



My View

Prepare...Prepare...Prepare

Recently, I heard a Navy Seal talk about one of the Seal's principles: *"You won't rise to the occasion, you'll sink to your level of preparation."* This rings so true to me.

Although we are not a crack military outfit like the Seals, we do aspire to be a high performance organization. Our promise to emergency responders...*"Call us anytime for anything and we will be there in 20 minutes or less"*...is a very high bar and requires that we have very high standards.

I believe that the best way to maintain these high standards is to prepare, prepare, prepare for everything we do.

To be the top notch organization we want to be, everyone in the organization needs to diligently prepare for their particular responsibilities on an ongoing basis. TIP volunteers, TIP Leaders and TIP Trainers need to **Prepare, Prepare, Prepare....**

- ... **TIP Volunteers** need to prepare to provide excellent services to our clients by attending CE meetings, by regularly reviewing their training manual, by knowing their resource guide inside and out and by being prepared during their on call shifts (rested...equipped...ready to roll).
- ... **TIP Leaders** need to prepare to lead by continually educating themselves about the principles of effective leadership, by being prepared to conduct key functions (CE meeting, scheduling, community presentations, board meetings, volunteer recruitment...) and by attending the TIP Annual meeting to learn "best practices" from other TIP Leaders.
- ... **TIP National trainers** need to prepare for the Volunteer Training Academy by preparing for their lectures, by preparing to work with co trainers and by ensuring their materials and audio visual equipment are ready to go.

Why is being prepared for everything we do so important? Here are a few reasons.

1. When we are not prepared, it shows. We can't get away with being unprepared. When TIP Leaders are not prepared for their leadership activities they lose credibility with those they are leading (TIP Volunteers); when TIP Volunteers are not prepared during their scheduled

shifts, it's noticed by TIP dispatches and TIP Leaders; and when TIP Trainers are not prepared their co trainer and trainees listen politely but impatiently.

2. TIP is a "behind the scenes" organization. Most people outside our organization have never seen TIP in action. Community members form their impressions of TIP when they attend fundraisers, the Volunteer Training Academy and other TIP activities. In all of these situations, our constituency is getting their impressions of us by how prepared we are and if our activities are organized and top notch.
3. Providing quality services to our clients (what it's all about!) is a team effort and requires that everyone in the Chain of Service is prepared...volunteers, leaders, and TIP dispatchers. If someone in that Chain of Service is not prepared, our service flounders.

I suspect we would all agree that being prepared at all levels of the organization is very important. So why do we need a reminder to "Be Prepared"?

There are 3 reasons...

1. When we do the same thing over and over, whether it be responding to TIP Calls or lecturing at the TIP Training Academy we tend to function on auto pilot. Rather than prepare for a lecture it's easier for a TIP Trainers to just pick up their tried and true lectures and do it again and again. For veteran TIP Volunteers it's easier to think "*I know how to do this*" rather than continually learning new helping interventions.
2. We are all very busy, and it takes time to prepare and to prepare again. To save time we don't prepare. We turn on our auto pilot. I suggest that if we don't have the time to prepare for what we have committed to doing, we should consider letting go of those commitments.
3. We tend to think that we only need to prepare vigorously for "Big" events. We need to remember to prepare for everything that we do.

In short, because we are an emergency response organization we are always "rising to the occasion." We will not rise to those occasions effectively if we are not an organization of individuals who prepare...prepare...prepare for their responsibilities vigorously and continuously.

Wayne would like to hear your thoughts.

Email him at Tipincceo@aol.com