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We are all shocked and saddened by the human impact of the Haitian earthquake. Crisis Care Network has received many requests from its internal staff and network of Specialists to immediately fly to Haiti and serve. However, as noted by the World Health Organization, any disaster response must be phase-sensitive to be effective. The people of Haiti need access to basic resources of food, water, shelter, safety, and medical care at this time. Sending in behavioral health professionals at this stage would only serve to deplete already scarce resources. Please support relief efforts by contributing to reputable organizations who can make a life and death difference! *(Click [here](#) to view a list of relief organizations identified by the International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies.)*

At this time, Crisis Care Network is deeply involved in providing support to US companies and their Haitian employees. As you might imagine, responses have focused upon feelings of isolation, helplessness, and anxiety. We are coaching deployed Specialists to focus upon those objectives as they consult with business leaders. Care right now is predominantly palliative; not clinical.

Based upon assessment of need, those leading the incident response process and associated communications must help individuals and organizations transition through several predictable phases. Sequencing is crucial. Response phases should focus upon the following transitions that will likely occur:

- **Deprivation to Access to Basic Resources**

Asking someone how they feel when they lack food, clothing, and shelter does not empower them and will understandably add frustration. First, assure access to safety and basic resources. Be practical.

- **Isolation to Connectivity**

Crises tend to isolate. This dynamic is exponentially multiplied in this tragedy because of communication impasses between US Haitians and the disaster site. Connectivity to natural social supports and professional resources is helpful. When separated from loved ones, the workplace can fill a crucial role in providing a sense of connectedness, community, and order. We are encouraging our Specialists to gather employee groups to build cohesiveness and enhance opportunities for mutual support. We are coaching business leaders regarding ways to facilitate supportive networks.

- **Chaos to Order**

This earthquake has produced external and internal chaos. People and teams find it helpful when they transition from that chaos to a predictable structure. Timely information, resumption of typical schedules, and prompt return to familiar tasks help re-create a sense of order. When leadership shares pertinent information it serves to guide understanding and help reduce anxiety. Crises force people into situations and feelings that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable. When impacted employees can get back to familiar schedules and tasks, it helps them bounce back more quickly and effectively.

- **Powerlessness to Efficacy**

In terms of helping loved ones in Haiti, these employees ARE powerless right now. Timely return to function or adaptive functioning helps replace the sense of helplessness with a self-identification of efficacy. Successful transit of this objective provides a sense of confidence and hope to continue. It is helpful when one views one's self *and one's organization* as competent. Focusing upon what one can accomplish vs. what one feels helpless to address is crucial.

- **Victim to Survivor**

As the immediate impact shifts in intensity, people begin to attribute meaning to the incident and integrate it within their world view. We must be culturally competent in planning and response. Self-definition as Survivor is certainly more life-giving than that as Victim. Sensitive communication of an expectation of recovery supports resilience. US Haitians may be wrestling also with survival guilt because of their relative safety.

CCN has taken the following actions in anticipation of continued response needs:

- Placed CCN staff and auxiliary staff on readiness alert status.
- Engaged CCN Leadership Team and external strategic partners in development of response protocols specific to this event.
- Developed and strengthened relationships with resources specific to Haitian culture and language expertise.
- Adjusted internal and external communication planning.
- Identified resources necessary for a phase-sensitive response.

As this situation unfolds we will continue to offer communications, support, resources, and strategies to empower leadership at all levels. Please contact Jeff Gorter (888-736-0911x840) or myself to discuss how we can best support your objectives. Thank you for honoring us as your proven, trusted partner.

Bob VandePol
President
Crisis Care Network

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