

Adapting the Triage Assessment Form (TACKLE) for Generic Responder Use

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The recent influx of Katrina evacuees into Memphis caused massive problems for our local health and government systems as they attempted to accommodate these people. Because our city is in a highly volatile earthquake zone it was decided to completely remodel and integrate our emergency services. However, to do so meant that a wide variety of people who were not necessarily trained in mental health or crisis intervention would have to be given a common crisis language and cross trained. In October of 2006 over 200 Shelby county Tennessee government, school, medical, mental health, law enforcement, and human services professionals were given training on how to use the TACKLE. Occupations ranged from bookkeeper, computer programmer, and homeland security officer to school counselor, nurse, and medical doctor

The TACKLE is a simplified police version of the Triage Assessment Form which was originally developed for mental health professionals to make fast assessments of individuals in crisis. TACKLE has been streamlined and put in layman language so that with minimal training police officers could use the form to make decisions in regard to disposition of individuals in crisis and also allow them to assess their own efforts at diffusing and deescalating the crisis.

A four hour training session was conducted with the Shelby county Tennessee emergency preparedness participants. Participants were given the TACKLE FORM and given verbal instructions on how to score and interpret the form. A video tape with three scenarios of a mother whose son had been injured in a school bus accident were played and scored by participants. Ratings of participants were compared with expert raters. Rationale for the expert ratings were given and discussed with participants. While there are variations in specific scale ratings, the participants rating agree enough with the expert ratings to lead us to believe TACKLE assessment can be used as a common assessment language across a wide array of occupations that might come into contact with one another during a major crisis.

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