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# Tabletop Exercises: Training That Works & Manages Risks



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# Senior Management Decision

How much risk is  
acceptable versus the  
**cost** of reducing that  
risk?



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***There are two kinds of Executives; those that have lived through a crisis and those that will...***



# Are you Prepared for this....





# Training & Exercises

- Training and exercises are invaluable tools for preparing staff and testing emergency plans.
- Training and exercises should **reinforce concepts in the organizational emergency plan.**
- Training should be **conducted regularly** (Reality: *we do what we've practiced, not what is in the plan*).



## Through Exercises, Organizations Can:

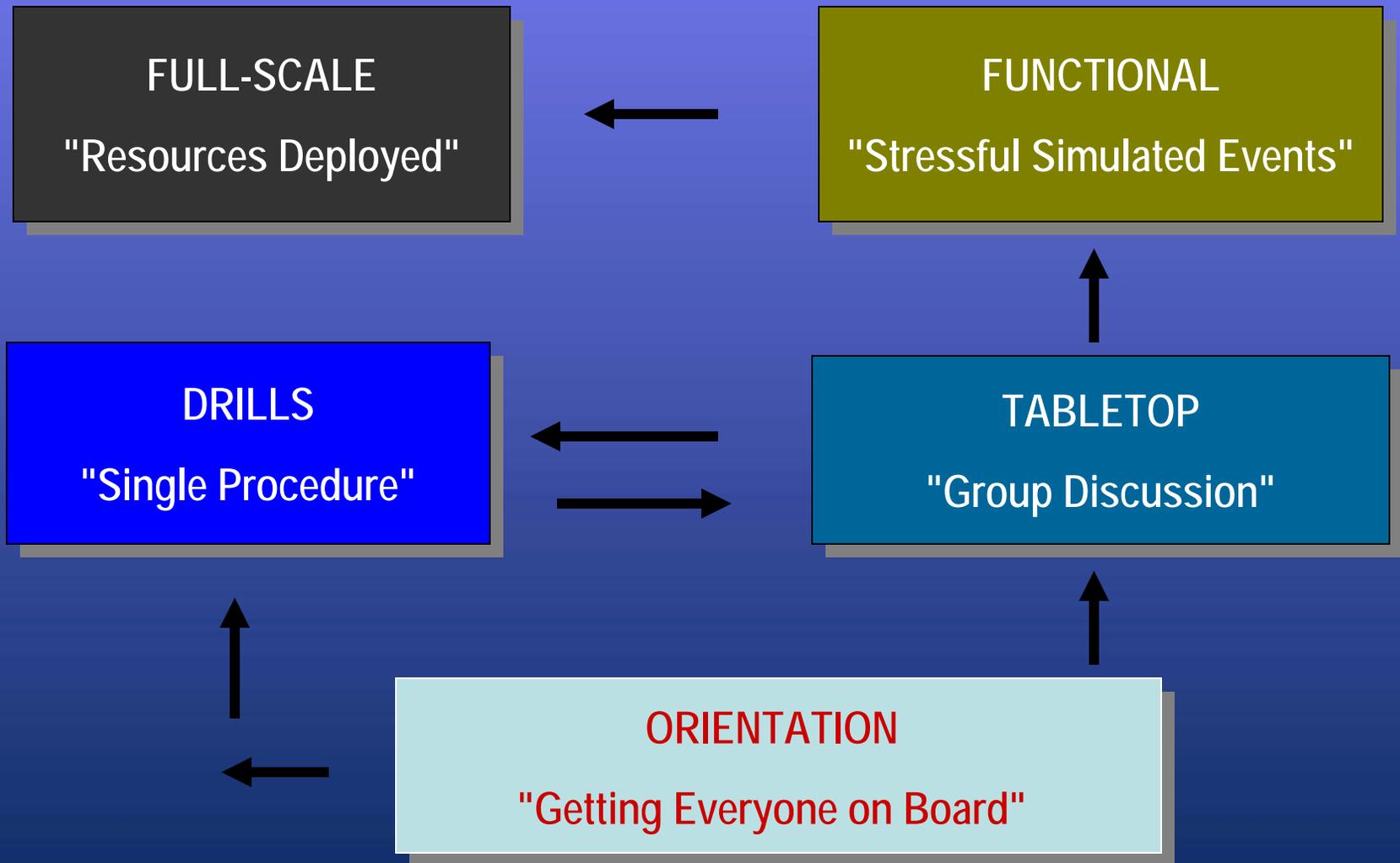
- Test and evaluate **plans**, policies, and procedures.
- Reveal planning **weaknesses**.
- Reveal gaps in resources.
- Improve organizational **coordination** and **communications**.
- **Clarify roles** and responsibilities.
- **Train personnel** in roles and responsibilities.
- Improve individual **performance**.
- **Gain** program recognition and **support** of officials.
- **Satisfy** regulatory requirements.





# Types of Exercises

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# What is a Tabletop Exercise?

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- A tabletop exercise is a facilitated, scenario-based group discussion; used for centuries
- Typically 3 hours to 6 hours in duration
- Scenarios should be chosen on priority response and recovery events
- There are many formats and methods





# Why Conduct Tabletop Exercises?

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- Clarify Roles and Responsibilities
- Evaluate Plans and Procedures
- Develop Effective Teamwork
- Assess Resources and Capabilities
- Identify Needs and Solutions
- Cost Effective & Validation

# Why Conduct Tabletop Exercises?

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- Are **low-stress discussion** of coordination and policy within the organization and/or between the organization and other agencies.
- Provide a good environment for **problem solving**.
- Provide an opportunity for key agencies and stakeholders to become **acquainted** with one another, their interrelated roles, and their respective responsibilities.
- Provide good **preparation for a functional exercise**.
- Cost Effective
- Minimal Disruption
- Validation of your Plan





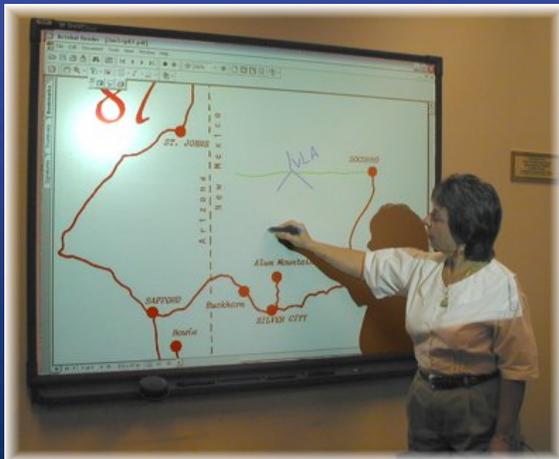


# Tabletop Exercise Preparation

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- Pre Exercise Preparations
  - Emergency/Continuity Plan Reviews
  - Management Interviews
  - Guide/Handout Preparations
  - Audio/Video Content
  - Power Point Preparations
- Flipchart and markers
- Note taker
- A/V equipment
- Extra seats for observers
- Name Plates
- Copies of the exercise scenario
- Emergency plans/Incident focus
- Additional pre-incident information
- Participant evaluation form



# The After Action Process

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- Immediate Debriefing
- Evaluator and Participant Comments
- Written Comments from Evaluators
- Comprehensive Report
- After Action Meeting (Weeks Later)
- Improvement Ideas and Implementation
- Supplemental Training





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# Outsourced vs. In-House

- Difficulty of Exercise
- Human Resources
- Cost Benefits
- Liability/Expertise
- Time Management
- Third Party Validation



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# Complacency is Risky Business

- The Myth of the Non Profit Veil
- Will Insurance Pay
- Standard of Duty





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# Questions