

Transcript of Evacuation Decision Making for Afterschool Programs

Speaker 1: Hello and welcome to the Evacuation Decision Making for Afterschool Programs. This program is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and 21st Century Learning Programs. We're going to talk today about several items necessary for evacuation decision making to incorporate in your pre-planning of your afterschool program emergency plan. Specifically today, we've listed a couple objectives for you. We want to identify viable protective actions that your afterschool program should have in place to protect your students and staff members. We want to identify the decision-making process, the process that will be used in doing the decisions to enact protective actions.

We'll explain planning for evacuations using algorithms, or flowcharts, and the benefits of using those algorithms. We'll also identify group decision emergency situations where it might be more beneficial to use a group of people, a small group, or a large group to make decision-making, rather than have one individual try to make those decisions.

As we begin, we're gonna look at a chart here that has a bunch of protective actions for educational programs. Both, before school, school K through 12 programs, and afterschool programs can use the same chart. Typically, we break those into scheduling options and movement of student options. Scheduling options are very clearly where we'll cancel school for the day or we'll cancel the afterschool program. We might have a delay in starting the afterschool program, or we might dismiss early from the program and have all parents come and pick their children up because of a situation that occurs. An option that is not considered very often, even by a lot of school districts, is extending the program. When something is happening, most notably weather emergencies where it is more dangerous to release students at their regular dismissal time, we may wish to extend our programming hours to provide the safety of a secure building, rather than to have parents and children being taken out by car into a dangerous situation.

And then we have the movement of student situations. We're all very familiar with the evacuation processes we do for fire drills. We might evacuate partially within our building for small events. Generally, the fire drill, we're evacuating outside our building, but somewhere on our program campus for a fire drill. We can have situations where we need to evacuate off campus. One of the planning needs that we'll talk about later on is having a location pre-identified that you can move to in case your campus is totally unable to be used during the emergency or immediately after the emergency.

Reverse evacuation, one that's not commonly used in a lot of programs but should be is where we teach our staff how to evacuate our students back into the building from outside in case there's a dangerous situation outside. If children are out on the playground or outside learning activities, staff members should know how to rapidly get them back into the building if a dangerous situation could be ranging from a stray dog or wild animal on campus up to a shooting situation that might be occurring in the neighborhood.

The next item we talk about is drop, cover, and hold. This should be in place in all of your programs. We use this for tornadoes, to a certain extent where the tornado suddenly comes up and we need to move our students, or most commonly, it's used for earthquakes. All of this program is very specific to Pennsylvania. I'm sure we have some outside of Pennsylvania folks that will be listening to this program. Earthquakes do occur in all states. Magnitude and scope vary, but Pennsylvania does have an earthquake history. Drop, cover, and hold should be part of your planning for ground shaking or earthquake situations.

Lastly in the center column as we'll talk about shelter in place, shelter in place is typically used when there's a hazardous materials event that occurs outside of your building. It could be a railway spill. It could be a truck that spills chemicals on the road in front of your school. But we should have shelter in place procedures that we know how to move our students inside, turn off the heating ventilation and air conditioning units, shut the doors and windows, and not allow people in and out of our doors until the emergency responders have told us it is safe.

On the right column, this is more for serious events that are occurring spontaneously. I'm actually gonna start from the bottom up on the right column, room clear. This is probably the least serious and most likely to happen. This is where you may have a student that goes into a medical emergency. It could be a seizure or other type event in a classroom. You don't want a lot of small children standing around watching that child seize, so you will instruct those students to leave one room and go to another room. That's a room clear. Again, you probably practice this in your programs all the time, but you might not have given it the name. We use the term "room clear" to identify moving students from one room to another due to an emergency. It could be a medical emergency. It could be emotional support issue. It could be a parent that makes their way into the program unexpectedly and creates a problem.

Hit the deck is probably used more for urban schools where they have a history or a neighborhood history of drive by shootings. Many programs in schools across Pennsylvania do not have this as part of their procedures because they don't see a real issue with that, but many of our urban centers have experienced drive by shootings or shootings in the neighborhood. Teaching the children to hit the deck when shots are fired is a good life skill practice for them if they're living in those type of environments.

As we look at the top three in the right column, we have active shooter, lockdown, and restricted movement. The Center for Safe Schools does differentiate categories instead of just lumping everything together as a lockdown. Many of you probably already look at a lockdown procedure and you use it for a wide range of issues. That can be concerning to the parents. It can be concerning to students that are of an age where they understand what's going on. We really recommend that you look at trying to separate your procedures into three separate areas. Restricted movement is the least restrictive. This is something we do, maybe, if we have a medical emergency and we don't want students changing from one room to another. This is something that schools can do during a school day if they bring a drug canine in and they don't want students in the hallways, but is the least restrictive of all these events. We're continuing our programming as normal. We're simply limiting the students from leaving the particular

classroom or area that they're in during the time of the emergency or situation that's occurring.

Lockdown is a little bit more severe. A lockdown in the center there is for those intruders that come in that are not actively engaged in shooting or creating problems for the school. We need to have lockdown processes in place when we do have unauthorized visitors come in. We may also use a lockdown for an exterior threat. Maybe the police are doing something in the neighborhood, chasing a bad guy that has been involved in a robbery, so we might lock our building down, but we don't have to necessarily put our children into a corner and have them laying low the way we would with an active shooter.

Active shooter is the most severe situation. This is where a person is in your facility, your afterschool program, actually engaged in attempting to kill or shoot people. In this scenario, teachers and staff members need to be given some options, and we'll talk a little bit more about that later on. But generally across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania in this country since Sandy Hook, it's been very, very well discussed to have options of escape or lock, cover, and fortify and then defend as a last option where a person is actually confronted by the shooter. They need to take steps to defend themselves and fight or take counter measures against the intruder. These are all scenarios that should be talked about with your staff ahead of time, and it becomes very important, particularly with the flight or escape option that we understand that teachers and other staff members can not just abandon their children. They must be able to take their children with them to a safe area.

Evacuation decision-making is not something that is very difficult if we practice and we learn it. We have a graphic in front of you right now that talks about we should be anticipating the need to evacuate the afterschool program. We look at that through the monthly fire drill as you're conducting it and understand that we may have situations that we have to evacuate. Most importantly, though, is the recognition of when to evacuate. All staff members need to be trained in an evacuation process. They need to understand when and where to activate alarms and other procedures to evacuate students.

Thirdly, after an event occurs, we evaluate. Is the procedures we've just taken sufficient? Do we need to take additional steps to protect our children? It's an ongoing situation, all awareness of what's occurring that must take place by not only the program managers that are on site supervising, but also every staff member. Control is important in that we need to make sure we have good attendance, we have have good accountability, good supervision of our students. Staff members need to be accountable back to program managers. And then lastly, confirming what we're doing works. Part of the evaluation process, we're gonna say yes this is working. We want to make sure we do what's good for this process.

When we look at decision-making to evacuate, problem solving and decision-making go hand in hand. Problem solving is a set of activities where decision-making is a mechanism. Decision-making is part of problem solving. Every time we are confronted with a situation in our afterschool program, whether it's an emergency situation or a day-to-day situation, we are making decisions as part of problem solving. Decision-making

occurs at every step of the problem solving process. We want to keep in mind that pre-determined plans are good. We certainly have a need for plans ahead of time, but good decision-making is part of solving the problem we're confronted with when an emergency occurs.

Sometimes, we have obstacles to these decision-making goals that we have. A lot of folks in education and a lot of you listening to this broadcast probably really want details all the time. Unfortunately, in emergency situations, details are lacking quite often. In emergency situations, we are faced with a situation of incomplete facts. We know part of the situation. We know there might be smoke in our building, but we're not yet sure at this point in time where the smoke is coming from. We've gotta start making decisions prior to having all the facts and all the details. That certainly creates some angst for a lot of people because of the uncertainty, uncertainty of what's occurring, uncertain of whether or not the actions you take are the proper actions. We need to accept that. I had a person tell me one time that emergency management is making critical decisions with incomplete information in a compressed time period. Certainly, that's not what we like to do. We like to make decisions after we have all the facts.

Fourthly, we have trade offs. Unfortunately, we may need to trade off saving some supplies or saving some equipment for saving lives. Obviously, life safety is much more important than saving buildings. So, there are trade offs that happen in emergency management. Most of the afterschool programs have a relatively small number of students compared to day time K through 12 programs. You are able to supervise your students much closer, in most cases, so you don't have the trade off factor the way a large school might have, but understand that there are some trade offs that might occur there.

Next, we have cognitive and effective needs. We need to look at the big picture as emergency managers, the program managers of the afterschool program becomes an emergency responder prior to police, fire, and EMS arriving. You may remain in emergency response mode even after those services come. We need to really look cognitively at what's going on, thinking with our brains, not with our hearts. That's a very tough decision. I do a lot of training with EMS personnel across the region where I live. One of the biggest decisions they have many times is whether or not a patient goes first or a patient goes further down the list in a mass casualty. They need to balance thinking with their brains and not with their hearts. You're gonna need to do those things.

Lastly, we talk about questions. Questions are good during an emergency. We want to question as much as we can within the scope of the emergency, but one of the things that we need to make sure we understand is staff members can not question our direction. When we give an order to evacuate or we give an order to shelter in place or lockdown, our staff member really needs to understand that it's important that they follow those directions immediately because time can be the essence in an emergency situation.

Some of you out there are probably not very skilled at emergency decision-making, and that's quite all right. The majority of folks involved in education, the majority of folks involved in business and industry that have to do emergency decision-making is part of

their job generally don't do that on a regular basis. Understand that the decision-making you do as a person in charge of or as a staff member at your afterschool program, you can learn good decision-making. But in order to learn it, you then need to continue to practice it and practice that decision-making.

The best way to do that is through mock scenarios, drills, and exercises. It can be as simple as a staff meeting where you sit down and discuss a what if scenario what if we have a tornado 15 minutes before our normal dismissal time? What if we have a person that's being chased by the police in the neighborhood during our peak parent pick up time? Those are all scenarios that you can learn and work with decision-making, but drills and exercises can be very, very important and beneficial to you.

As you begin your emergency planning, and I will presume at this point that most of you have already worked with the basic template provided by the Department of Education in 21st Century to start working on school programs. Understand that we plan with certain assumptions in place, things that we take for granted that will be occurring or will not be occurring during the emergency. What we need to understand is no approach to evacuation is ever completely 100% safe. Any time we're moving students and we're moving students during an emergency, we have a potential of secondary injuries as simple as the slips, trips, and falls, or it can be as simple as the fact that as we're going outside, a student now is stung by a bee and has an allergic reaction. No approach, no evacuation is ever totally liability free. We need to keep that in mind that many times, the evacuation could create a greater danger than keeping students inside the building with a situation.

I will take a situation occurred in central Pennsylvania about two years ago. There was an alcohol fire in a school situation. The school evacuated at the immediate vicinity of that fire because it was put out very quickly, but they chose to keep the students in that school building rather than take them outside during cold weather situation. It was probably a very good decision on the part of that district. I certainly support their decision to keep those many hundreds of students inside, rather than take them outside without coats during cold weather. They didn't need to be removed to the outside because the fire was out, very little soot, very little smoke, and they were immediately evacuated from the general area so it worked very well.

The other thing that you need to keep in mind with your program is sometimes over-evacuation can be as bad as under-evacuation. I'll take the situation of bomb threats that typically occur in school and afterschool programs during the spring warmer weather season. Districts that tend to evacuate immediately on bomb threats without determining whether they're credible or not, many times, are played with multiple bomb threats within a short period of time. Sometimes, over-evacuation can be as detrimental as under-evacuation. That's where good decision-making really does come in to place based upon all available facts.

Lastly, one of the planning assumptions that we always take into account is public opinion. Public opinion will never be unanimous. Regardless of what you do in your program, you will have certain parents and certain members of the community questioning what you do. But the whole concept of planning and preparing and good

decision-making is we're making the decision in the best interest of our students and staff. That decision hopefully is beneficial to what we do and has the support of the majority of our parents involved in our program.

Some other things that we want to talk about in planning that you should be looking at is identify what are your evacuation drivers, and document those in your plan. For instance, one school district I work with in the very northern part of Pennsylvania has indicated that they don't do delays of their schedule or delayed start to the schedule for cold weather, simply based upon the fact that they don't believe in an hour or two hours, the temperature sufficiently rises during extremely cold weather, and it's beneficial for their students to miss two hours of school. They have documented in their plan when and how they do delays for weather, keeping in mind that the first cold weather of the season, a lot of schools and a lot of afterschool programs will cancel recesses and do other things, but it's just the start of cold weather.

Another decision-making driver that many times districts will do is when do we send students outside? We're gonna do an evacuation and the temperature is seven degrees outside, we might want to think that rather than taking those students outside, moving those students to a building close by, or calling in buses, or vans, or putting those students in even personal vehicles and vans to keep them warm rather than standing on the playground or the parking lot.

Secondly, manage decision-making. We'll talk a little bit more about managing decision-making in a little bit, but once you make a decision, unless something very critical happens, stick with your decision. It's more important to manage the decision and it creates a lot of concern and a lot of bad publicity if your program keeps changing their mind about what to do. We're gonna move the kids outside. Now we're gonna keep them inside. Now we're gonna move them outside. Let's put them back inside, really makes it look like you don't know what you're doing and do not have your act together. Once you make a decision, unless something major occurs that that decision is no longer valid, it's best to make the decision, stick with the decision, and manage that decision.

Thirdly, look at algorithms or flow charts. We'll give you some examples here in a little bit as part of the PowerPoint, but certainly flow charts can be beneficial in aiding in decision-making. Do not allow the chart to do the decision-making. There's still a human element involved here, but we're using the chart to guide us in decision-making.

Lastly, revisit your communication strategies and tools. It's very important that we have good internal communications with our staff and our students in our programming so that they understand what's expected of them during the emergency, but we also need to have those communication strategies and tools with our responders and with our parents during and after the emergency.

Those are all things that you want to look at as part of your planning to really make sure that when you have evacuation decision making, you identify key elements or drivers. Some of you may know these as tipping points where it's gonna create a decision. Manage your decisions once they're made. Stick with it. Manage it. Use your flow charts.

Use your algorithms, but use them as a tool. Do not let them replace your human thinking about the situation. Certainly, revisit your communication strategies and tools.

I want to talk a little bit about decision-making landscape, and you have a chart in front of you right now where two things really come in to play with decision-making. One is time. I mentioned earlier, emergency management is many times making critical decisions in a compressed time period. Things have to happen. Things have to happen quickly with the process. But unfortunately, the quicker we make decisions, the more spontaneous those decisions are. Many times, they can hurt us. Any time we can take that deep breath, think the situation out and give ourselves a little bit more time to become more methodical than spontaneous is certainly good to do.

The other driver for decision-making is emotion. I mentioned this earlier in talking with EMS providers and training them in triage. We try to think with our brain and not with our heart because when emotions are high, we're thinking of humanistic type drivers and we're thinking very much on the personal level of people. We want to try to lower the emotions so we're making decisions based upon logic and fact. Again, think with the brain, not with the heart. We look at this chart, ideally, what we want to do is we want to have low emotion. We don't want to avoid emotion. It's certainly an important human element. It keeps us together, but we don't want emotion to get in our way of making decision-making. Whenever possible, we want to try to take as much time as we can to make the decision, but it has to be a timely decision.

As a former police officer, I had a supervisor tell me one time that a good decision made at the right time is always better than a great decision made too late. We want to keep time and emotion in check as we work with decision-making.

Let's take a look now at decision-making in a flow chart that we have for you. On the next four slides, actually, we'll talk about that. Again, I don't expect you to be referring to this flow chart during an emergency, but we want to talk about the processes here and talk with your staff about the processes in an emergency. Let's just use the example of a small trashcan fire as part of the decision-making process to look at this flow chart. Obviously, the most important part in the process here is for someone to recognize and report that small trashcan fire. If we ignore that, if staff members ignore that, that small trashcan fire will do one of two things. It will burn itself, or more than likely, it will increase in size and set other objects on fire creating a much larger event. The most important thing we can do in any emergency is recognize and report the emergency.

Now depending upon the type of situation, persons may go directly to pulling the fire alarm, or activating an intruder lockdown through a PA system, or they might seek guidance and direction from staff that is superior to them in your program. In the case of the fire, obviously, we want the staff to immediately pull the fire alarm. That fire alarm being pulled, sounding the alarm, the strobe lights being activated relays the message to all the occupants in the building that something is going on. That message is now relayed and there should be an evacuation decision. Each person should make the decision to evacuate. Evacuate to a safe area and then follow your process that is turning this over.

We might have other situations that we're not quite sure of, that the alarm would not be pulled. That could be a situation where we have a student that maybe has suffered an injury. In that particular case, we recognize the student has an emergency. We recognize it's not necessarily life-threatening, but we will seek instruction from a superior about do they want us to call 911? Should we call the parent? Should we just provide first aid? It runs a parallel track after recognize and report. But whether we pull a fire alarm, or announce for a lockdown, or seek additional information, we're gonna relay a message to those people that have to be notified.

Decision-making to evacuate, if we're in a safe area, we don't evacuate. If we're in a dangerous area, we need to evacuate. Then at some point in time, we turn it over to either a superior person within the afterschool program, or we might turn the situation over to a fire EMS police responder in that situation.

It's important that any time we turn a situation over, first step is to provide sufficient incident information, whether it's to the 911 call or relaying it to an ambulance, or whether it's directly to a fire officer or a police officer on the scene at the afterschool program. We want to provide as much information as we can regarding the event. We may need to make additional decisions in addition to pulling the fire alarm. We want to look at the whether or not we have reasonable time to make decisions. If we have the amount of time to make a decision, then we might want to look at the fact of saying, okay, let's talk to people and other people, and get them involved. A reasonable amount of time to make decisions, yes, we have reasonable time, we might make an individual decision, or we might make a group decision.

Does the leader of the afterschool program, the person in charge at that point in time, have experience to make a good decision? If they do, we continue with individual decision-making. If they don't, they may need to use group decision-making, reaching out to other people, maybe calling a program manager at a different site, maybe talking to a home office or agency. We look at the process and we always have to look at that time factor when decisions are made. But most of the time, if we can make a group decision-making, it's usually a better decision than in individual decision-making.

We have provided in the handout material steps three through nine with some additional questions. If the majority of these questions are answered yes, then certainly, you can go with group decision-making. If the majority of these questions are no, then you're gonna want to look at making an individual decision and probably making that in a fairly quick manner.

The empowerment to evacuate or take whatever protective action is necessary is really set up in three levels. Your agency, your school, your organization that runs your afterschool program probably has policy out there. Those policies generally establish objectives. Most simply put, policy for schools and afterschool programs is keep our students and staff safe. The policy is probably a lot more verbose than that, but we're certainly talking about the fact that we want to keep everyone in our building safe, students, staff, and visitors.

Strategies come down either at a school district level or the agency organization level. They generally involve what we call standard operating guidelines, or procedure manuals, or staff manuals. It's giving us a general strategy of what to file. The most common is in case of fire, evacuate a building. In case of intruder, lock down building. Those are general strategies. But what is absolutely important for each program location is to have your individual program location emergency plan that contains the specific tactics, those things you're going to do at your building to protect students and staff.

If I can go back to the fact that in the general objective, we will say we will have severe weather procedures in place. The strategy, the staff manual, the procedure, the guideline will say generally in a tornado severe weather emergency, we're gonna drop, cover, and hold in predesignated safe areas of the building. That's the general strategy that works across 4 or 5, 25 building, but each of your building needs to have, in your building plan, this specific tactic that says room 101 during a tornado situation will take cover under their desks. Room 103 might have a lot of glass in their building and you might be moving that classroom into the hallway. Room 107 may have a very bad location in the building, very large expansive room, so you're gonna move them away from glass and expansive room covers into a restroom area. Each of your building plans needs to list specific tactics for the major emergencies that are involved. In the 21st Century template that's posted on both the 21st Century and PDE website, that template talks about all the major protective actions of how to handle those and fill those in.

One of the things that we need to look at is best practice. In fire situations, it is obviously a best practice for a staff member to immediately pull fire alarm to alert all occupants in the building of the fire, and then make notification to an office or make notification to the 911 center. Those things that happen for 50+ years, we know how to handle those, but other events tend to be a little bit more difficult. In many emergency plans I've looked at for all events other than fire, the first step is call the office. Notify the program director. Notify the supervisor on site. Notify the lead teacher or staff member. Those can be okay in situations that are not time sensitive. When we have time sensitive issues, we need to empower staff to act.

Here's a picture of an album cover. Many of you probably remember the 33 and a third albums that are out there. Those of you of the younger generation may need to ask your parents what I'm talking about, but this was an album that was put out many years ago, called Power to the People. One of the things we need to keep in mind is, we need to empower staff members in critical emergencies to take the first steps. The first 30 seconds of an emergency can be very critical. If a staff member is observing an irate parent with a gun walking towards the school, they should be empowered to lock the facility down. Your afterschool program staff member should be empowered to do certain actions that are critical. That's easier said than done. Administrators don't like to relinquish that authority sometimes. They're afraid of bad decision-making. But if we train our staff, it's important.

An example I will use is fire spreads at a rate of doubling in every minute it burns uncontrolled. I used the illustration earlier of a small trashcan fire. If I take no action, that fire will burn twice as much area every minute it goes unchecked. With controlled gun

fire, acquired target gun fire, a shooter can actually fire an excess of 45 shells per minute, 45 bullets per minute. That's a huge number of potential injuries.

So, it's important that you think about, in your program, empowering staff members to call for protective actions other than fire drills. I don't want to focus just on the shooter. It can be the wild dog on campus. It can be the irate parent that's in the office area. Staff members should be empowered to make critical decisions in time sensitive matters.

As we look at decision-making, we mentioned earlier that sometimes group decision-making might be preferable to individual decision-making, particularly for folks that don't have a lot of training and experience. We need to look at group decision-making and look at the leadership functions. Do you have a good leadership cadre at your afterschool program, or are you only having one real leader there? We look at the leadership in our staff members.

It's important that we avoid groupthink. Groupthink is a term that's been coined where we all get together, and we're all thinking alike, and so we enact the process without really having good problem solving or decision-making. We look at groupthink and we say, we all agree on this, but is it really the best decision? Sometimes, it's nice to have a person who is not the person we're thinking along the lines with all of us.

Here's a quote that I love to use when we do emergency planning from General Patton, a World War II fame. General Patton often told his officers in staff meetings, "If we're all thinking alike, one of us isn't thinking." So sometimes, it's good to have that person working with our group decision-making processes thinking outside of the box to coin the old cliché. We're thinking different than the rest of us. We don't want somebody that's totally negative. Likewise, we don't want somebody that is just super positive and it's all rosy and going to turn out nice. We need critical thinkers involved in a decision-making process.

When we look at decision-makers, we understand that many times, decision-maker is an individual. But sometimes, we can make decisions based upon consultation. That can be as simple as your program manager on site or your senior teacher on site calls back to the office and talks to somebody, confers with them, and after that consultation, makes a decision to enact a certain protective action. Group decision-making certainly can be preferable when time allows for it, when I can bring three or four key people together. I can bring my police chief, my fire chief in and talk about the emergency situation. That many times happens in a bomb threat scenario where we've got a generic, there's a bomb going to go off in the building. Typically, we don't evacuate right away. We'll bring in police, fire, EMS, and we'll talk to some of those people or all of those people and get a decision-making based upon good group thinking.

Likewise, we have delegation. Some folks that they're very good program managers. Some folks that are excellent educational leaders in schools just don't have the good ability to function during an emergency situation. Many years ago, I met a superintendent who was just a phenomenal education leader, but that superintendent says, "I don't do emergencies well." And so, they delegated decision-making in emergency to a subordinate staff member. Keep in mind is, you can do that in

emergencies. You can delegate someone who has more extensive medical training to run the medical emergency. You can delegate somebody that maybe has some previous experience in the emergency services to run some of these emergencies, but you as the program manager are still responsible for the decisions made by that person.

Many schools, many afterschool programs think because the police and fire folks show up in an emergency that they automatically will take charge. They will take charge of their particular fire, police, or EMS discipline. You are still responsible for the care of your children. You can not delegate care of your children to an emergency response organization, but you can delegate care of the children down to a lower level or a teacher level.

We just talked about the fact that the decision-maker can be an individual. It can be an individual making a decision after a consultation. It can be a group decision or you can delegate the decision to another person. Regardless of how we do that, we want to talk about the effective decision-maker, what attributes that they possess that makes them an effective person to make decisions. We really have two slides here that will talk about these with 10 characteristics or attributes of the effective decision-maker.

First is knowledge. You have to have knowledge of your physical facility. You have to have knowledge of your staff, knowledge of your students. Secondly is the initiative. The wallflower, the meek person typically does not do well in emergency decision-making. The person that's gonna make decisions in an emergency has to take the initiative to step out there, and make decisions, and get involved in the situation, but that does not mean they act alone. Good decision-makers seek advice. They seek advice in advance of the emergency whenever possible. If you are not sure in your afterschool program of where to put your children and staff members during a tornado, to be an effective decision-maker, you will reach out to your local emergency management folks. You will reach out to your local fire department folks and ask for their input.

Next, we have selectivity. Select your battles. Pick parts of your program that you're gonna work on, get them developed, and then work on other parts of the program. The 21st Century PD toolkit for afterschool programs is certainly a good starting point, but it doesn't mean you have to stop there. You might decide you want to improve upon that working with your local responders. It's a very comprehensive plan that's provided to you, but comprehensiveness is something that's important with decision-makers. If you feel that there's parts of that template that you want to expand upon, you certainly can do so, particularly with the cooperation of your emergency management folks and your emergency responders in your area.

The next of the couple attributes of a decision-maker we talk about deal with currency, flexibility, good judgment, risk taking, and self-knowledge. It's important that a good decision-maker remain current on best practices. As I work with schools and other agencies across the commonwealth the last couple years, I still find a lot of people that had training 10 or 15 years ago that are insisting that's the best way to do things, when in fact, best practice has changed considerably in many response areas across the last two years, let alone the last 10 or 15 years. You need to remain current with professional development, staying attuned with bulletins and publications that are poured out.

Flexibility is important. We mentioned earlier that emergency management is very compressed timeframe, generally under conditions you don't like, so you need to be flexible. Understand you may not have 100% of the data you would like to have, but be flexible with what you have. Be flexible with your staff in making moves that you need to make or on the fly. Good judgment is extremely important for a good decision-maker to be effective. We want to make decisions that are in the best interest to our students and staff all the time.

I had a superintendent tell me years ago that he tried to preface every decision he made by saying what's best for the students, and he really struggled with that because when it came to financial cuts and budget issues, he realized that he couldn't satisfy what's best for the students when he was trying to balance the bottom line. But, we really have to use good judgment for what's best for our students and staff in the emergency.

Understand that with emergency decision-making, there will be some calculated risk-taking. I mentioned the fire situation earlier where that school shows not to evacuate several hundred students, but keep them inside a building during cold weather. That was a certain amount of calculated risk-taking because they knew that was in the best interest of their children, but they also knew they would have extreme pressure from parents after that decision was made of why they did not evacuate the building. It worked out well for the district. I think the parents came to realize the district certainly did have their act together, but understand there sometimes are risk-taking is there, but it is calculated risk-taking based upon risk versus benefit. We have some risk, but the benefit of our decision is gonna overshadow or overwhelm the risk.

Lastly is self-knowledge. Really take a good hard look at yourself. Are you the person that should be managing the situation in your school. Look at your ability to perform and ask those questions, do I have enough knowledge, skill, and do I have the right attitude to perform well in an emergency?

We've talked a lot about making decision. Now let's talk a little bit about after the decision is made. Once a decision is made, stop worry about decision and start working on the plan. If you've made a decision to evacuate, you've made a decision to lockdown, make that decision, get it announced, get it out to your people, and then start working your plan and working on implementing and executing the decision you've made. For many people, decision managing is much more difficult than making the decision.

You can go from good to better by managing your decision. Several folks have talked about decision-making in private industry. One of the things they talk about is managing a decision correctly can make the difference between having good results and having great results. If you do any research in this area, managing decisions correctly, most people will tell you, is much more important than the actual decision. The decision to evacuate in a fire, the decision to lockdown during an intruder are relatively simple, but managing the outcome of those decisions can sometimes be a little bit more challenging for you.

Let's talk specifically now about evacuation and how to make sure we're doing that correctly. Safe evacuation really involves a couple of components, and you'll see this list

anywhere from three to seven, depending on whose material you're looking at, but we're gonna focus on four particular bullets of evacuation and safe evacuation now.

First is alerting. This can take the mode of a fire drill, this can be where we're locking down and moving students within a classroom, we're evacuating them from a risk area to a lower risk area. It can be in a tornado situation where we're moving them from a high-risk glass room or expansive gymnasium or auditorium to a much more secure area. First step is always alerting the people. We need to give that information out there, whether it's through a fire alarm, a PA announcement, whether it's for the bell system, whether it's for making announcements room to room personally. We need to alert the people. Every one of your protective actions needs to have in place procedures to alert.

Then we have the actual movement of students and staff. In the fire drill, we're moving them outside. A reverse evacuation, we're bringing them back inside. We need processes and plans in place. What routes do we use? What secondary or alternate routes do we use if we can't use our primary route? What if we need to do certain things? How are we gonna move our people in wheelchairs? How are we gonna take care of the person that's on crutches that's on the third floor? These are all concerns we have with safe evacuation that we need to address in our planning.

Sheltering during the emergency, whether the students are outside or inside, we need to shelter them and keep them safe. We think of evacuating on a fire drill or a bomb threat a nice spring day, we take the students outside. We think they're safe and secure, but are they getting sunburn? Are they being exposed to allergens that might create an asthma reaction? We need to look at the what ifs any time we move students and staff from their normal afterschool location to another location.

Lastly, support for recovery. If you have a traumatic event during your afterschool program, students and staff may be traumatized. Have in place some sort of counseling mode, the ability to reach out to counselors to take care of their students. Those of you that are associated with schools of the K through 12 setting, schools have this in place. Many times, they're called a post intervention or crisis recovery team. Those may be folks that you can use if you're school-based. If you're non-school-based, reach out to your local emergency managers. All counties in Pennsylvania have the ability to access crisis intervention teams, crisis diffusing teams, and what we call DCORT, or Disaster Crisis Outreach Teams. If you don't have that available through your agency or organization, talk to your local emergency managers. They can give you in advance of emergency points of contact you use for recovery in traumatic stress situations. Guaranteed, if you have a large scale event, whether it's a fire, explosion, shooter, students and staff will be traumatized. Depending on the situation, what percentage of those students and staff are traumatized may be different, but recovery is very important for you to work into your plan.

Understand responders' mentality and priorities as they come to your building. It's something that we should be looking at, as afterschool folks, to really look at the process of what is a priority in an emergency. Responders will use these four levels. First off is life safety. If there's a problem in a school, they're gonna want to know, is everybody safe? Is everybody secure? As I'm recording this, there's an active incident going on

right now in Pennsylvania. The first part of their process today in that method was life safety, getting students locked down, getting students to be safe. Secondly was life-sustaining efforts. They had some injuries in this situation today. They're taking care of EMS. They're getting EMS providers in. They're taking care of the students. That should be a priority of our afterschool programs, too. We move the students outside away from the fire or away from the [inaudible 00:52:07] spill that's occurred in the building, but now we have to keep them safe outside.

I mentioned earlier, the sunburn, the anaphylactic or allergic reaction to allergens in the air. We need to keep those students safe. If you have students with special needs, ventilators, respirators, getting them out of the building is the first step, but maintaining life-sustaining efforts is the second one. This could be as simple as food and water. It's part of what we talked about with the earlier slide with sheltering, making sure students have water if they're out on a hot day, making sure they have shade. That's all part of life-sustaining efforts.

Thirdly, we look at the property. If our building catches fire, if we get all of the students out and we get them out safely, that's a successful evacuation. If we have a building or we have several rooms in a building that burn, that's certainly not good for our program, but it is less costly for us to replace a building because we can not replace lives. Life safety, life-sustaining effort, followed by property. Certainly, we want to do what we can to protect the property. That's why we have staff members close doors during an emergency fire drill because in a real fire, closing a door does provide some protection from fire spreading.

Lastly is the environment, probably not something the school or the afterschool program considers a lot, but responders do consider it. If we have a chemical spill and that chemical has contaminated five or six students or staff members, we're gonna want to flush that chemical off of them. Flushing the chemical off the person may push it down into the environment. Maybe it's in the sewer system. Maybe it's going into a septic system. Maybe it's going out and flowing into your parking lot and the fire department is doing emergency [inaudible 00:54:10]. But, the environment is a concern to us, but it's a lower priority ranking fourth in our priorities that we look at and that responders will look at when they come in to your school.

I mentioned earlier that with all hazards, planning algorithms or flow charts can be very, very beneficial. When I work with schools, we have a general protecting actions flow chart, we use a bomb threat assessment flowchart, and we use a general thread assessment where somebody makes a verbal spoken or written threat to another person. Those are flow charts that we use in planning for schools. At the afterschool level, you can probably focus in on the general protective actions flow chart. Coming up in a slide or two, we will give you a copy of that flow chart of how to look at that process.

Keep in mind, as I mentioned earlier, flow charts assist you in decision-making. The flow chart should not be the decision-maker. We don't want to take the human evaluation out of this flow chart. The flow chart is paper, pencil, if, then, this, that, but there's always contingencies that may go beyond the flow chart and that human decision-making becomes important.

This full page general protective action chart is something that you can look at to incorporate into your program. Certainly, it can be reproduced, but we look at an instant or a threat and then we say, well, is school in session or not in session? If your afterschool program is not due to start for six hours and something happened to the building, then we're gonna probably cancel the program, or at least delay the start of a program. If it's happening during the afterschool program, now I need to say, okay, what's our immediate threat? Is the danger in the building or outside of the building? If the danger is in the building, I probably want my students outside of the building, and we're gonna do that through evacuation either on campus or off campus. And probably, the situation will not resolve itself and we'll have to send these students home.

If my danger is outside of the building, I will look at protective actions for them. Maybe we don't have to do anything except lock the doors. The police are serving a warrant three blocks away. My students are now outside for playground or recess. They're not being affected by that. We don't really take any action. We continue the afterschool program as we would. If the program is having activities outside and the danger is outside, then we talked about earlier reverse evacuation. We may need to extend the school day until it is safe is part of that. Drop, cover, hold, shelter in place, lockdown, active shooter are all things that we might take as protective actions when the danger is in our building.

After an event, it is always important that we bring conclusion to the event. We're gonna dismiss our students to go home. We're gonna resume our afterschool activities, whatever we decide to do, we need to make sure folks know that the emergency situation is over and this is what we're doing from here on out. Part of that process will involve some followup meetings and reviews, but for our general students, we're either resuming afterschool programming or we're sending them home at that point in time.

Any time you evacuate, make sure you look at your evacuation area you're responding to and make sure you've looked at it ahead of time. All evacuation points, all assembly points outside of the school, many of you might call these rally points, should be predetermined. Generally, we use those every month for a fire drill. They remain the same. But if you run into a situation where you've been doing maybe multiple bomb threats or multiple false fire alarms, you may want to look at moving your evacuation points just to change things around so we're not setting ourselves up for an attack.

If your off campus evacuation site is not somewhere that your agency or your school district controls, then you probably want to develop a memorandum understanding for sheltering. It's a small written agreement that provides the fact that says school A afterschool program will evacuate to the local YMCA. YMCA will make the facility available for afterschool program A. It's just a nice manner. Many of you probably have verbal or handshake type agreements that do that, but sometimes you want to form that up and formalize that a lot better so you know that if this, then what? The most common one, actually, it sounds surprising, is who pays for the additional paper products used in our restroom if you come here with 50 kids that suddenly start using the restroom? Those are things that can be written into the memorandum of understanding between your afterschool program and a local facility that will host you in case of an emergency.

The other thing to consider is your evacuation route. If you're moving students from afterschool program A to the local YMCA and it's three blocks away, it may seem very clear to you how to walk there, but some of your staff members may not be aware of where the YMCA is. So putting written directions to walk down Fifth Street, turn left on Catalyssa Avenue, go to the YMCA might be necessary in your individual afterschool programs. Some afterschool programs will actually take pictures from MapQuest or other mapping programs and draw a route map. Any time you're using buses or vans to use students, route maps such as that can be very beneficial to the bus drivers.

We've talked about the decision-making, how to properly evacuate. Now, we want to talk a little bit about evacuation sites, whether it's on campus, off campus, some things that need to happen when you evacuate your students is site security. Generally, the police are gonna be involved in the emergency very quickly and they will probably not be able to provide site security for you. Eventually, there will be police there to help you with security, but at the initial evacuation point in those first 30 minutes at least, you're probably gonna need to use your staff to provide security.

Provide support for your students. Parent-child reunification is certainly going to occur very rapidly if a major emergency occurs. Up on the same website where you're obtaining this webinar is a webinar on parent-child reunification for afterschool programs. I encourage you to look at that program if you have not looked at it and have a parent-child reunification process in place for reuniting parents and children immediately after an emergency occurs.

And then lastly is your evacuation site is a temporary site. We're gonna be either returning students to parents, sending students home, or returning back to our afterschool program from that evacuation site. You need to have in place processes to return to your building, make sure your building is indeed safe to be reentered, and then recovery from the situation. Those are all things that should be written into your hazards plan. Let's take the instance of that small trashcan fire we used earlier. You've had smoke. You had some fire. You have some soot. Now, the fire department comes in, they put the fire out. Before they leave, they might run ventilation fans to air out the building. They might actually have a four gas meter that they're willing to actually bring gas meters in and make sure that you do not have hazardous gases in your building as a result of that fire. Have processes in place and talk to your responders.

I want to shift gears a little bit now and talk about an internal HAZ MAT release because unfortunately, schools have this happen more often than we think about. Afterschool programs are probably not dealing with a lot of hazardous chemicals, but you do have cleaning products and many of you are in facilities that have other chemicals in them. You may end up with a hazardous materials spill inside your building or outside the building with truck, train, and water transportation. But we want to focus now on internal HAZ MATs. This could be as simple as somebody mixing the Clorox bleach with the ammonia and cleaning your restrooms. It creates a vapor cloud. A HAZ MAT internal to your building really involves size up. You, as the program manager, you, as the lead staff member, whoever is in charge of the facility, needs to make a size up. What is the substance involved? Are we dealing with hydrochloric acid if it spilled in a science lab, or

are we dealing with a little bit of Clorox and bleach that were inadvertently mixed in a restroom? What's the amount of the substance involved, and what's the location?

Any time we have those three items, we can help do better decision-making because back to what we talked about earlier, complete information. If I know I have a substance spilled but I don't know how much, it's tougher to make a decision. If I know where the location of the spill is but I don't know what the chemical is, that makes my decision-making tougher.

Any time there's a hazardous material spill or release, as we would have with the Clorox and the ammonia bleach, some four important actions that we want to take: Isolate the problem. Do the best we can to keep the chemical in its place. Don't have students walking through it, past it, around it. Isolate the chemical. Try to contain the chemical. If you're dealing with small amounts of bleach and ammonia that have spilled, many times, paper towels, blankets will be able to absorb some of that material and keep it from running in the drains. Deny access. If you're not sure what the chemical is in particular, you should be contacting fire rescue to help assist you, but don't allow people to go back into that area until you've determined with fire rescue what's there and what is safe to wear around that substance.

Even minor pool chemicals, cleaning products can create hazardous vapors that your fire rescue and HAZ MAT teams may put on self-contained breathing apparatus to go in. When in doubt, evacuate your students away from the area. That's always a best practice. If you have somebody there that knows what the chemical is, knows what the properties of those chemicals are, then you might be able to keep students in the building, but in other areas away from the spill. But when in doubt, evacuate away from the chemical spill.

Lastly is decontamination. Make sure if you're cleaning up the chemical on your own, that you're decontaminating the people properly with that. Hazardous materials can be very, very dangerous and I would strongly suggest as part of your process, you're contacting fire rescue, even if it's not a full fire department response. At least they can provide technical assistance to you regarding the chemicals. Keep in mind that you may have clean up costs involved here. You may have other costs involved if you've spilled chemicals in your program. Again, most afterschool programs probably are not dealing with a lot of very hazardous chemicals, but the schools and other businesses and industries your programs you're in may have some of these chemicals, and you should be aware of those chemicals. When in doubt, call fire rescue. When in doubt, evacuate away from the spill.

The next specialty area we want to talk about are bomb threats. Bomb threats probably don't affect the afterschool program near the way they do the normal school program, but occasionally, they do happen. This is a flow chart or algorithm that helps you make decision-making in bomb threat situations. I strongly suggest group decision-making. If your secretary or your office receives a phone call that says, "Your building is gonna blow up in 10 minutes," that doesn't give you a lot of time to consult fire or police resources. But if you get a general bomb threat written on a wall that simply says, "Bomb

in school," or, "Bomb will go off in an hour and a half," or they give you a timeframe, you have time to call the police.

One of the things we talked about earlier is over-evacuation. In bomb threats, over-evacuation creates a lot of problems for programs. Assess the threat. Determine your response. Many times, the police department wants you to do a search prior to the event of an evacuation. Don't look for bombs. Bombs can be concealed in every day household items. They're very difficult to identify. Typically, we search for bombs using bomb sniffing dogs, or we simply have our staff members go in to the rooms that they're assigned to and say, "Is there anything in that room that does not belong in your room?" That would be a suspicious item. Then the police and bomb squad could take additional action.

I'm not gonna spend a lot of time on this. This could be a full program in and of its own. Indeed, I have a five hour program just on bomb response for schools. But hopefully, this helps you in your decision-making process if you do have a bomb threat at your afterschool program.

Want to keep in mind is evacuations can be full or partial. What we mean by that is you can completely evacuate a building, you can completely evacuate a program area, or you can partially evacuate it. I'll go back to the fire situation in the middle school we talked about earlier where that school chose to simply evacuate the area of where that alcohol fire took place. That building is in somewhat of a pod system. What they did was they evacuated simply the pod where the fire occurred and moved all of those students to another location in your building.

Many of you that are running the afterschool programs have very large buildings you're in and you're only gonna use a small portion of the building. If that's your case, you want to talk to the building people, whether it's the school district or who you're renting space from and say, "Is a partial evacuation to another safe area of the building a possibility in case of emergency?" It is not always necessary to completely evacuate the building to the outside. It is dependent upon what the emergency inside is.

One thing to caution you on, particularly with bomb threats, and I mentioned it earlier with false fire alarms also, multiple evacuations in a short timeframe may create predictability. If we have run four false bomb threats in the last two weeks and we've always taken the students to the playground behind the school, that many times can be predictability for somebody wanting to attack our students. If you run multiple events in a short period of time, consider moving your rally point or assembly point to a safe area.

We always, in emergency services nowadays, have to be aware of secondary devices. You, as the afterschool people, need to be aware of this concept. A secondary device is a device planted to explode, in most cases, or some other action being taken against the people, secondary to the initial device with the initial threat. For instance, there have been two school shootings to my knowledge where a fire alarm has been pulled, students evacuated to the outside, and then shooters open fire on the students outside. In Georgia several years ago, fire department was targeted with a bomb. There was initial bomb situation occurred in a facility. When the fire department showed up, several

minutes later, a secondary bomb went off beside a dumpster. It was only as a result of probably some exceptionally good coincidence. That dumpster was brought in for a remodeling project just prior to the fire alarm being sounded for the facility and shielded those responders.

Any time you move your students from Point A to Point B, there should be a lead teacher or someone scanning the area as you exit the building. Many schools and afterschool programs are now teaching their teachers, if you're the first one out the fire door during an evacuation, pause for three or four seconds and scan the area you're walking in to make sure there's no threats out there. It's just a good situation awareness.

I've included a couple resources for you now if you want some additional information on decision-making and evacuation decision-making. The first two are from FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency. These are online available programs that are free for you. One is IS200, which is instant at command for single unit response. Although this is designed for police and fire responders, it gives you an idea of what your police and fire responders are looking at during emergencies and will help you if you do not have experience. This is actually the second course in a series. IS100 independent study course 100 from FEMA is instantly command for schools, and that is a program you may also wish to take.

The second program listed on your slide is IS241. A decision-making and problem-solving. This is an online course that goes very much more in-depth than I have been able to cover in today's time period with decision-making and problem-solving. Also available on the web if you Google in Dr. Elke Weber's information, Dr. Weber from Columbia University has posted several decision-making PowerPoints up on the webpage. I do want to credit her. Some of the information in this program today was developed through some of her training programs with her permission, and we provided a good reference there to her. Also, there's an online article by John Maxwell. Many of you are probably familiar with John Maxwell. He has a lot of good executive and leadership books that have been published, but he has an article, called Making Good Decisions Better. The web URL is listed there for you. It was current at the time that we're recording this webinar. Hopefully it's still good at the time you hear this webinar, but John Maxwell in that article talks about managing decision-making, of how making decision is important, but it's much more important to manage.