It is very important to conduct what is called an after-action analysis as quickly as is possible after any disruptive event in order to develop an After-Action Report (AAR). This allows the crisis team to gather relevant data to ensure that lessons are learned, improvements are made, and the organization is better prepared for their next crisis event.

The following information provides guidelines for After Action Report activities.

Meeting Prep

- Schedule the after-action meeting immediately after the crisis is formally ended. It should be held in a matter of days so that participants still remember relevant information and how the situation unfolded.
    - During a long-lived event, as is the COVID-19 pandemic, the team should look for milestones or touchpoints where this same activity can take place throughout the event to ensure that information is captured and memorialized and that any short-term fixes can be implemented now, rather than waiting for the formal end of the event.
- The meeting should allow for enough time for a full discussion - a couple of hours for a short event, an entire day for a lengthy crisis.
- One person should lead the meeting - often, it is the crisis manager. However, if there is a person trained in leading information gathering sessions available, they can often give a more neutral take to the day and allow the crisis manager to participate more fully in the discussion as a participant.
- There should be two scribes tasked with taking extensive notes - when ideas are flowing quickly, it can be difficult for one person to capture everything. It may also be helpful to have a third person writing notes on a whiteboard or equivalent.
- Anyone who led any part of the crisis response, business continuity response, etc., should be invited. If there are several people from the same area, have them elect a spokesperson for their group to keep the discussion manageable.
- Ensure that there are drinks and snacks - you need to keep people's energy up as they relive a stressful part of their lives.

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome all participants, acknowledge how hard they have worked and your appreciation for all that they did - set the meeting tone as positive from the start.
- What went well - allow participants to talk about the things that they found most helpful and where the response worked. Encourage people highlighting others for their efforts.
- What could be improved - ensure that all participants need to keep this as a safe space... you are looking to improve, not blame, discourage people being called out by name. It's imperative that discipline is kept around this if emotions are running high.
- Action plan - the group should use the information during the "what could be improved" session to come up with an action plan of activities that must take place to ensure that any future events will be met with an even better response.
    - The action plan must be specific - exactly what needs to be done
    - Every action must have a due date
    - Every action must have an owner assigned
    - Every action should be prioritized high/medium/low

Post Meeting

- Ideally, progress reports would be collected weekly or as appropriate and given visibility up to the C-Suite. This will ensure that closing actions will be a priority.
- People who lead crisis, business continuity and disaster recovery should ensure all plans are updated as changes are made and include lessons learned for each individual team.
- Risk team should update organizational readiness and risk items to reflect knowledge gained and subsequent changes made.