

# WHERE'S MY SON?

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## CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION SYSTEMS

*Presented by Dr. Mary  
Schoenfeldt*



# SESSION GOALS

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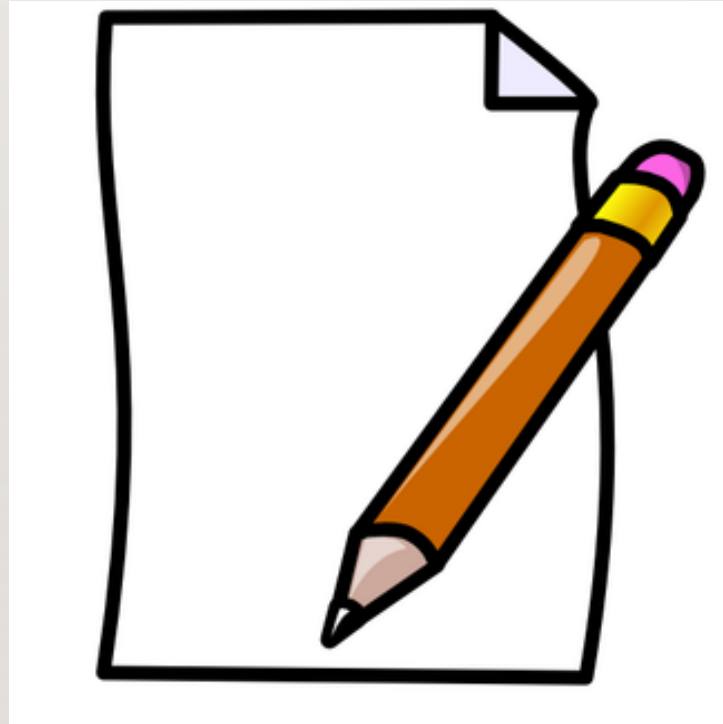
Talk about  
Reunification Systems  
and what they need

Look at both System  
challenges and  
Community  
Responder Challenges

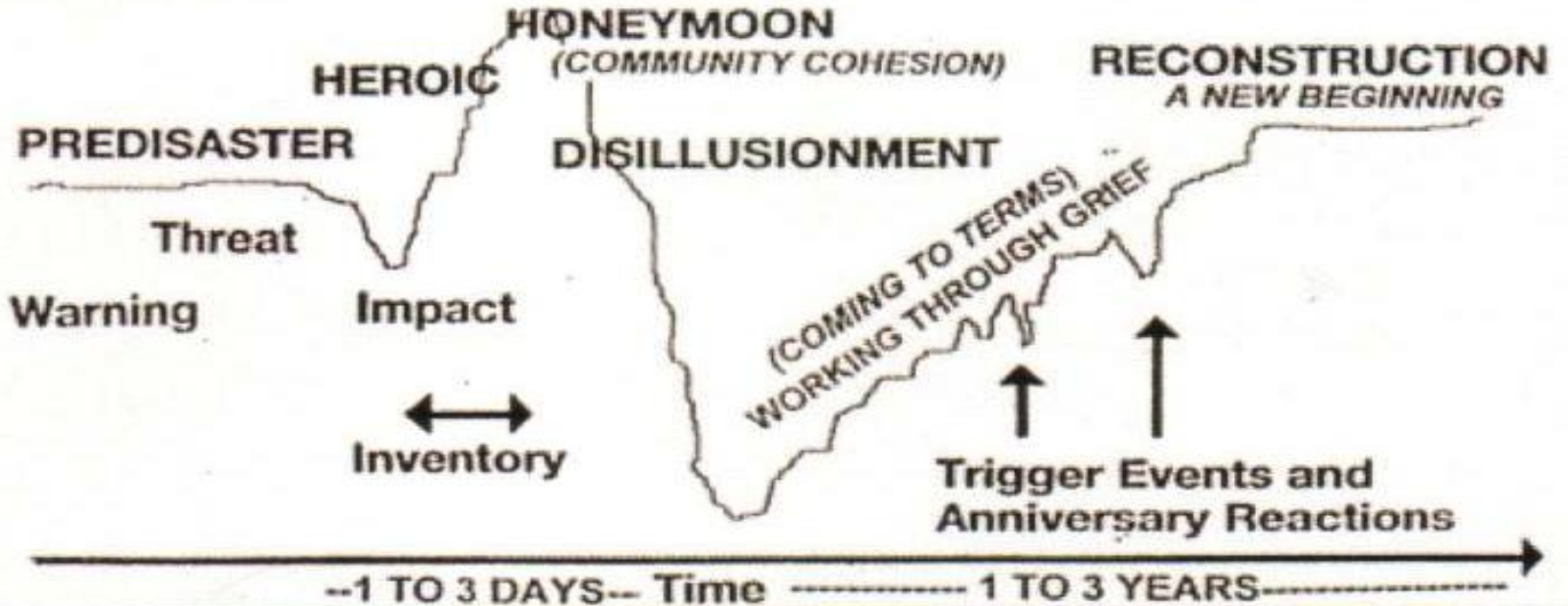
Walk though a specific  
Renunciation model

# YOUR NOTES...

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# Phases of Disaster



# IN AN EMERGENCY...

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- **PEOPLE NEED 2 THINGS**

- **1. INFORMATION**

- **2. SENSE THAT SOMEONE IS IN CONTROL**



## SCENARIO

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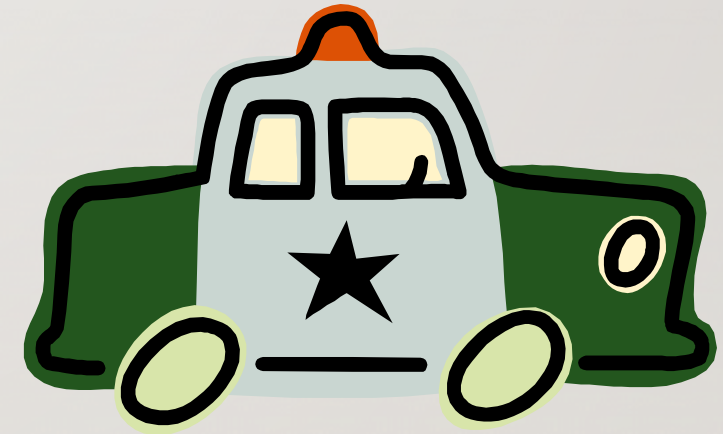
There is an explosion in the commons area at the local high school. Severe injuries and possible loss of life have been reported.

- What will need to be done to manage this situation?

# POSSIBILITIES...

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- Attend to injured
- Evacuate others
- Partner with responders on scene
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!
- Reunite families
- Recovery activities







# COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

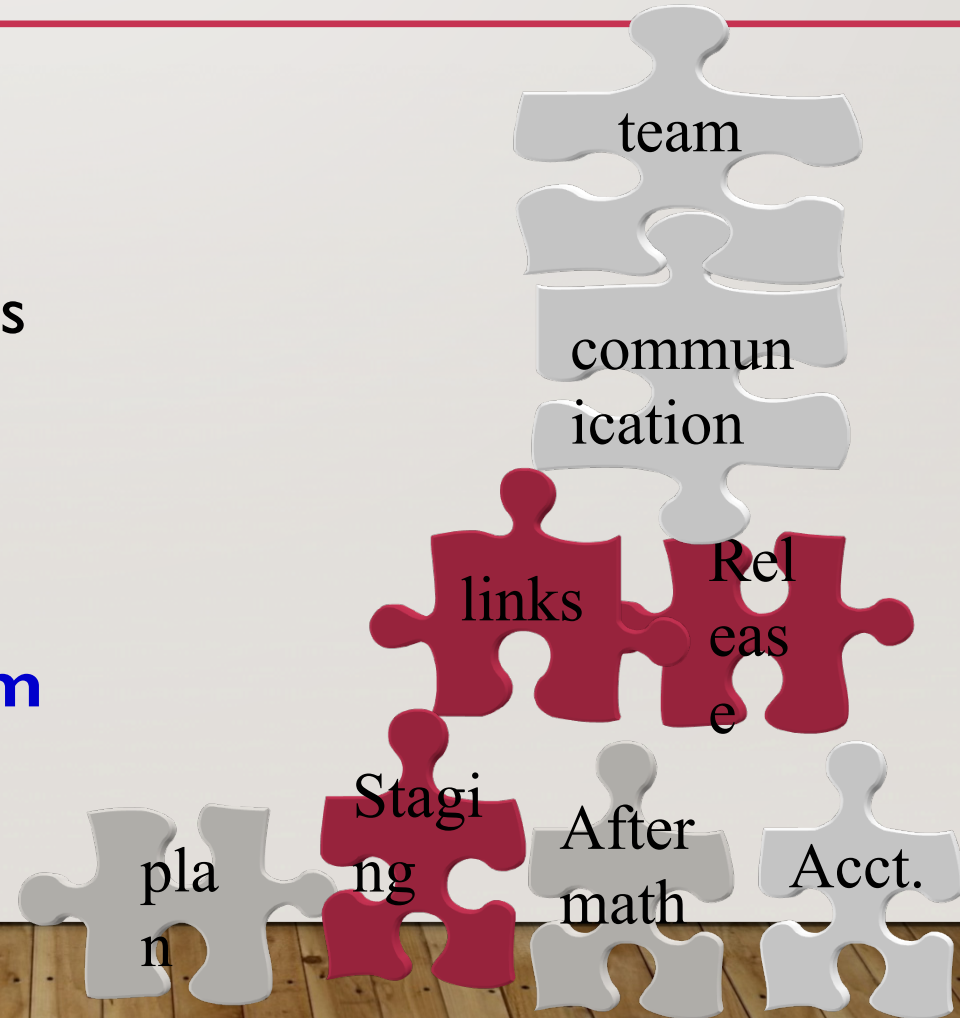
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- Policies and procedures for 3 types of events:
- Get 'em out
- **Keep 'em in**
- Bring 'em back



# ESSENTIALS OF CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

- Management team
- Written plan
- Coordination between agencies
- Communication systems
- Staging areas
- **Accountability procedures**
- **Family Reunification system**
- Aftermath plan



# ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS WE MUST ANSWER

- Who is involved
- Who is missing
- How can we communicate with those who need to know

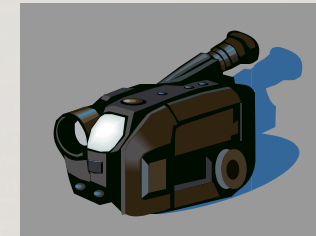


## SCENARIO CONTINUES...

- **Students are relocated to a pre-assigned Evacuation Site**

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- How Do We Notify Parents to Pick Up Their Children?
- How do we guarantee that students get to the Alternative Site?
- How do we guarantee that only the appropriate person take the child?
- How do we document what actions we've taken?
- What do you do with Convergent Volunteers?



# REUNIFICATION CHALLENGES

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- Chaos Management
- Parent/Loved Ones Expectations
- Staffing
- Paperwork



# CAMPUS SYSTEM ISSUES

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- Accountability
- Reunification Location
- Communication
  - Internally
  - Externally
- International Students
- Media Messages
- Emotional Support
- Spontaneous Volunteers



# REUNIFICATION SITE CONSIDERATIONS

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- Easily Accessible
- Traffic Flow
- Resources
- Security





# COMMUNICATION

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- Internally
- Externally



# STUDENT MIX

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- International
- ESL
- Independent



# MEDIA MESSAGES

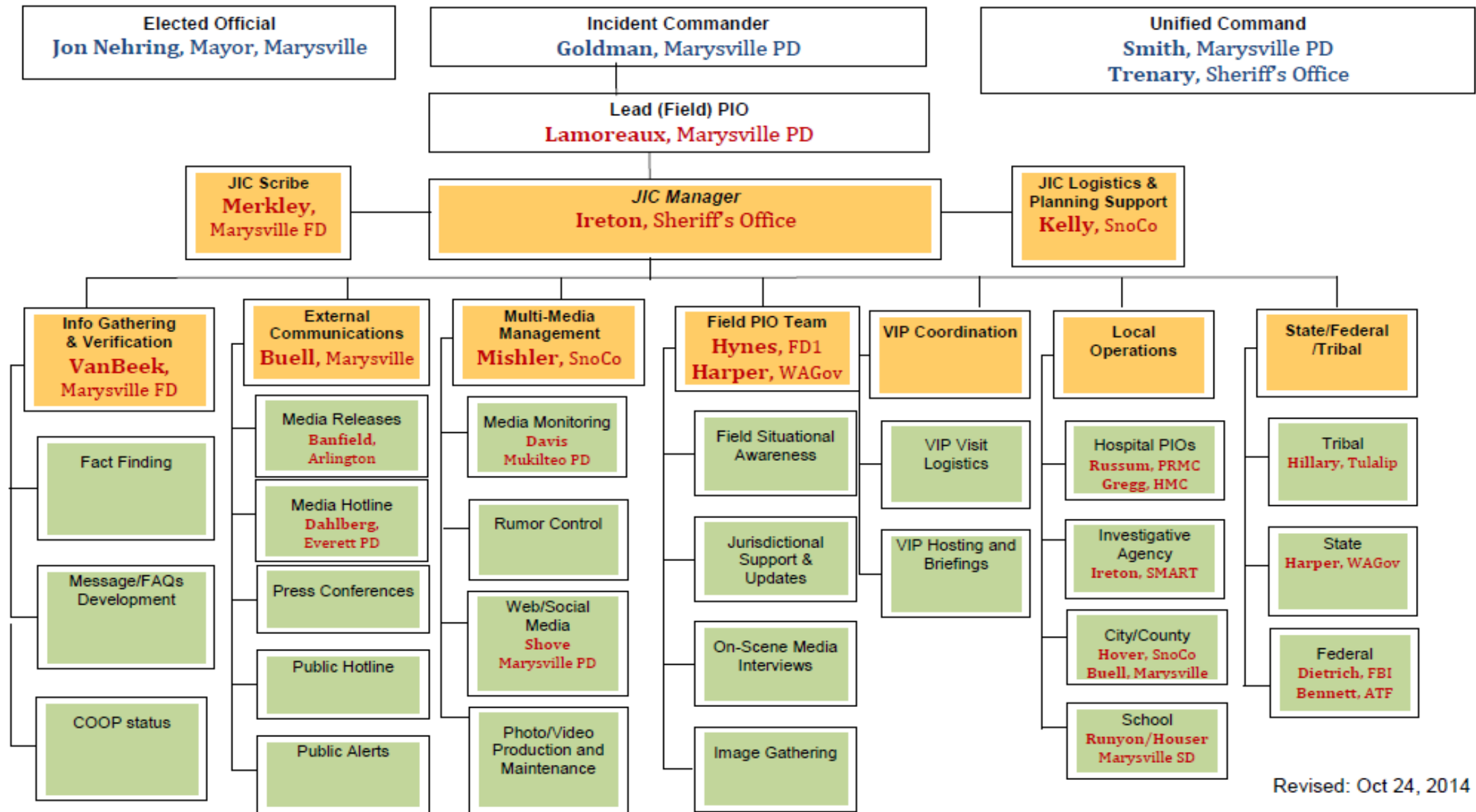
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- Coordination ... JIC, JIS
- Consistent Message
- Multiple Methods



# Snohomish County Joint Information System (JIS) Org Chart

Joint Information Center Model



Revised: Oct 24, 2014

# SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS

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- **Wanted**
  
- **Unwanted**



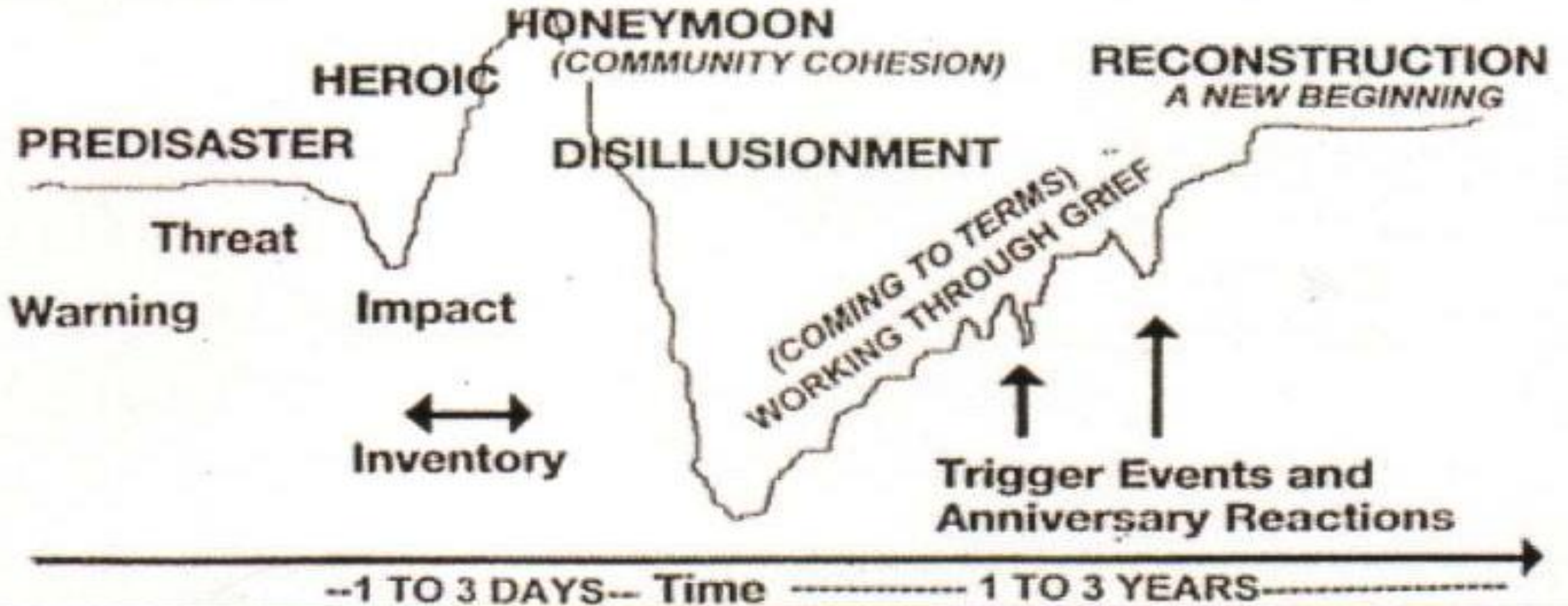
# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

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- Students
- Staff
- Waiting Families



# Phases of Disaster





## WHO DOES FAMILY REUNIFICATION INTERACT WITH?

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- **Parents of Students**
- **Students**
- **School Staff**
- **Accountability Team**
- **Student Supervision Team**
- **Other IMT members**
- **Medical Team – Patient Tracking**
- **Hospital**
- **Operations Chief to Incident Coordinator**
- **Security – Perimeter Control**



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS ROLES

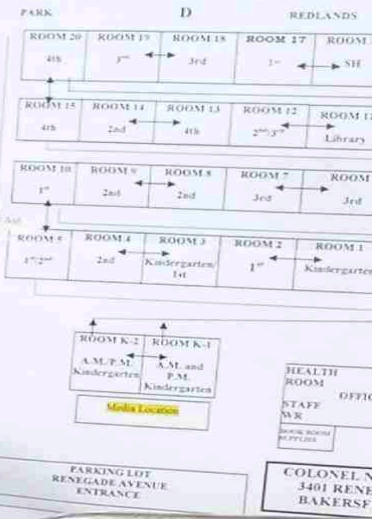
- Unified Command
- Communication with Campus
- Perimeter Traffic Control
- Traffic Control at Site
- Large Event Management
- Site Security
- Logistics... Food, Shelter, Water, Signs
- Media Management
- Investigation and Interviews





Arrow between rooms indicates room buddy system  
Solid color represents Team Leader - oldest grade

A, B, C, D, F exit North side of building.  
K-1 and K-2 exit South side of building.



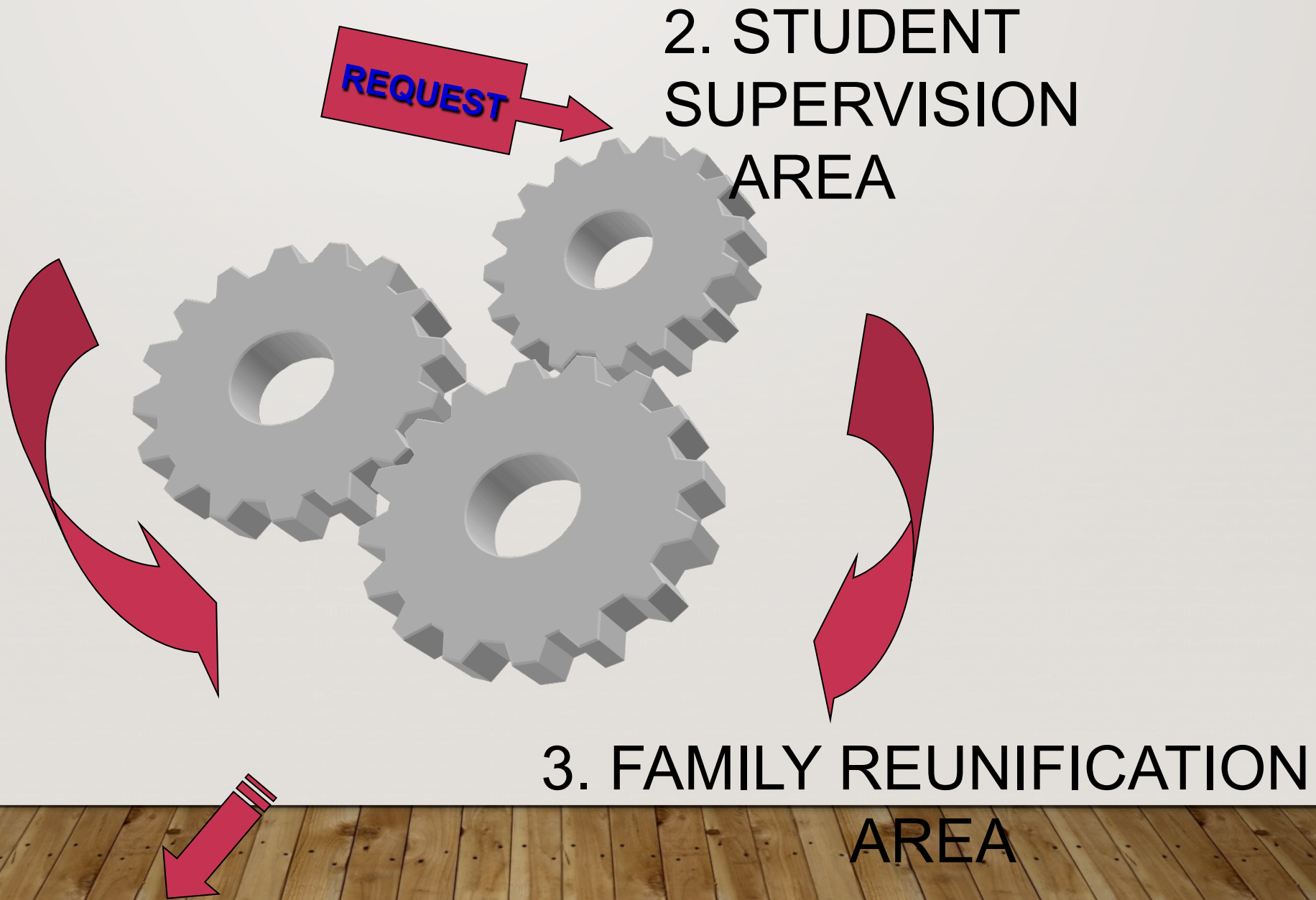
Evacuation Route

# IN AN EMERGENCY...

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- **PARENTS NEED 2 THINGS**
  - **1. INFORMATION**
  - **2. SENSE THAT SOMEONE IS IN CONTROL**

- I. CHECK IN GATE



# PROCEDURE

Family Reunification Systems... Dr. Mary Schoenfeldt 2017

- **Adult Checks in at Check In Gate**
- **Team checks emergency form and ID**
- **Staff completes the top copy of Student Release Form**
- **Request is made to Student Supervision area**



- **Staff fills out section that documents student status and time student leaves**

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- **Student is escorted to Reunification Center**
- **Adult ID is checked again**
- **Adult fills out portion with time, destination and signature**
- **Copy is filed in alphabetical order**





- **What can we do before an emergency to reduce the chaos and the stress to individuals and the school system?**

# BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

- **Teach parents and students the policies and procedures for releasing students**
- **Help parents understand what to expect on the day of the emergency**
- **Practice drills**
- **Pre print policies and procedures to give to parents at Release Gate**

# SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

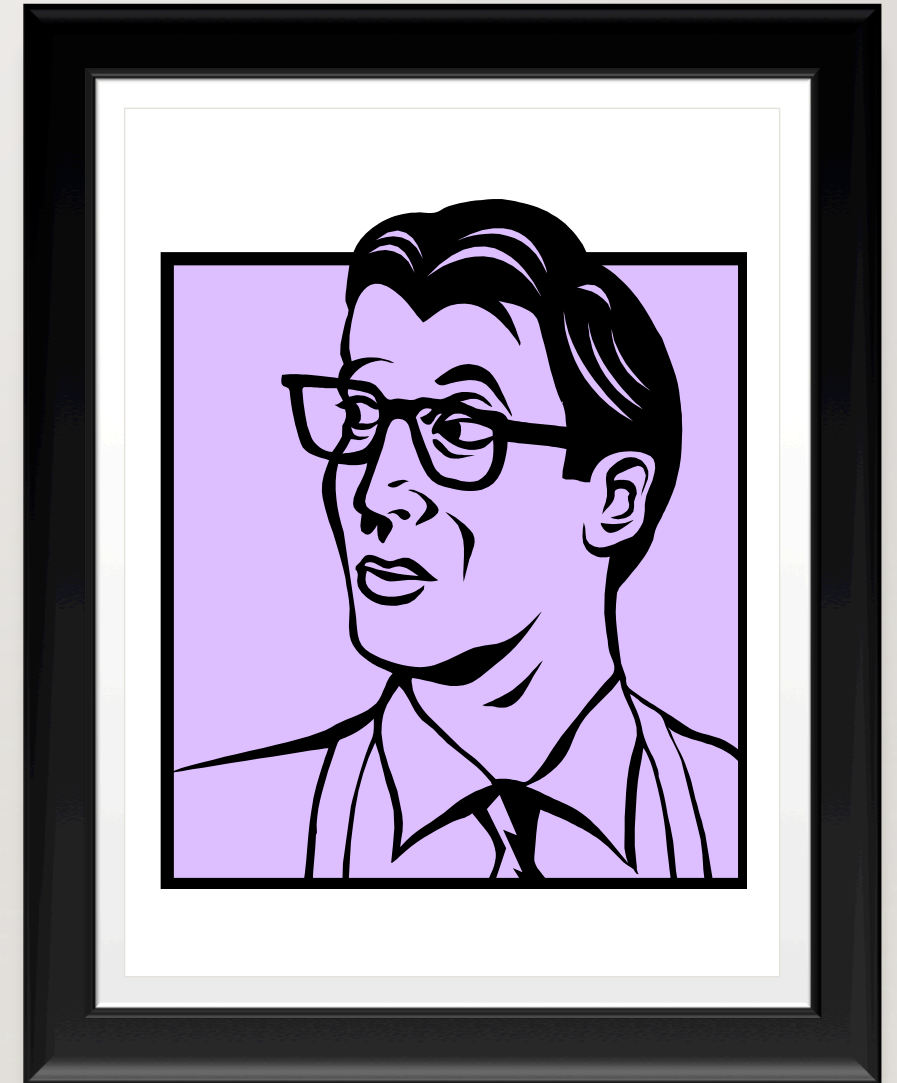
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- **How would you describe your school/district?  
Rural? Urban? Small? Medium? Large?**
- **How do your students get to and from school?**
- **Where are the parents of your students during the day?**
- **What challenges do you face?**
- **What is unique about your school community?**
- **What resources do you have to assist in an emergency at your school?**

# TO DO LIST...

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- **Forms and info in portable box**
- **Designate Family Reunification Team**
- **Identify locations of Reunification System**
- **Obtain supplies**
- **Train staff**



# DURING THE EMERGENCY

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- **Follow the plan**
- **Reunification Team begin releasing students and reuniting families according to plan**
- **Be flexible**



## REMEMBER... PARENTS NEED 2 THINGS...

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- **I. INFORMATION – How do they get it?**
  - **What are some of the things we can do to provide them with information?**





# HOW TO TALK TO FAMILIES

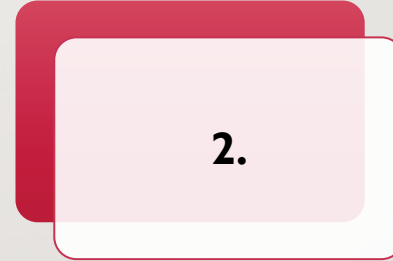
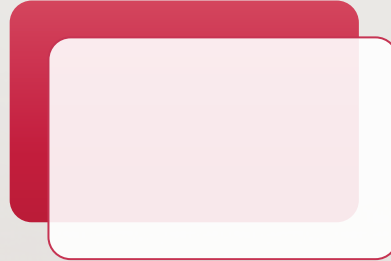
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- **Stay Calm**
- **Provide Facts --- Frequently**
- **DON'T speculate**
- **Keep in small groups if possible**
- **Ask for visible Law Enforcement presence**
- **Give them copies of policies and procedures**



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**REMEMBER ...  
PARENTS  
NEED 2  
THINGS...**



# SENSE THAT SOMEONE IS IN CONTROL

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- **Have Family Reunification System set up**
- **Have appropriate equipment**
- **Have appropriate records available**
- **Have adequate staff**
- **Have preprinted copies of policies and procedures for parents**
- **Provide security**



## SCENARIO # 2

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- **150 of your students go on an overnight trip to a Science Camp. 22 students get sick the first day, by the morning of the second day, 87 more students are sick and 5 of the 7 staff members are also sick.**
- **What do you do?**
- **How do you notify parents? Which parents?**
- **What do you tell them?**
- **What other steps do you take?**

# SESSION GOALS

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and what they need

Look at both System  
challenges and  
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Responder Challenges

Walk though a specific  
Renunciation model

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