

## 2: The Wrong Right Answer

Effective risk management depends on a consistent comparison of the hazards a particular jurisdiction faces.

–FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 [14]

Things seem inexplicable. And to make it worse, many of our ways of making sense of the inexplicable seem to have collapsed.

-Karl Weick [20]

### Goal

To move from a planning assignment to a visceral understanding of the real problem the planning process needs to solve.

### Mission

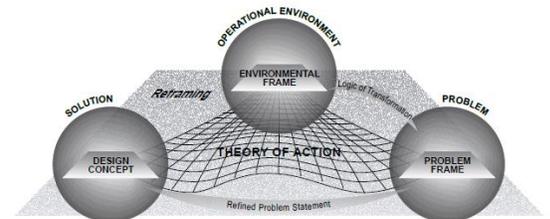
When planners accept a planning assignment at face value, they often spend a lot of time trying to solve a problem that doesn't really exist. With the best intentions, they develop **the wrong right answer**. Before any planning happens, the planner should interrogate their assignment to discover the real problem it is trying to solve. First, analyze the systems in your environment to understand how they function. Then, determine the impacts to those functions implied by the situation the planning assignment describes. From there, you can rank those impacts, figure out their root causes, and create a problem statement that summarizes the core issues the planning process must address. In this way, the **planning process** can focus on the underlying critical impacts and not get lost in fixing arbitrary symptoms.

### Operational Approach

- Many of the problems that emergency planners face are *inexplicable*. Before you engage in *planning*, engage in a process of **plan design** to define the problem and the executive's priorities for solving that problem [20].
- Disasters are *nonroutine social problems*. That is, they are created by the way some hazard impacts a specific community. The disaster is not the hazard; the disaster is embedded in the nature of the community itself [35, 36]. What is its capacity to help itself? How cohesive is it?
- Planning is non-linear: ideas always lead to new ideas and reframe old conceptions. [13]. So reframe the problem as you go to make sure you solve the right one. Keep thinking critically.



Write the Process ≠ Plan	1
Raise Wicked Problems	2
Capabilities Not Analogies	3
Coordinate don't Command	4
Strategize to Improve	5
Write Reality	6
Be One Community	7
Slow the Burn	8
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Think Management	10



### 💡 Design Before You Plan

Phases 2-4 walk you through a **planning process** that focuses on **Plan Design** and culminates in a **Planning Directive**.

**Plan Design** is “an approach to reasoning and critical thinking” that enables a leader “to create understanding about a unique situation and on that basis, to visualize and describe how to generate change.” [9]

## Objectives

1. Define an *end state* for your problem: the conditions on the ground at the point where your mission is complete [16].
2. Frame the *operational environment*: Define the complexities of the situation in which your problem will occur (your city or county systems). Use the research-based assumptions below to start. This gives you the context in which your plan will be implemented – and thus ground truth[20].
3. Frame the *problem* itself: Use the **Problem Frame Worksheet** to analyze how the problem will impact your operational environment. You will discover that what you thought was one problem is actually dozens of interlocking subproblems [20] . It doesn't matter if you're planning based on a scenario (e.g., nerve gas) or a function (e.g., transportation).
4. Summarize this work into a *problem statement* of around 200 words that defines the problem set to be managed. It should compare the imagined impacted environment to the end state. Focus on the elements you can change[9].
5. Target most at-risk 5% of the population with the **Vulnerable Populations Matrix Analysis**. It locates those with functional vulnerabilities or greater susceptibility/exposure to the problem

## 📁🎵 Planning Assumption Myth Busting

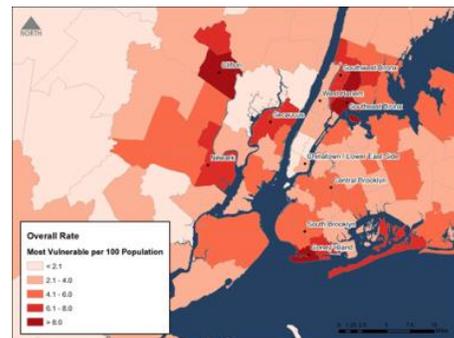
**On People** People cherish normal; this is why emergencies always seem unexpected despite warnings [12]. With few exceptions, people do not loot. They stay orderly, adapt, help[37], conduct initial search and rescue, transport more people to hospitals than EMS, donate food, share their homes and quickly create ad hoc teams that run parts of the response (e.g., ferry evacuation). They take themselves *either* to the closest hospital or one they trust. Families wait to evacuate together, often including pets[22].

**On Organizations** Organizations are slow, stumble, do not cooperate, do not know how to integrate with citizen efforts and usually cause most of the problems after a disaster[1, 10]. Emergency workers usually behave as trained without major changes[38].

**On Disasters** Social/political structures remain in place, no societal breakdown occurs. The most vulnerable suffer most. Disasters are a *non-routine social problem*[39]: the effects are embedded in the structure of society but invisible until an incident occurs.

The **Problem Frame Worksheet** instructs you to consider attributes and impacts to major systems of society: Political, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Informational, Responder and the Environment.

The **Vulnerable Populations Matrix Analysis** finds headcounts of the most vulnerable based on Census data and other sources to help you direct resources and interventions.



🧠 The only panic will be elite panic – the panic of those in power who assume victims will panic.[1]