

Effective Crisis & Risk Communication During Disasters & Extreme Weather Events

Angie B. Lindsey, Ph.D.
University of Florida

Crisis..Risk..Issues..Communication.... AACK!

- *Crisis Theory* – organizations must adopt a crisis management strategy in order to avoid &/or be prepared for a potential crisis
- *Crisis Management* – pre-crisis, crisis response and post-crisis
 - *Crisis Communication* – Crucial comm. that happens during management of disaster
- *Risk Communication* – communicating potential risk (non-incident)
- *Issues Management*
 - Jones and Chase (1979) define issues as questions from environment that demand major decisions
 - Heath and Palenchar (2009) introduced stakeholders and define it as managing interests and seeking balance between all players

Crisis & Risk Communication

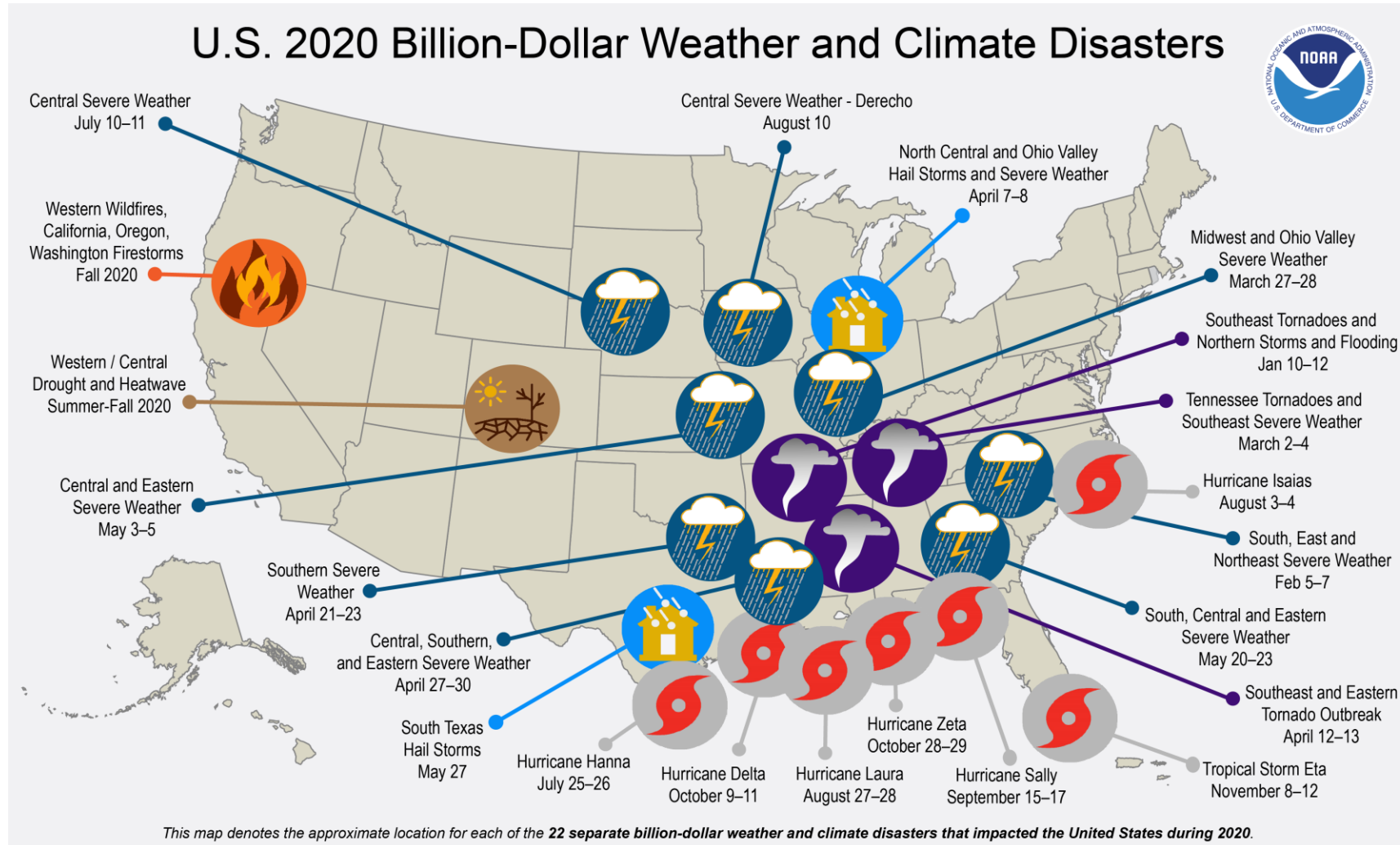
Risk Communication

- Informs people about hazards to their environment or health
- Manages potential problems
- Communicates potential crisis
- Encouraging early action
- Reducing panic
- Understand perception & audiences
- Lays groundwork for trust
- Bad risk communication = bad crisis communication (can)
- Objective and Subjective Risks

Crisis Communication

- Communication done both internally & externally to manage a crisis
- Can use several different communication mediums to disseminate information
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Social Media
 - Grassroots
 - Press Conferences
- Need development of a crisis communication plan in order to communicate with different audiences effectively

2020 Extreme Weather & Climate Disasters



- 22 Separate billion-dollar weather & climate disasters across US - \$95 Billion
- 7 disasters linked to tropical cyclones
- 13 to severe storms (30)
- 1 to drought
- 1 to wildfires

Defining Hazards & Disaster

1

Defining Hazard

- ***“The potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced physical event or trend or physical impact that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, ecosystems, and environmental resources.” (Field & Barros, 2014, p. 1766)***

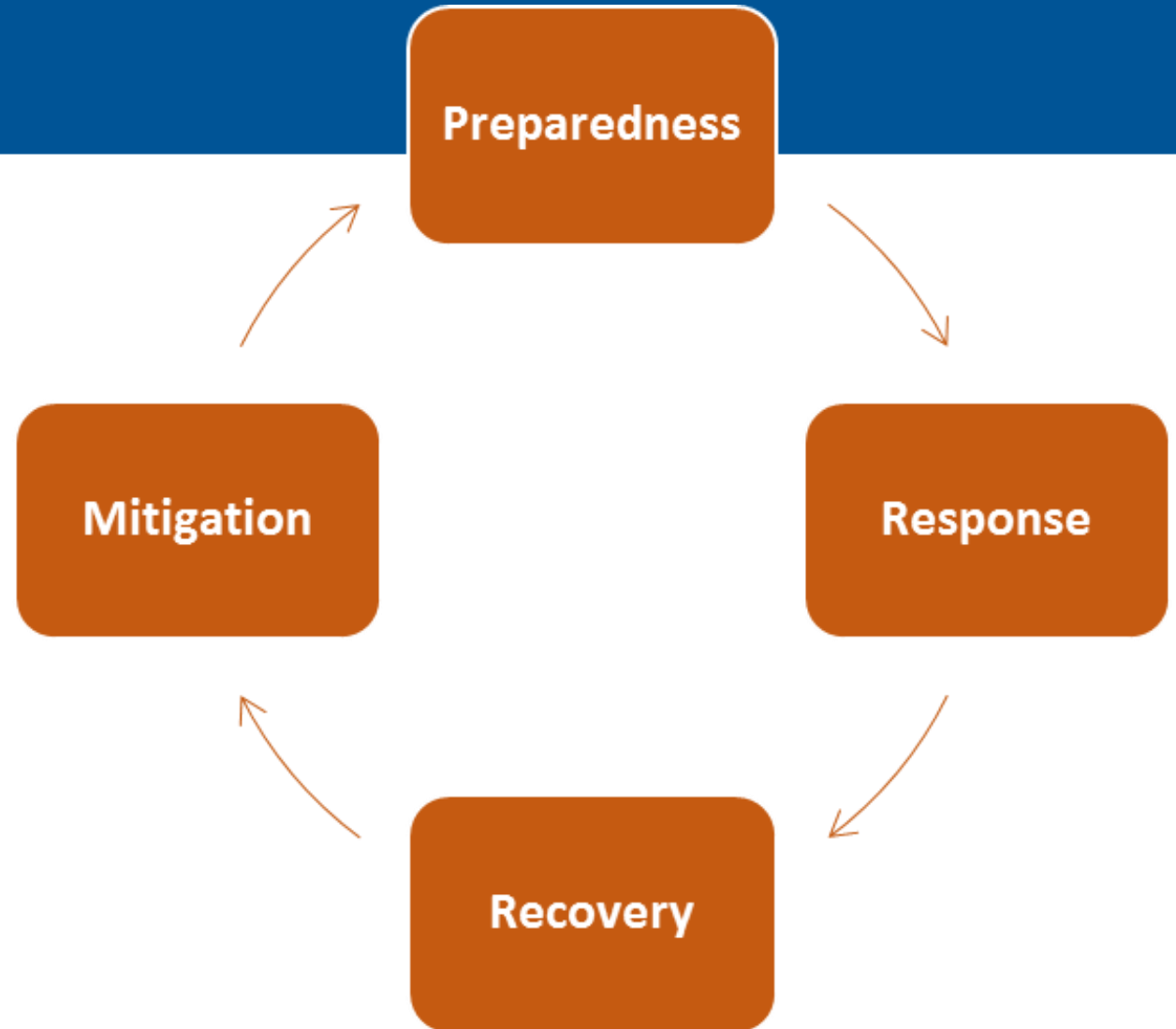
2

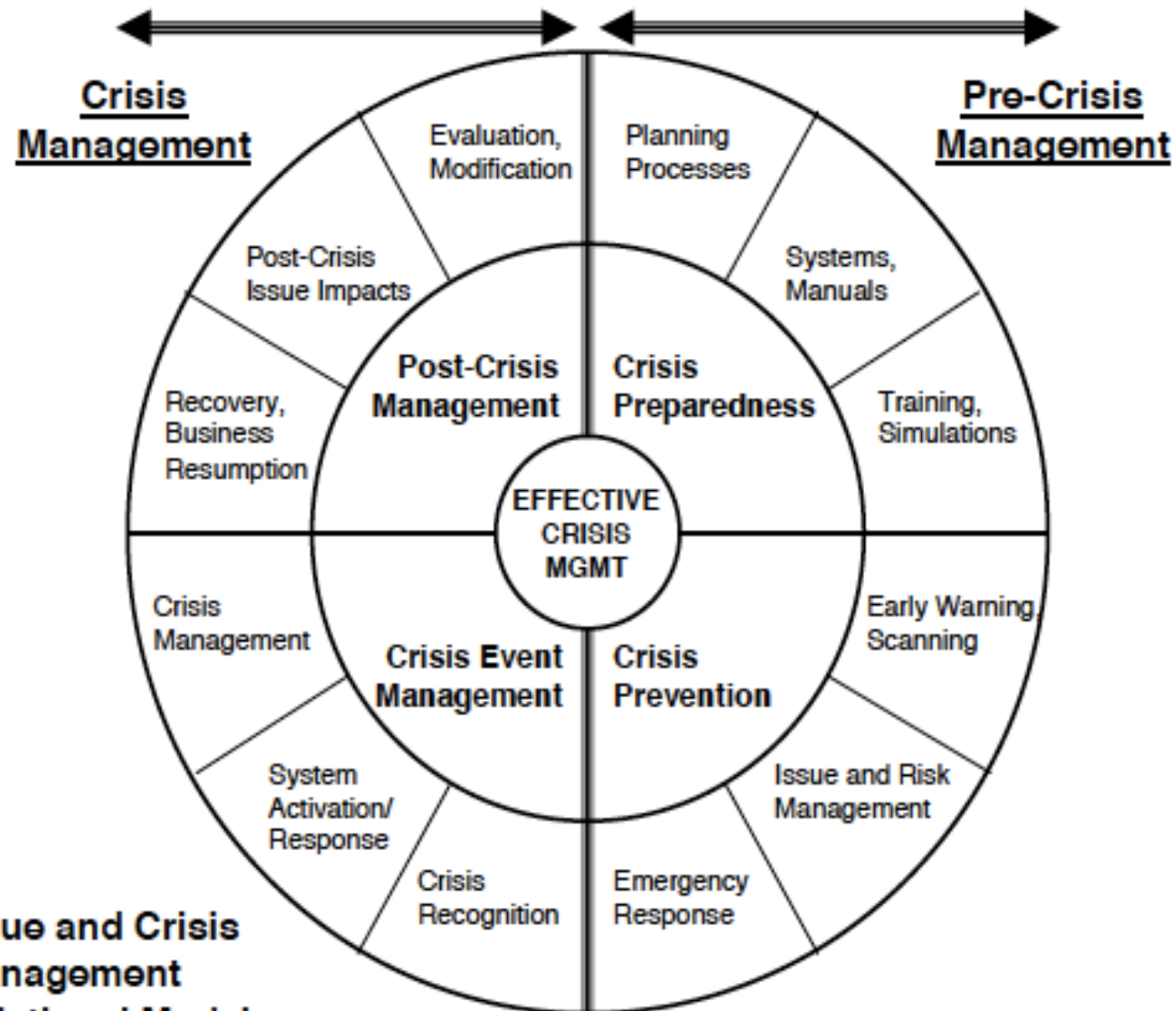
Defining Disaster

- ***A disaster is a non-routine event that exceeds the capacity of the affected area to respond to it in such a way as to save lives; to preserve property; and to maintain the social, ecological, economic, and political stability of the affected region. (Pearce, 2000)***

Hazards

- Actual disturbance, event, or phenomenon
- Threats to humans & what they value
- Potential for damage & widespread impact
- 4 Phases of Hazards





**Issue and Crisis
Management
Relational Model ©**

Anticipating a Crisis – Evaluating Risks

- Create a framework for crisis planning
- Inventory assets & resources and identify crisis risks
- Conduct a crisis assessment
- Develop a risk financing strategy
- Call in the troops!!-
 - Crisis & Risk Comm. Committee
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Practice (Running an exercise is GREAT)
- Plan to ACT
- Identify audiences and how they communicate

Best Defense: A PLAN

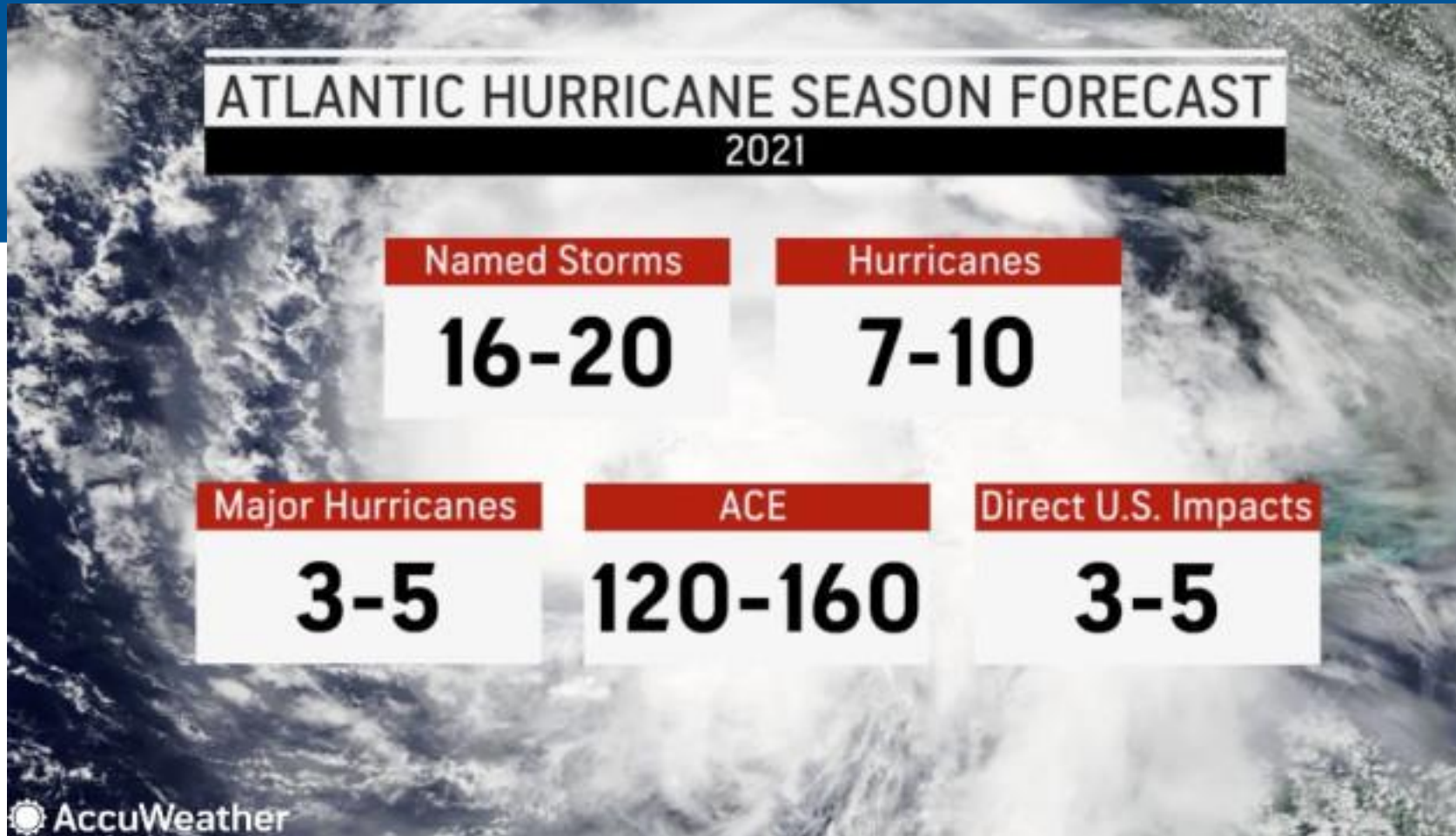
- Develop a Risk & Crisis Communication PLAN – NOW!
- Worst Possible scenario brainstorm session
 - Potential hazards & risks
 - Potential crisis
- Key components of plan:
 - The Who
 - The What
 - The How
 - The When
 - The Where

Communicating During a Crisis

- Essential Elements:
 - Care (empathy), Ownership (Transparency), Sharing (constant communication)
- PLAN for HOW to communicate
 - Crisis Spokesperson (& back-up)
 - Dark website?
 - Materials? (media kit, Fact sheets, summary)
 - Key messages
 - Internal and External communication
 - Back-up plans in case of power outages, downed cell phone towers, etc.

5 Final Tips

1. Crisis Prepared vs. Crisis Prone (Proactive vs. Reactive)
2. Manage the Response
3. Identify Key Audiences
4. Develop Messages and then Communicate the Messages and the Facts
5. Keep Calm & Carry on (no “off the record”; “no comment” – stay calm – be responsive)



Thank You!
ablindsey@ufl.edu