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A Study to Determine the Inservice Training Needs of Red Cross Emergency Services After Hours Duty Workers

Sharon Wingate
Old Dominion University

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE
INSERVICE TRAINING NEEDS
OF RED CROSS EMERGENCY SERVICES
AFTER HOURS
DUTY WORKERS

A RESEARCH PROJECT
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

BY
SHARON WINGATE
AUGUST 1993

This research paper was prepared by Sharon Wingate under the direction of Dr. John Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science in Education.

APPROVED BY: John M. Ritz 8-4-93
Dr. John M. Ritz Date
Advisor
Occupational and Technical Studies

John M. Ritz 8-4-93
Dr John M. Ritz Date
Graduate Program Director
Occupational and Technical Studies

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American Red Cross is a non-profitable, charity organization. The scope of Red Cross's mission is worldwide, providing services 24 hours daily. On a national level, the greatest service provided by Red Cross is in the blood area, soliciting and receiving blood from volunteers.

The second largest operation within the Red Cross is emergency services. Emergency services address needs induced by unforeseen situations that require immediate action. Emergency services' target population is disaster victims and the armed forces.

Those who provide emergency services during the normal business hours are called case workers. The case workers that work after normal business day hours, including weekends, are called after hour duty workers. Duty workers do more crisis intervention than the regular case workers.

The pace for after hours duty workers is swift, stressful and demanding. Also sharp communication skills are a must. From time to time, the duty worker has to diffuse a suicidal situation; the day workers do not have to deal with these kinds of cases. Also, there are other areas possibly needing update information and sharp skills in crisis intervention. After all, the after hours system is the backbone to emergency services. It is usually on the after hours system when many crises occur. Skill in delivering service is critical.

This is what the focus of this study is--determining inservice training needs for the duty workers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the inservice training needs of Red Cross emergency service after hours duty workers.

RESEARCH GOALS

The research goals of this study were to determine:

- (1) What are the most requested emergency needs?
- (2) What are the problems duty workers encounter in addressing these needs?
- (3) What are the recommended inservice training topics for after hours duty workers?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The after hours duty worker system at the Red Cross is a flexible operation. The duty workers handle large volumes of emergency, crisis-intervention cases for active duty military members and their families. Also, the general public is assisted with disaster relief services in cases of house fires and tropical storms.

Due to the nature of the services provided and given, and the volume requested, inservice training for duty workers should be considered. The training might include stress management and methods in human services delivery.

The training might benefit duty workers, management and clients. Ideally, a more professional staff would evolve as a result of the training sessions. Employee-management

relations would be enhanced. The duty workers quality of work would improve and services to clients would be more professional and up to date.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to the after hours duty workers at the Tidewater Chapter of the American Red Cross. Another limitation was that full time case workers are excluded from this study.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The research study was based on the assumptions that duty workers concur that there was a need for inservice training at some level. Also considered was the assumption that training seminars, when constructed, would be preferred and would be relevant to the needs of the duty workers, as reflected in data from the surveys.

PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA

Research data was collected from duty workers that were at the Tidewater Chapter of the American Red Cross. A survey was used to gather the data. The questions were designed to determine whether the duty workers felt a need for some inservice training, and if so, what areas in training were needed and were desirable.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were used throughout the study.

- (1) After hours- After hours is a term referring to after the normal business hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, including weekends and holidays.
- (2) Case worker- A case worker is one who renders human services delivery to clients and provides social services. These services are designed to promote the welfare of the community and the individual.
- (3) Client- A person dependent on another for protection or patronage is a client.
- (4) Duty worker- A duty worker is an after hours case worker who intervenes in emergency crisis situations. The duty worker renders service to active duty military members and family, including disaster relief for victims in the community.

SUMMARY

Chapter I of the research study dealt with the problem of inservice training needs for the American Red Cross emergency services after hour duty workers. Included in the chapter were statement of the problem, background and significance of the study, limitations, and assumptions. Definitions of the terms were within the study were also included.

The success of the research will depend on how well duty workers express their needs for inservice training in operational terms as the survey dictates. A brief description of the procedures used to gather the pertinent data is also provided in Chapter I.

In the following chapter, review of the literature pertaining to the problem was presented. Also included was

a chapter on the the methods and procedures used to collect data. The final chapters reported the findings and presented analysis of the same. A summary of the research study was given and conclusions were sighted based on the collected data.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The problem of this study was to determine inservice training needs for after hours duty workers at the American Red Cross. The literature reviewed contains the following sections: (1) existing inservice training needs, (2) needs analysis, (3) and setting goals and objectives..

EXISTING INSERVICE TRAINING

The Red Cross adapts to the needs of the general public. The needs of military personnel are included. Training is implemented in several departments. The purpose of these training activities is to equip the employee with the skills and knowledge required to better service the needs of others.

Most of the training available for duty workers is in disaster services. There are five basic courses given.. and they are as follows: (1) Introduction to Disaster, (2) Family Service Assistance, (3) Mass Care, (4) Shelter Management, and (5) Damagement Assessment.

The Introduction to Disaster course is a beginner's course. It exposes the trainee to the concept of disaster. Disaster is defined and an overview of the entire operation is included. First principles of the functions of disaster are laid in the introduction course. After successfully completing the introduction course, the trainee is ready to move on to the Family Service Assistance course.

The Family Service Assistance course prepares the trainee

to assist individuals and families who suffer from the effects of a disaster. The Red Cross is responsible for working with these individuals and families to address their disaster caused needs (Disaster Services, ARC 3045, March 1986, p. 3).

Next, there is the Mass Care Course. This course will equip the trainee to provide for the basic needs of disaster victims in a shelter situation. The shelters are mostly schools, churches and auditoriums. The victims obtain food and medical care until such is not needed (Disaster Services, ARC 3031, April 1987, p. 9).

Closely related to Mass Care is the course on Shelter Management. Shelter Management presents instructions in shelter supervision and administration.

Lastly, the Damage Assessment course presents principles in survey activities. It involves overall assessment of the extent of damage after a disaster strikes. Damage Assessment directs the trainee in gathering, analyzing, and distributing detailed information on the precise nature and degree of disaster damage (Disaster Services, ARC 3029, February, 1988, p. 5).

Disaster courses are optional for duty workers. However, management highly recommends duty workers to be trained for disaster services. The annual performance evaluation for duty workers reflect whether each worker has taken any disaster courses. If so, points are given for merit.

Upon completion of the disaster courses, duty workers

become eligible to apply for certification to travel to disasters around the country when needed.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The first and most important step in assessing the needs for any training is to conduct a needs analysis. The training needs must be carefully researched. Professionally, needs analysis is referred to as front end analysis, which means, why bother to go ahead with training and development unless there is insurance that there is an agreed on problem, and the training is the appropriate response to the problem (Legree and Flynn, 1961, p. 19). Needs analysis will ensure that the right program and services will be offered at the right time.

One author cautions that the word needs has several possible meanings. He stresses that everyone involved must work with the same definition (Nadler, 1985, p. 17).

There are other variables involved, such as perceived needs and real needs. A case in referenced, a journal article revealed that a certain company decided to design and implement a management skills improvement program. There was quite a bit of controversy over what to name the need, which was already vague. A real need for training could arise out of the controversy, and that is to design training on how to define what a need is. Labels that were given to the needs in the controversy ranged from management development, to just plain development in Human Resource

training. The results revealed two different sets of needs and approaches to meet the needs (Hiebert and Smallwood, 1987, p. 15).

In determining needs, there are three categories of needs to be dealt with. They are organization needs, operations needs, and individuals needs. The needs of each do not have to conflict. They must be met if any performance change is to be helpful (Nadler 1985, p. 17).

Operation analysis and individuals analysis are the frame of references from which duty workers determine the need for training. Operation analysis focuses on the task or job, regardless of the employee performing the job. It includes the determination of what the employee must do, and the specific behavior required to effectively perform the job. The focus is on task or job (Thayer and McGhee, 1961, p. 59).

The purpose of operation analysis is to determine just what an employee must be taught in order to perform the task or job, so that he may maximize the contributions to the attainment of organizational goals (Chapados, Rentfrow, and Hocheiser, 1987, p. 64).

Individual needs are closely tied to the organization needs. In organization analysis, the concern includes

discovering individuals who are in need of training and concerns for specific training needs (Thayer and Mcghee, 1961, p. 36).

Individuals analysis of needs is determined by measuring what employees know and can do, and compare that to what employees ought to know or were supposed to be able to perform. Training should provide employees with skills they lack to do their jobs. Through needs analysis both performance gaps and training needs can be identified (Graham and Mihal, 1986, p. 38).

To determine the needs of individuals, an assessment of the individual's performance is involved. Observation and tests scores are included in assessment. The assessment will indicate which skills are needed for each individual. The importance of skill in terms of job performance and future jobs, need to be obtained (Newstrom, 1987, p. 52). The assessment determines what the individual needs to know and how important it is to the company that the individual knows it.

SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After assessing the needs for training, goals and objectives are to be formulated. The terms goal and objective are used interchangeably; however, these terms have different meanings.

One definition of a goal which distinguishes it from objectives is that a goal is a result or achievement, an end.

or an objective. An objective is something worked towards; in essence, it is a goal (Clegg, 1987, p. 65).

Every aspect of any training activity is to be designed with evaluation in mind; therefore, training objectives must be programmed to specify behavioral change (Clegg, 1987, p. 65).

It is crucial that the end result of training be measureable and observable. Behavioral objectives can determine program content. Thusly, the more specific content and lesson plans are relative to training objectives, the greater the likelihood that trainees will reach those objectives (Chapados, Rentfrow and Hochleiser, 1987, p. 64). Therefore, constructive, meaningful, well written goals and concise learning objectives will describe what a successful learner is able to do after receiving training.

Learning objectives typically originate from two sources. Firstly, they are developed based on job analysis information that carefully examines job tasks. Nextly, they are derived from new methods or procedures introduced into the work place. It is important to carefully identify new tasks methods, knowledge, skills and abilities to use them, for creating learning objectives (Smith and Merchant, 1990, p. 66). The literature reveals that there are several categories of learning objectives. One of the resources identified objectives according to levels of skills. The first level of skills objectives is more applicable to the problem

of the study. These objectives provide detailed knowledge and the correct procedures for accomplishing the tasks. This level requires that the learning objectives contain progression steps, permitting the trainee and the employee to change attitudes, knowledge, or skills on a step-by-step basis. The behavioral change that is expected to take place at each step should be written into the objectives for evaluation purposes. Expectation for performance should be considered to determine objectives (Donaldson and Scannell, 1986, p. 34).

SUMMARY

As shown in the literature reviewed, research and documentation have been analyzed in determining the existence of inservice training for duty workers at the Red Cross. It was revealed that most of the inservice training in effect were as follows: Introduction to Disaster; Family Service Assistance; Mass Care; Shelter Management; and Damage Assessment.

Chapter II also presented researched material on the process of determining needs for training. Firstly, there must be a needs analysis. There are three categories of needs analysis, and they are operation, individuals and organizations needs. All categories overlap to accomplish set goals. Setting objectives is very important because evaluation is based on objectives being met.

The objectives are to be stated in behavioral form; for example, as results of the training, the trainee will be able to do word processing. The evaluation will reflect that the trainee has successfully completed the training and is now able to do word processing. Behavioral objectives are to be clear and concise before training can be effectively implemented.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In this chapter the methods and procedures for gathering data are presented and outlined. The chapter contains a discussion of the design and procedures used for the collection and treatment of the data. The four headings are as follows: (1) population, (2) instrument, (3) data processing, and (4) summary.

POPULATION

The population consists of the after hours emergency duty workers at the Tidewater Chapter of the American Red Cross. The population was comprised of eight duty workers.

INSTRUMENT

A survey instrument was used for the study. The survey was based on the objectives of the study, which were:

- (1) What are the most requested emergency needs?
- (2) What are the problems duty workers encounter in addressing these needs?
- (3) What are the recommended inservice training topics for after hours duty workers?

The survey was given to the duty workers at the beginning or end of their shift. Instruction was given on how to properly fill out the survey. The researcher was available to answer questions about the contents of the survey. Duty workers were asked to complete the form within three days.

A copy of the survey is found in the Appendix.

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

The survey responses were sorted. Each item was calculated and recorded to the duty workers' responses. The responses were categorized into criteria set by the researcher for purposes of data analysis.

SUMMARY

Chapter III discussed the design and procedure used for collection and treatment of data. The population, instrument and data collection procedure were also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The problem of this study was to determine inservice training needs of the American Red Cross after hours duty workers. Duty workers were given a survey. The questions on the survey left space for duty workers to fill in five responses.

EMERGENCY NEEDS

Question 1 was what are the most requested emergency needs. The responses for this were similiar. Duty workers concurred with what they felt to be the most requested services.

They responded 100 percent that notifying service men of illness and death in the family were the most requested services they provided.

Request for financial assistance was another popular request. The wives of service men call duty workers requesting funds because they have not received their allotment. Also, service men may request financial assistance when they go on emergency leave due to a crisis in their family. This response was identified by 88 % of the duty workers.

Health and welfare is a service offered by Red Cross. When the family has not heard from the service man in at least a month, the Red Cross will send a telegram to military commands requesting to know the status of the service men.

Sixty three percent of duty workers selected health and welfare as a major service provided.

Request for food and lodging were chosen by 50 percent of the population. Also 50 % of the duty workers chose assistance to fire victims as the most requested emergency service.

Next, birth announcements were chosen by 38 % of the duty workers as a requested service. The American Red Cross sends birth announcements to service men while they are deployed.

Only one person selected alive and well inquiry as a most requested service. Thirteen percent of the duty workers identified this response. An alive and well statement is sent to the service man when a wife is closing on a new home. The lawyers need to know that the service man is actually alive and well and on full duty and that he has not provoked the power of attorney that his wife has. Table 1 illustrates the most requested emergency service provided by duty workers.

MAJOR PROBLEMS

Question 2 dealt with major problems duty workers experienced in addressing the needs mentioned in Question 1. In ranking order, abusive clients was the number one response; seventy five percent agreed that the heavy case load was a major problem.

There were three other entries to which duty workers gave a 25 percent response rate. These were the items: (1) not enough time to work on cases, (2) stressful atmosphere,

TABLE 1
SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 1

The most requested emergency service needs

| Rank Order | Responses | Number of respondents | Percent |
|------------|---|-----------------------|---------|
| 1 | Notify the service man of illness in family | 8 | 100 % |
| 2 | Notify the service man of death in family | 8 | 100 % |
| 3 | Request for financial assistance | 7 | 88 % |
| 4 | Health and welfare inquiry | 5 | 63 % |
| 5 | Food and lodging requests | 4 | 50 % |
| 6 | Assisting fire victims | 4 | 50 % |
| 7 | Notify service man of birth | 3 | 38 % |
| 8 | Alive and well requests | 1 | 13 % |

TABLE 2
SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 2

MAJOR PROBLEMS IN ADDRESSING NEEDS

| Rank Order | Responses | Number of Respondents | Percent |
|------------|---|-----------------------|---------|
| 1 | Abusive clients | 6 | 75 % |
| 2 | Clients don't have accurate information | 4 | 50 % |
| 3 | High volumn of cases | 4 | 50 % |
| 4 | Stressful atmosphere | 2 | 25 % |
| 5 | Poor employee and management relations | 2 | 25 % |

(3) poor employee and management relations. Table 2 provides an illustration of these results.

SUMMARY

The survey was completed by eight duty workers. The results reported in this chapter were a collection of the data developed by the survey. In this chapter, the statistical information obtained from the study was tabulated and recorded. Tables were provided for each question. The tables showed the number of respondents who had common responses.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the inservice training needs of the American Red Cross after hours duty workers. This study is significant, especially for those duty workers who are very concerned about the quality of service given to clients.

To determine the inservice training needs, a survey was designed to answer three research goals which were: what are the most requested emergency needs; what are the problems duty workers encounter in addressing these needs; and what are the recommended inservice training topics for after hours duty workers?

The survey was administered to eight duty workers. They were given a week to complete the survey. The researcher was available to answer questions about the survey. Completed surveys were deposited in the researcher's mail box, and then were analyzed.

CONCLUSIONS

In this section conclusions from research goals one and two will be drawn. The third research goal regarding recommendation of inservice training topics will be

dealt with in the recommendation section of this chapter.

Questions one and two were designed to help answer the goals. For the first question, listing the most requested emergency service needs encountered at work, responses were most similar to question number two. In question one, duty workers concurred that the top requested emergency needs were (1) notifying the service man of illness and death in the service man's family, (2) birth announcements and (3) alive and well requests.

For question number 2, eight duty workers concurred that the major problem in addressing needs were dealing with abusive and irate clients. The least problem identified was that there was not enough time to service individual cases.

Overall, duty workers work under a significant amount of pressure and stress. There were significant problems that were disruptive to the quality of services provided.

Inservice training may not address every need, or solve every problem, but it can be a start toward improved service and communications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the survey and the conclusions drawn, there are recommendations being proposed to improve the situation. The problems duty workers encounter were real, tasks related and job related. Problems can cause performance gaps between what is required of the worker and what the worker actually does.

Inservice training in some areas can be implemented for possible change. One of the most serious conditions on the job is high stress. There is not much that can be done about job stress due to the nature of the job itself. However, training in stress management can help duty workers channel that stress through positive means.

Duty workers identified abusive clients as a major problem. It is very difficult to service a client that has a negative and poor attitude. A rude and disrespectful client can ruin the whole shift for the worker. The other perspective is that the worker does not perform his or her best for such clients. A seminar on how to handle difficult clients could be quite helpful in training the workers how not to internalize other's abuse.

Because of the large number of cases being handled, it is difficult to complete the work in the time allotted. Often, duty workers find themselves having to work one and two hours past their shift to finish their cases. To make it more difficult, co-workers will not always offer assistance when their work is caught up. Training in the area of team building is needed to rectify this problem.

In conclusion, it is recommended that duty workers be exposed to updated information on the principles and ethnics of social work and human services delivery.

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APPENDIX

TRAINING NEEDS FOR AFTER DUTY WORKERS

PURPOSE: The purpose of this survey is to determine the inservice training needs of the American Red Cross After Hours?Duty/Workers.

DIRECTIONS: Answer each question by filling in the blanks provided.

QUESTIONS:

1. List the most requested emergency service needs you encounter at work.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. What are the major problems you encounter in addressing these needs?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____