

PROACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT



OTIS CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

RISK MANAGEMENT

What is risk?

The question proposed is not how do we eliminate risk? But rather, **how do we safely engage risk to allow for profound learning opportunities?**



The Essentials

Management happens in **layers**

Judgment =
experience with
critical reflections

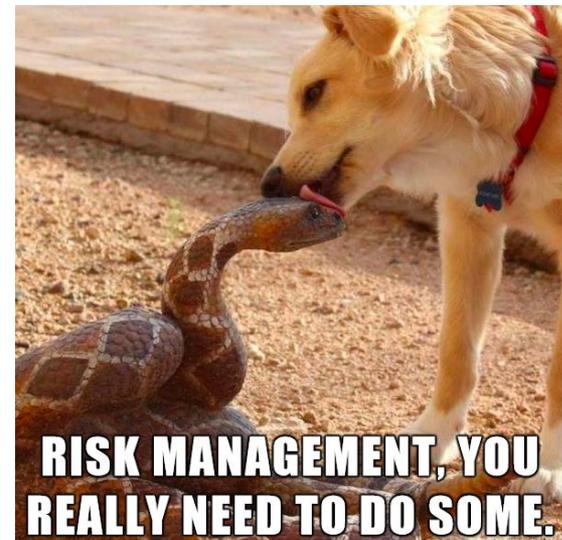
RISK MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS

Proactive Risk Management

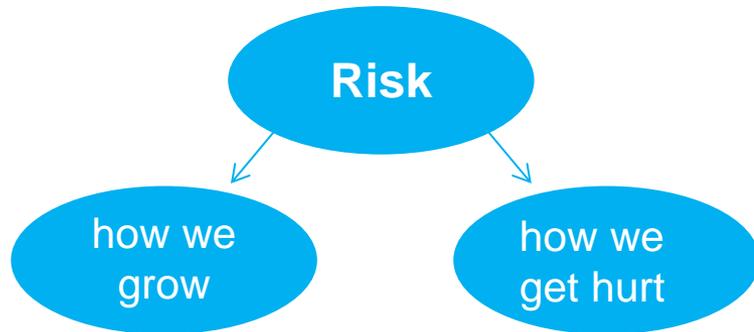
- Policies and procedures
- Risk assessment
- Identifying and understanding local hazards
- Developing judgment and decision making skills
- Teaching risk awareness to participants – especially in the first 48 hours.
- Trainings

Reactive Risk Management

- Critical incident management
- Evacuations Protocol



A ship in a harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for!



Positive Risk Taking – calculated and guided risks



Comfort Zone

- Safe and Familiar
- A good place to return to regularly
- Not a place to stay for too long

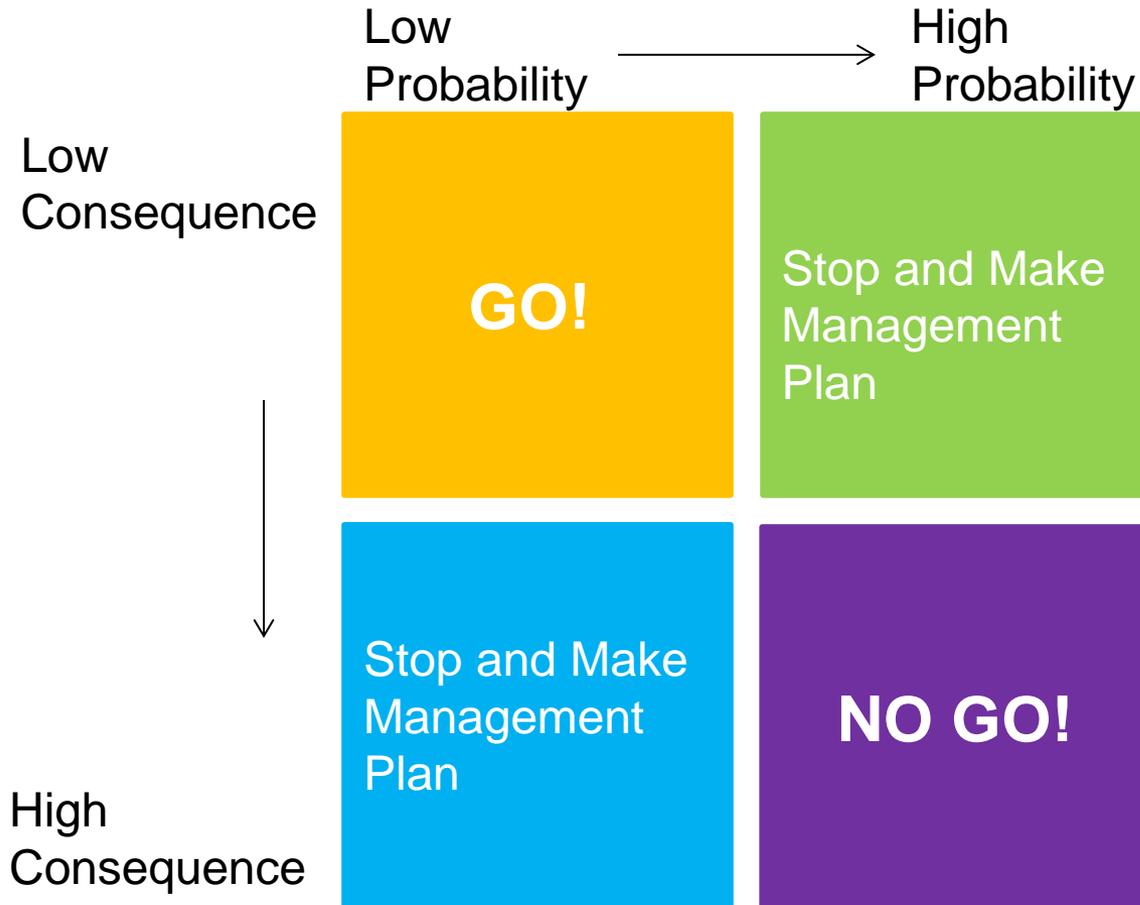
Challenge/Learning Zone

- Increases as competency increases
- Create appropriate challenges
- Embrace ambiguity
- Navigating unknown internal & external realms

Panic Zone

- Learning stops, recoil to familiar habits
- Potential for more serious risk
- Potential for trauma and lost learning.

FOUR QUADRANT MODEL

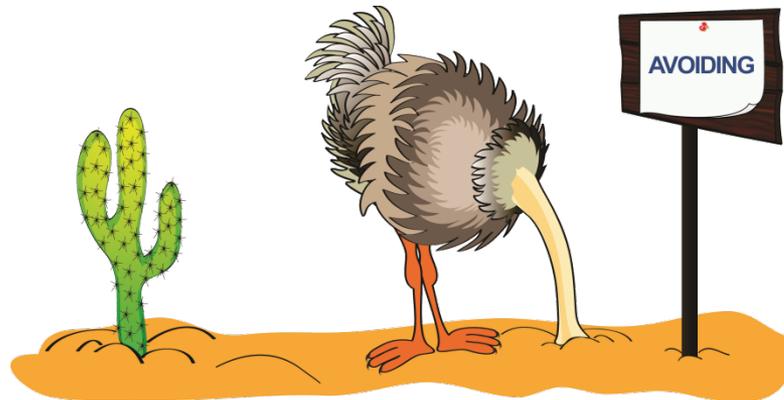


Probability

represents the likelihood of something going wrong or an accident happening, or the amount of unknowns in an activity. The greater the number of unknowns the higher the probability.

Consequence

represents the seriousness or degree of injury, accident, delay, or other problems including death. “How hurt would I be if something did go wrong?” or “What is the worst thing that could happen?”



HAZARDS



Objective/Environmental

Environment: Falling objects, altitude, loose terrain, plant, Animals, etc.

Changes over time

Elements: heat, cold, water, fire, wind

Infrastructure

Conditions and appropriateness of gear

Innate cultural elements

Unsafe Conditions



Accidents/Incidents



Subjective/Human

Group dynamics. Goals, risk tolerance

Role of competition and group behavior

Hero halo – over confidence

Blind spot and non-event feedback

Fatigue

Time pressure or scheduling pressure

Perceptions of risk

Outside leaders and contacts

Mental and physical fitness

Unsafe acts or errors in judgment

CONTAINERS -

A systems approach to Proactive Risk Management

Institutional

- Risk Acceptance
- Leadership & Culture
- Marketing
- Knowledge of emergency and medical resources
- Policies and Procedures
- Program History
- Training

Course

- In-country relationships
- Course design – progression & intention
- Leader protocols
- Lines of communication
- Clear goals & expectations
- Safety briefings
- Documentation and reporting
- Student Group

Group

- Student Group
- Student & Instructor
- Individual

CONTAINERS -

A systems approach to Proactive Risk Management

Student Group

- Positive & safe learning environment
- Intra-group accountability
- Culture of diversity & inclusion
- Increased competency in-line with curriculum & progression
- Self directed goals
- Working style
- In-country experience
- Culture of feedback
- Balanced skill sets
- Clear decision making processes
- Understanding of and buy-in to institutional expectations

Student & Instructor

- Rapport between all participants
- Goals & objectives aligned
- Open Communication
- Frequent meetings
- Regular feedback sessions

Individual

- Personal values
- Experience
- Education – formal & Informal
- Skills abilities
- Comfort zone
- Communication & conflict styles
- Ethnic/Racial history

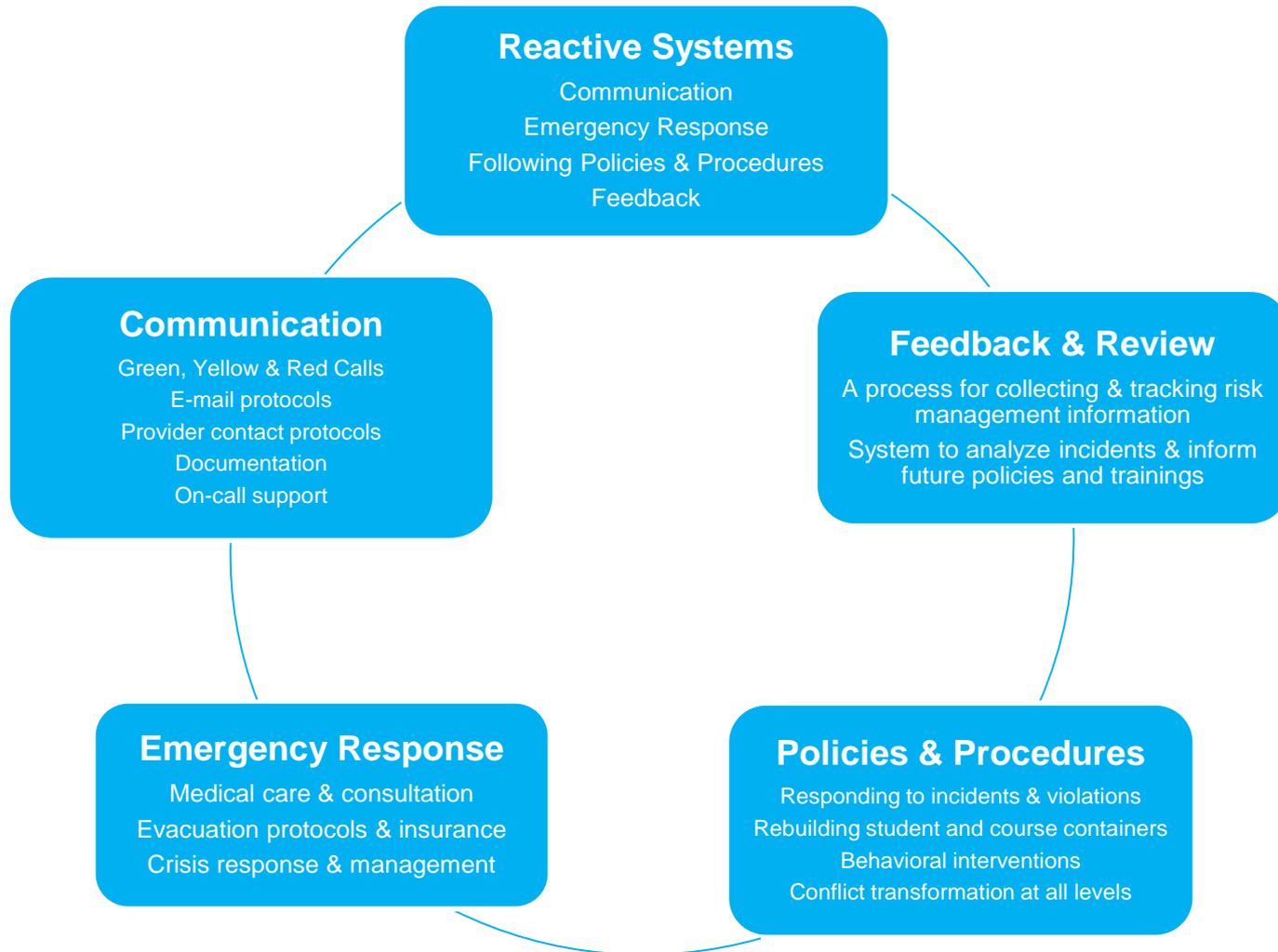
Outside Influences: Societal Norms, laws & taboos, families & friends

REACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT

- Containers are breakable and imperfect
- Incident vs. Accident
- Don't place blame, seek to understand
- Incidents passes through the cracks of the container
- Establish reactive systems ahead of time



SYSTEMS



FIRST 48-72 HOURS

- The checklist in your Travel Study Course Log is meant to ensure that leaders have taught the fundamental lessons and have done the necessary evaluation, feedback, and communication to ensure a safe, high quality experience for students
- You should begin pre-travel with other program leaders by planning and time-lining these important activities, discussions, and lessons.

TONE SETTING

- **Tone Setting:** Creating boundaries and a culture of respect will build a tight container in which students can take appropriate risks while minimizing harm. Particularly essential to construction of a tight container are:
 - **Effective 48-72-hour planning**
 - **Proper briefing and debriefing for all activities.**
 - **Development & Distribution of Contact Cards**
 - **Develop/ Provide Student Roles & Responsibilities**

STONE SETTING (continued)

- Set high group expectations. Be firm and explicit that the group is expected to follow instructions and that there may not be warnings and second chances
- If you set a rule and consequences, you will need to carry that out
- Short-term programs are highly structured. It is important to explain that this is not because students are not adults, but because of the nature of the program
- Address potential health and safety concerns
- Have students sign program specific waiver

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Effective Communication:** Clear and timely communication is perhaps the single most proactive method for managing risk. The Leader and Program Provider must have excellent communication internally, with their student group, and with the Center for International Education.
 - **Daily Check-ins:** A daily ritual of communication is paramount.
 - **Feedback:** A culture of “openness” is crucial. Students and leaders must feel safe to express their concerns, goals, etc.
 - **Emergency Communication:** Know the system and available resources

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (continued)

SAFETY BRIEFINGS

- An introduction to the activity and how it fits into Otis' goals for the program.
- An explanation or description of scheduled activity and time considerations.
- Anticipated hazards involved.
- Explain any extra precaution that needs to be taken and/or extra concerns.
- Who will be involved and their role(s). Be explicit about the role of others involved.
- An opportunity for participants to ask questions and discuss concerns.
- Clear communication regarding Leader and Program Provider expectations.
- Individual and group expectations of participation.

DAILY GROUP MEETINGS

Daily Routines

- Daily routines are a crucial element to a successful program. The more intention and thought you put into your days, and weeks, the more students will get, understand, and make meaning out of their experiences. Meeting to map out the coming day, or week, will enhance your course tremendously.

Briefing: Start the Day Together

- Choose a specific time that does not allow students to flake. Start with a group check-in. Create a space for students to express how they're doing physically and emotionally. This will help you feel like you've got your finger on the pulse of the group's energy and enthusiasm. You may need to model what this entails by going first, making the students feel comfortable about communicating openly.
 - Brief students by communicating a clear and detailed schedule for the day:
 - What will they need for the day (full water bottle, sketchbook, journal, and hat?)
 - Are there specific goals for the day?
 - Why have you decided to facilitate certain activities?

DAILY GROUP MEETINGS (continued)

Sample Meeting Structure

- Daily Reading, Emotional Check-in, Health Scale, Logistics, Announcements

Debriefing: End the Day Together

- Remember that your students are going through a lot, and they need a platform to speak...especially in the first 72 hours. As often as possible, and preferably each day, debrief with your students and allow them the space to question things they've seen, talk about issues they are grappling with, and discuss group dynamics issues. As the course progresses, group meetings are a good activity for students to take over, perhaps a student leader of the day reads a quote, poses questions, frames the days/s itinerary, etc.

TRAVEL STUDY COURSE LOG

The function of the Course Log is:

- To serve as a record of events on our courses.
- To serve as a place for Leaders to note, process, or document information that they want to remember or share.
- To communicate important information to the Director of the Center for International Education, Provost, Dean of Student Affairs, and future Leaders.
- To serve as a resource for future travel programs

MID-COURSE REFLECTION

Schedule your mid-course reflection process into your course itinerary. Set the tone and make sure students understand how valuable their input is and that by taking this step they can begin to take ownership of their course and create the experience they are seeking.

- Create a safe and comfortable space that is conducive to meditation and communication.
- Structure group time/activities to share memories, assess goals, and brainstorm strategies for improvement.
- Celebrate your achievements and make this a positive event. Encouragement, positive reinforcement, celebratory dinner, etc.

DE-ORIENTATION

For many students, the program end is really the beginning of an extensive journey of personal transformation. As a Leader, it is essential to be available to students during this stage. Students may be experiencing intense feelings of anxiety and/or excitement as they look forward to their journeys home and as they ponder their new roles in that environment.

- On one of your final program days, gather your students together for a closing ceremony. You may like to include your students in the planning for this activity. Students often contribute in poignant ways that would have been deemed “cheesy” if prepared by a leader.

CONCLUSION

- Risk is not a four-letter word
- Know and articulate your personal and institutional risk acceptance
- Risk Management happens in layers
- Consider both proactive and reactive R.M. systems