

**Crisis Management Café Overview**

The Crisis Management Café is a short blended learning experience oriented around the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Crisis Management topic. The Crisis Management topic will help managers:

* *Take quick, decisive actions in volatile situations and adapt plans as needed*
* *Communicate clearly by managing uncertainty, dispelling rumors, and sharing what they know*
* *Connect with and comfort their teams during a crisis so they remain resilient and productive*
* *Help team members recover after a crisis, capture lessons learned, and gain new momentum*

The learning experience has three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Part 1: Pre-work (self-paced, individual)

Before the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Review the following online lessons from the Harvard ManageMentor Crisis Management topic:
  + What You Need to Tackle a Crisis
  + Respond Swiftly to a Crisis
  + Communicate Early and Often During a Crisis
  + Lead with Compassion in a Crisis
  + Emerge Stronger from a Crisis
* Complete the online assessment from the Harvard ManageMentor Crisis Management topic

Part 2: Café session (live, group)

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The session provides an opportunity for managers to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with others
* Discuss the context of how concepts and skills apply in the workplace
* Practice and begin application of those concepts and skills
* Build momentum and support for applying the concepts and skills in the workplace

The Café session focuses specifically on the following concepts and tasks from the Crisis Management topic:

* Responding swiftly when a crisis arises
* Supporting and enabling teams to act with resilience
* Communicating well to manage uncertainty and dispel rumors

Facilitating the Café session as outlined should take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific concept or activity, they may want to cover only those concepts and activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | Show icebreaker question while participants are arriving to the session (Think of a leader whose actions during the Covid-19 crisis or any other crisis inspired you. In a few words, how did they respond to the challenges?)   * Introduce facilitators. * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Debrief icebreaker question, calling on 2-3 individual participants to elaborate on their responses. * Set context: We have all likely experienced more than one crisis in our lives and careers. We’ve certainly all lived through (or are living through) the Covid-19 pandemic and the sudden changes it brought to our organizations and our ways of working. As a leader at any level, you have a key role to play in a crisis in terms of how you respond, how you support and comfort your teams, and how you communicate with your teams and other stakeholders. * Review session objectives. | 10 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Respond Swiftly to a Crisis** | Facilitate discussion activity on the importance of quick action in the face of a crisis and acting despite the lack of complete information. Participants:   * Share examples where quick action averted or minimized the impact of a crisis.   Facilitate discussion and reflection activity on responding swiftly *yet deliberately* to a crisis. Participants:   * Reflect on their/their leaders’ actions at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. Specifically, how did they assess the situation, gather input from people, and formulate a plan? | 13 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Enable Your Team to Act with Resilience** | Facilitate discussion on a leader’s position during a crisis, highlighting that leaders of successful teams usually cycle between three positions that each have their advantages – working alongside the team, stepping back to monitor the work, and standing apart to diagnose problems and spot opportunities. Participants:   * Reflect on their actions during the Covid-19 crisis: which roles came naturally to them and which did they struggle to take on. * Facilitate discussion activity on helping teams practice agility and resilience during a crisis. Participants: * Share examples of specific ways they/their leaders responded (or could respond in the future) to a crisis to help their teams act faster, with more agility, and with greater resilience. | 13 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Communicate Well During a Crisis** | Facilitate discussion activity: What were the big questions from the team as the Covid-19 crisis unfolded? Participants:   * + Share examples of questions they heard from their teams or their own big questions at the beginning of the crisis.   Facilitate discussion activity: Best practices for communicating in a crisis. Participants:   * + Share their dos and don’ts for communicating in a crisis based on their experiences in the Covid-19 or other crises as well as their learning from the Crisis Management topic.   + Share their reflections on which best practices they followed well and which ones they could have done better on.   Facilitate discussion activity. Participants:   * Read the scenario presented on the slide and respond to the discussion question * Discuss common communication mistakes such as sugarcoating, scapegoating, having an answer for everything, and overpromising. * Facilitate discussion activity: Sharing good news in a crisis. Participants:   + Reflect on the Covid-9 crisis and share instances when they acted as the bearer of good news, such as organizational achievements, team accomplishments, individual achievements, or just gratitude for the team’s efforts. | 13 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | Review session objectives and skill areas discussed.  Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan.  Close the session. | 5 minutes |

Part 3: Application (self-paced, individual)

After the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Crisis Management topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill. Note: If your organization does not include the On-the-Job section in your configuration of Harvard ManageMentor, ask participants to think of two things they can do over the next 90 days to further apply and develop their skills in this area.
* Execute their action plan over a specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Crisis Management topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.