

# What is a crisis?



- A **serious disruption** of a system or organization's normal functioning.
- Characterized by **high stakes, uncertainty, and short decision time**.
- Involves a sense of **loss of control** and potential for severe consequences (reputational, financial, operational, etc.).



# What is difference between a crisis and an emergency?

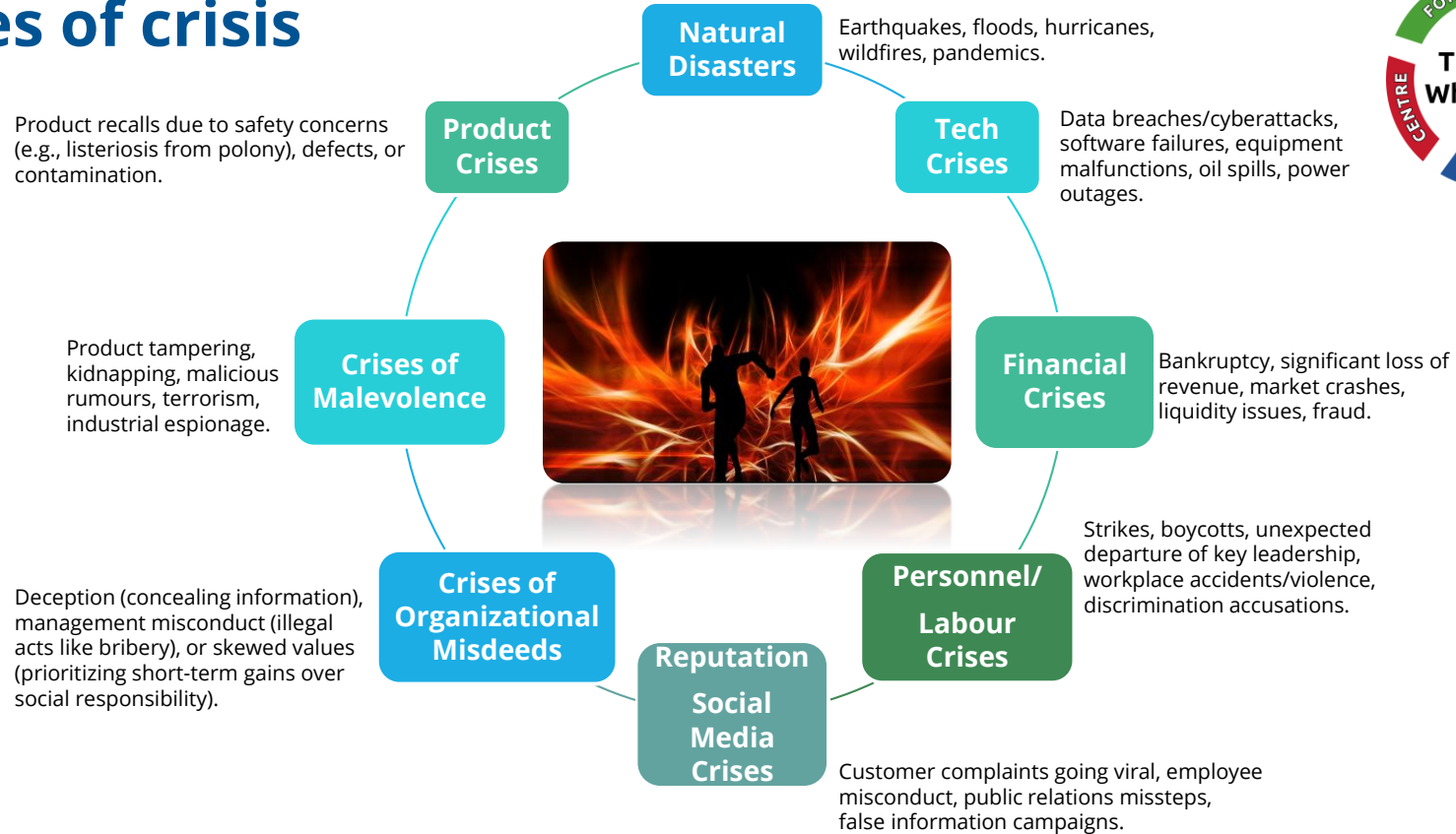


An emergency can trigger a crisis, and a prolonged crisis can devolve into an emergency.

For example, a ransomware attack on a company's systems is an **emergency** (immediate threat to operations), but if the company fails to respond effectively, it can escalate into a full-blown **crisis** involving data loss, regulatory scrutiny, and long-term reputational damage.



# Types of crisis



# Sudden vs Gradual Crisis



Crises can also be classified based on how quickly they emerge:

1

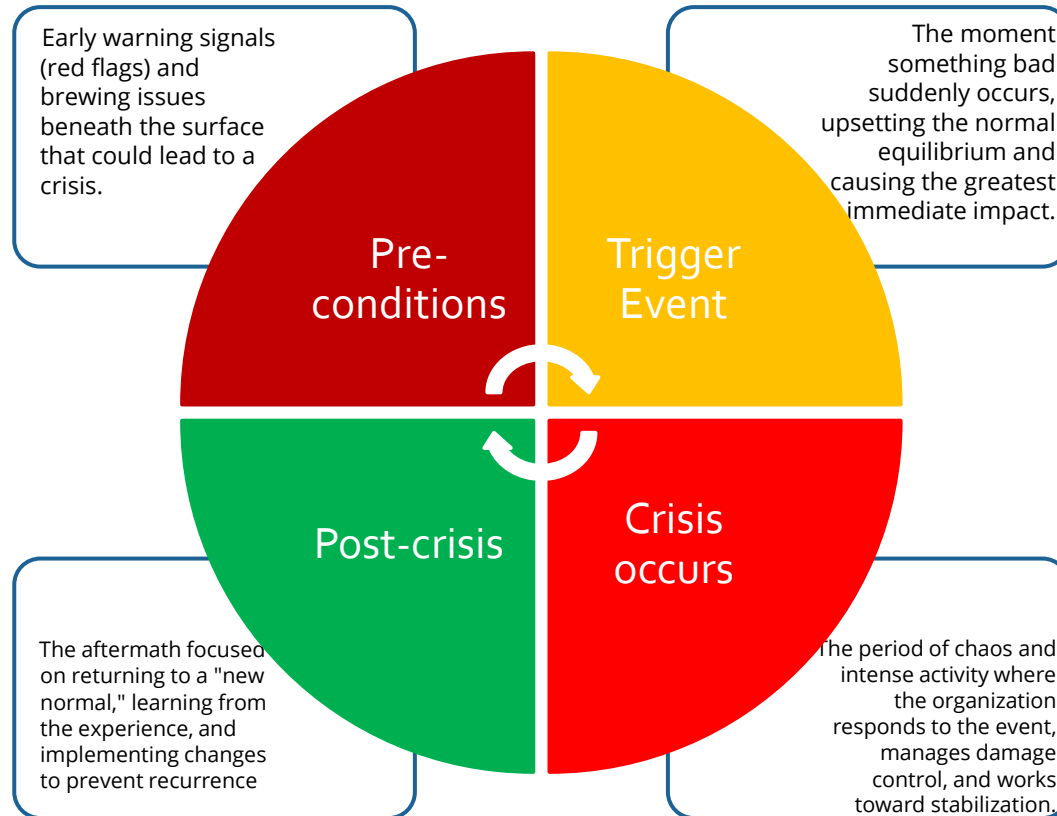
**Sudden Crises:** Occur without warning and demand immediate attention (e.g., a factory explosion or an earthquake).

2

**Slow-Burn Crises:** Begin as minor issues and gradually escalate over time due to negligence or unaddressed concerns (e.g., ongoing internal conflicts or a brewing financial problem that is ignored).

Understanding the specific nature of a crisis allows an organization to develop tailored strategies for prevention, response, and recovery.

# Lifecycle of a crisis



# Essentials of crisis response



# Crisis communications

**Concern:** Express genuine empathy and care for those affected.

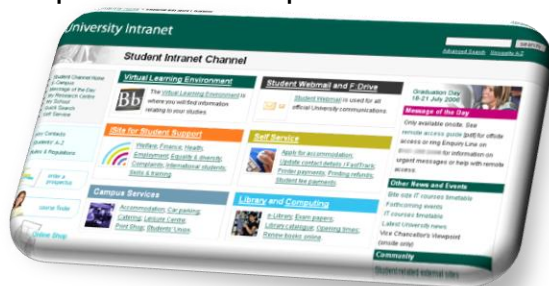
**Commitment:** Commit to making the situation better and seeing the effort through to resolution.

**Competency:** Demonstrate that the situation is being handled by capable individuals and teams.

**Clarity:** Provide clear, concise, and factual information, avoiding assumptions.

**Confidence:** Project a calm and confident presence to help de-escalate panic and inspire trust.

## Combine multiple dimensions





# Tailor crisis communications



## Analytical (SE)

Use facts and figures to explain the urgency. Get to the point, and fast, or they lose interest quickly.

## Practical (IE)

Present detail and plans where possible. Share communications in writing as well.

## Experimental (SD)

Imaginative, big-picture thinkers. Make sure anything you present links back to the 'why'.

## Relational (ID)

Communicate in an open forum that gives everyone an opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns.

The Creative Brain – Ned Herrmann -1995



# Tailor crisis communications



Suppliers



Government



Communities



A team or  
department

**Stakeholder mapping** involves stepping into the shoes of the stakeholder and seeing the crisis from their point of view.

“What’s In It For Me (WIIFM) principle



Unions



Donors/  
Funders

# Post crisis reflection/Lessons Learned



A crisis experience is transformative; the organization is never the same.



People may need medical and counselling services to de-stress and recover. Physical and mental health concerns may arise post the crisis event



Conduct post-incident reviews and after-action analyses to identify gaps and lessons learned. Build resilience by integrating lessons into future planning and operations.