

Facilitated Debriefing:

A process to help you identify
successes & opportunities

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway
Public Safety Laboratory
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Copyright © 2015
Richard B. Gasaway
Gasaway Consulting Group, LLC
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

The contents of the Facilitated Debriefing
program is the intellectual property of:
Richard B. Gasaway, Ph.D.

Gasaway Consulting Group, LLC
1769 Lexington Avenue North
St. Paul, MN 55113-6522
Phone: 612-548-4424



If you are interested in
hosting a program
please contact
Dr. Gasaway at

www.SAMatters.com

Phone: 612-548-4424

rich@RichGasaway.com

The purpose of a
facilitated debriefing is:

To understand...

What went well and what can be improved.

In a facilitated debriefing...
No one is on trial.
So do not judge.



No DISCIPLINE

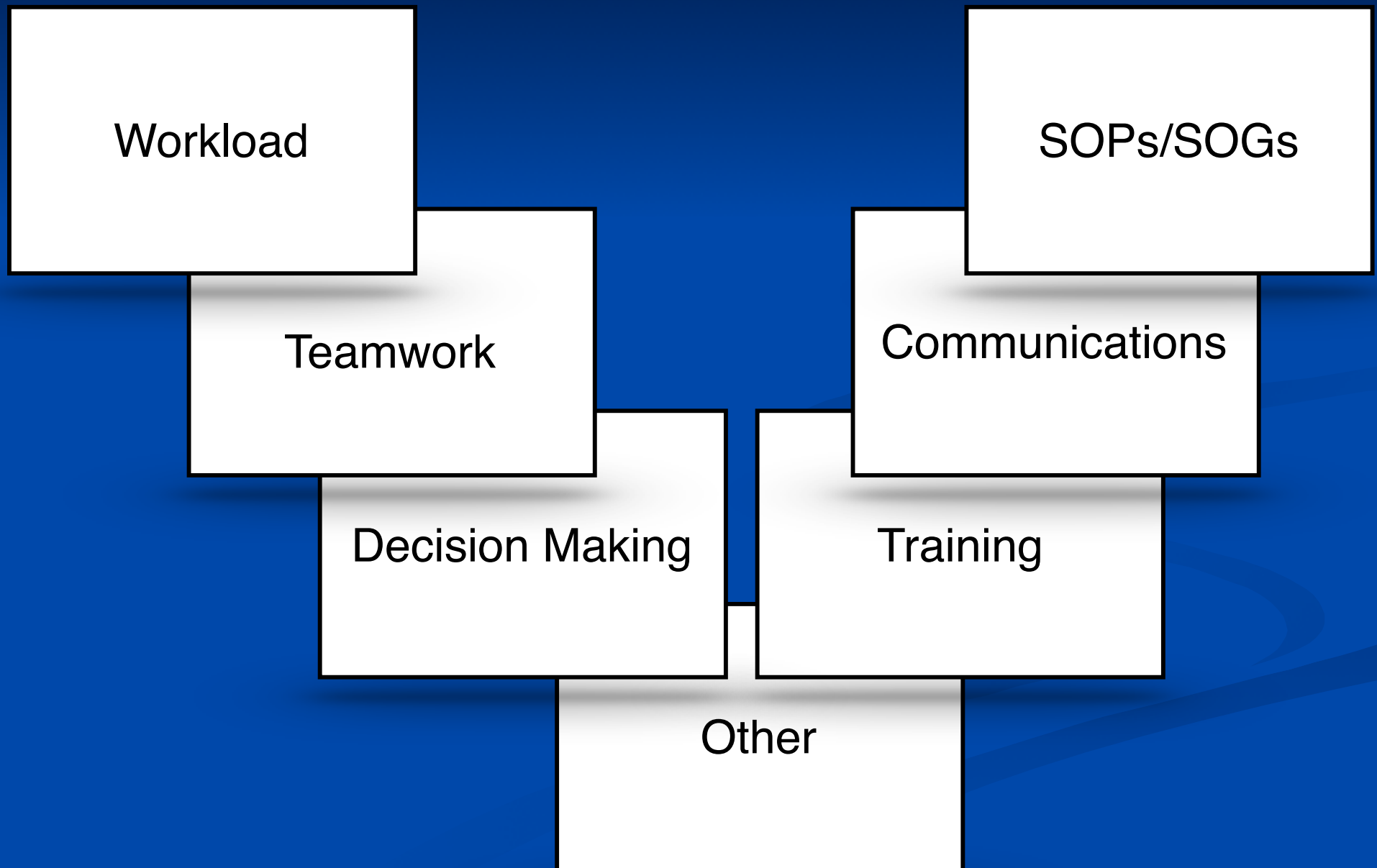
Facilitated Debriefing Tips

- Avoid using the term “Critique”
- Debriefings are learning opportunities
- Unit or company level debriefings initially
- May conduct an “all-involved” debriefing afterwards
- Focus on what individuals did well
- Identify individual areas for improvement
- Debrief a sampling of all incidents (even when things go well)
- Make debriefings non-threatening
- Ask participants open-ended questions.

Facilitated Debriefing Tips

- Distribute and follow an outline
- Best if facilitated by neutral party
- Start with what occurred prior to arrival
- Speaking order: Lowest rank to highest rank
- Beneficial to have a scene layout to reference
- Use audio & video if available and valuable
- Schedule soon after event to avoid losing information
- Document lessons (anonymously) and share so others can benefit.

Discussion prompts can be used during the debrief



Debriefing Ground Rules

- Not designed to find fault or criticize the actions of others
- Set rules for civil behavior
- Egos and rank are checked at the door
- Remember, even if things did not go well...
no one made mistakes on purpose
- Goal is to conduct an honest assessment of the incident
- Facilitator serves as the note taker.

All-Involved Debrief Process

- First arriving unit/company describes situation and actions
- Each successive unit/company explains what they saw and what they did
- Keep the conversation focused on key factors
- Relate actions to SOPs
- Identify what each unit/company did well and what can be improved.

Example of a structure fire evaluation.

For each question
if the answer is “no”...

Ask:
Why?
How do we fix it?

If command was passed:

Was it necessary?

Was the new commander
properly briefed?

Did the first-arriving
unit/company complete a
proper size-up of
the emergency scene?

Did the person in-charge
remain hands-off?
(Avoid performing front-line tasks)

Did the person in-charge stay far enough away from the action to ensure a big-picture view?

Was the strategy for the incident communicated to everyone at the scene?

Was it understood?

**Were incoming units/
companies given assignments?**

Were activities coordinated?

**Was accountability of
all personnel maintained
at all times?
(location, crew size and actions)**

**Were communications
clear, concise, controlled and
understood?**

Were the right tactics used to solve the problem?

Were units / crews changing outcomes?
(making things better)

**Were crews / units / commanders
think ahead of the incident?
(predict where the incident was heading)**

**Was radio traffic disciplined
and manageable?**

Was someone assigned to
monitor every radio channel
(talkgroup) in use?

Was every radio transmission from units/crews working in high-hazard areas heard the first time transmitted?

As conditions changed,
did the strategy and
tactics change?

Were progress reports clear,
concise, accurate, timely,
informative and understood?

**Were tactics coordinated
and non-conflicting?**

**Did the organizational culture
contribute to challenges with
strategy, tactics, operations or
decision making?**

Was a trained
safety officer assigned?

Did he/she perform their
duties appropriately?

Was staffing adequate to carry
out the strategy safely
and effectively?

Were there sufficient resources
(apparatus, equipment, tools, water, etc.)
present to accomplish
the mission?

Were personnel adequately
trained to perform their
assignments?

Were SOPs/SOGs:

- Well-established?
- Implemented?
Communicated?
- Followed?

Situational Awareness Matters!



Helping you see the bad things coming...
in time to change the outcome.

If I can help you in any way, please contact me:

Dr. Richard B. Gasaway, Chief Scientist
Public Safety Laboratory
St. Paul, Minnesota
www.SAMatters.com
Rich@RichGasaway.com
612-548-4424

