and funding did your agency experience in order to respond to the need presented during this emergency
J) What other agencies, organizations, governmental units did your agency work with during the response efforts

VII. Position
D) What was your position/responsibilities prior to the Emergency
E) How did your role change during the response efforts
F) What is your position/responsibilities now

VIII. Emergency Response Reflection
D) What were the shortfalls of your agency's response, if any
E) What were the strengths of your agency's response
F) What changes have you observed or experienced in your agencies mission and service as a result of the emergency

Appendix C

Consent Form

Dear Potential Participant:

As an intern at the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, I am currently gathering information surrounding member agency's response to the Emergency Winter Shelter Crisis. This study will explore the effect the emergency response has had on the service organization as the increase in need requires the organization to increase the output of service.

At the present time, organizations involved in this study are certain member agencies of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. Employees of these agencies involved in this qualitative study reflect on their participation and their agency's participation in the response efforts to the shelter crisis.

There are no anticipated significant risks associated with involvement in this research. Participants are free to decline participation in this study.

Benefits of participating in this study include contributing to the ability of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless to further discover how they can serve member agencies during emergency responses. Facilitating collaboration between agencies and conducting trainings appropriate for the deficits in service will be two main objectives adopted after results are analyzed.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or to decline to participate will not influence your relationship with the interviewers, the Providence College Social Work Department, or the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Please print, sign, and date this consent form. It can be sent to:
Mary Bogan, 133 Pinehurst Avenue, Providence, RI 02908.

_____

Name Date

Mary Bogan **mbogan@friars.providence.edu**

Appendix D

Consent Form

Dear Potential Participant:

As a senior Social Work Major at Providence College, I am currently gathering information regarding agency response and effect of emergency situations. This study is specifically intended to gather information surrounding the impact an emergency response has on a service organization. Specifically, I will be focusing on organizations' responses to the BP Oil Spill and/or Hurricane Katrina within the Gulf Coast region.

At the present time, organizations involved in this study are service agencies and other important companies that have worked closely with those affected by these emergencies. Individual employees of these service agencies and companies who volunteer to participate are asked to answer questions relating to the emergency itself and the response of the agency. Agencies can serve a broad span of purposes from community organizing to case work and must have increased their service and responsibility as a result of the great need the emergency presented. Companies must have been affected by the emergency and experienced a significant change in their operations.

There are no anticipated significant risks associated with involvement in this research. Participants are free to decline participation in this study.

Benefits of participating in this study include reflection of your involvement in the emergency response. This information will be used to study the effects of the emergency on the direct service agency and general population.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or to decline to participate will not influence your relationship with the interviewers or the Providence College Department of Social Work.

YOUR RETURN OF A COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICPATE IN THE STUDY.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Please print and sign below. Send completed form to :
Mary Bogan, 133 Pinehurst Avenue, Providence, RI 02908

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Name Date

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FIGURE 2
AN ORGANIZATIONAL TYPOLOGY OF RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS

Creative Culture (*Agility)*	**Ad Hoc/ Reactive**	**Balanced/ Adaptive**
Rigid Culture *(Agility)*	**Dysfunctional**	**Bureaucratic/ Procedural**
	Unstructured/ Undefined (*Discipline)*	Well Structured/ Well-Defined Process (*Discipline)*

Type 1: Dysfunctional
- Relatively unstructured, poorly defined processes and procedures
- Relatively rigid, unable to move or change
- Weaknesses—unable to create repeatable or predictable processes, unable to adjust to unexpected events or conditions

Type 2: Ad Hoc/Reactive
- Relatively unstructured, no defined processes and procedures
- Able to be creative and improvise
– Weaknesses—difficulty in creating and sustaining large organizations, difficulty in coordinating with other organizations
– Strengths—ability to change rapidly, to adjust to the unexpected
– Examples—many international relief organizations during 2004 Tsunami response

Type 3: Balanced/Adaptive
– Defined structure, well-defined processes and procedures
– Able to be creative and improvise
– Weaknesses—leaders must be innovative as well as technically competent, selection and training difficult
– Strengths—ability to mobilize and manage large, complex organizations, ability to change rapidly, adjust to other organizations
– Example—U.S. Coast Guard performance in Hurricane Katrina

Type 4: Bureaucratic/Procedural
– Defined structure, well-defined processes and procedures
– Relatively rigid, unable to change
– Weaknesses—inability to recognize and adapt to unexpected events, danger of becoming procedure-bound
–Strengths—ability to mobilize and coordinate large complex organizations, ability to develop consistent training
– Example—DHS performance in Hurricane Katrina

Note: “Agility and Discipline: Critical Success Factors for Disaster Response” by John R. Harrald, 2006, The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, p. 267-269