

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP: CRIMINAL JUSTICE APPROACHES FOR PREVENTING MASS ATROCITIES

MODULE 9: Action Planning and Change Management



UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM



MODULE 9: ACTION PLANNING AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this module is to enable participants to identify practical applications of the course content in their own work. This structure tracks basic components of an Atrocity Risk Assessment¹ through which participants can sharpen understanding of their domestic context, clarify the role they or their respective agencies can play in preventing or mitigating mass atrocities, and develop clear recommendations for action.

The module involves reflection and discussion on how the course content relates to course participants' roles as criminal justice leaders in mass atrocity prevention. It also explores how applying change management tools can support mass atrocity prevention. The module introduces some basic theory on change, including the different perspectives and systems that can be useful if implementing new approaches in one's domestic context. The module will also review some practical course tools and approaches. The draft plan can involve small or large actions; it can focus on one or more than one action.

Guiding questions for this module

- After participating in this course, how has your understanding of your profession changed?
- How can criminal justice professionals include mass atrocity prevention in their daily work?

Module objectives

- Participants are better able to connect the course themes, frameworks, and tools to their own professional realities.
- Participants leave the course with a draft action plan to help improve prevention.

¹ The components highlighted here are drawn from the United States Government [Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework](#) (2008) and USAID and US Department of State, [Atrocity Assessment Framework](#) (2015). The Atrocity Assessment Framework was prepared by the US Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. Updated version of the [US Atrocity Risk Assessment Framework](#) (2022). *See also* USAID, [Conflict Assessment Framework](#), Version 2.0 (June 2012).

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Module length: 95 minutes

SEGMENT	LENGTH
Introduction and Reflection on the Course	15 minutes
Change Management Principles	15 minutes
Action Planning Worksheet and Discussion	60 minutes
Conclusion	5 minutes

Required materials

- Module #9 PowerPoint
- Module #2 Handout (Risk Factors, Warning Signs, and Triggers of Mass Atrocities) and Module #9 Handout (Action Planning Worksheet)
- Chart paper and marker (optional)

Further reading

- Key Resource: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, [Guide to Criminal Justice and Preventing Mass Atrocities](#) (2023), Chapter 4
- [Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework](#) (2008)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID), [Conflict Assessment Framework](#), Version 2.0 (June 2012)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United States Department of State, [Atrocity Assessment Framework](#) (2015)
- United States Department of State, [US Atrocity Risk Assessment Framework](#) (2022)

LESSON PLAN

Introduction and Reflection on the Course (15 minutes)

Slides 1–2

Explain: “As we conclude the course, this action planning session has two goals:

- To set aside some time to reflect on and connect the course content to your own work and context
- To develop a draft action plan on how to integrate atrocity prevention into your work”

Ask: “I would like to begin this session with a few minutes for us to reflect on the course as a group. What stood out for you today? What is a new concept or new information you are still thinking about? What did today’s material make you think of in your own work?”

Note: Instructor may choose to give participants a few minutes to reflect and write down their answers before sharing with the group, or they may dive right into a group discussion. Instructor should note which concepts are highlighted by participants so those can be referenced during the action planning exercises (*10 minutes*).

Slide 3

Say: “You will need to have the Action Planning Worksheet (Module #9 Handout) in front of you for this session. The worksheet tracks the basic components of an atrocity risk assessment:

- Situation Analysis
 - Consideration of risk factors, warning signs, potential triggers or windows of opportunity, resilience (conditions or events that decrease, mitigate, or counteract risk), and core grievances
- Key Actors
 - Which actors increase or decrease risk?
 - Who are potential perpetrators, targeted groups, and influential third parties?
 - What are the motives and means?
- Agency and Individual Role
 - Organizational role in prevention and mitigation
 - Laws, policies, personnel, practices, and mindsets that influence the organization’s ability to prevent or respond to risks
 - Individual role within the organization

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- Recommendations to Include in a Plan of Action
 - Recommendations that are specific, achievable, and realistic
 - Recommendations that set out a goal, the outcomes required to achieve the goal, and the steps to achieve each outcome (who does what, resources required)

“This worksheet is purely yours—you do not have to hand it in; it is here for you to make notes and reflect on the material however you like. The intent is to take time while this content and experience are fresh to capture what you hope to keep thinking about and working on. This plan can then serve as a resource to you beyond the conclusion of this course.”

Slide 4

Say: “As you draft your action plans in this session, we will discuss some basic principles of how change happens (change management). Change can involve

- Implementing a new reform or initiative
- Applying preexisting laws or approaches more effectively
- In atrocity prevention, actions and changes to counter risk factors and warning signs and build resilience

“These tools could be external or internal. *External* refers to a goal or change that happens outside your agency. *Internal* refers to a goal or change that would happen inside your agency. External change might require some internal change, such as building mediation skills among mid-level officers in order to conduct better community outreach. Internal change could require external change, such as connecting with women’s or human rights groups or UN agencies to help lobby for resources for the gender violence crime unit.”

Change Management Principles (15 minutes)

Slides 5–9

Slide 5

Say: “We often think that implementing new approaches or cultures will look like this.”

Slide 6

Say: “In fact, change usually looks like this—nonlinear with ebbs and flows.² Change can be messy; we have to think of failure and setbacks as necessary for learning and sustaining positive change. We should let stakeholders or colleagues know that the process of change may be different from what they expect or hope it will be. This way they won’t be discouraged and look at a healthy process as ‘failing’ and give up too soon.

“As leaders, we can emphasize that for others, that change can be slow and messy—and the process often does not move forward in a straight line. Failure is very possible; think of it as necessary for learning and sustaining positive change. Being aware of this from the start might reduce frustrations when there are bumps in the road.”

Slide 7

Say: “To implement change, we need to look beyond the problem we see in front of us and look at patterns, structures, and mental models. We need to look at relationships within the system (power and trust relationships) and relationships that form resistance to change.”

Slide 8

Say: “This Iceberg Model—which you have in your handout—helps us visualize those levels of a problem that are often below the surface—that we might not easily see until we stop to look carefully at the challenge in depth.

“Events: Above the water are events. Events are what just happened (you find them in newspaper headlines: the military attempts a coup, cattle herders and farmers clash over land rights, protesters set fire to police cars). These are things we can see. But these are often symptoms of the problem and not the cause. If we stay at this level (above the water) and just address the symptom, the problem may go away temporarily, but it won’t be resolved.

“Patterns and Trends: We need to go deeper and look at the events in context. Look at the patterns and trends over time. The history of the system is important, as patterns and trends by nature repeat themselves.

² Adapted from Vivienne O’Connor, “[A Guide to Change and Change Management for Rule of Law Practitioners](#)”

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“Underlying Structures of Systems: Then go even deeper and look at the underlying structures of systems (e.g., the criminal justice system) and see how those structures are influencing a pattern or event. Structures include policies, procedures, laws, processes, perceptions, purpose (incentive structures—why people get hired, fired, paid, or promoted). We often find that structural issues support recurring problems and we need to look at the structures in order to deconstruct the problem. What are the relationships between the parts?”

“Mental Models: Dealing with structural issues is important for change, but true change may go even deeper, to “mental models.” Mental models include assumptions, beliefs, values, mindsets, and attitudes. What beliefs keep the system in place? This is where transformative change occurs.”

Slide 9

Say: “Next, we need to shrink the change. We don’t need to fix the whole system at once. Big problems do not necessarily need big solutions. We shrink the change and start small. Too much change at once is extremely difficult to do.

“We act locally within our sphere of influence to address a problem. Our sphere of influence is where we are, with the skills, resources, and connections that we have.

“So think about

- Where do you have influence?
- Where can small actions have the most impact?
- What relationships across the whole system can help?
- Is now the right time to act? (‘Ripeness’ or window of opportunity)”

Slide 10

Say: “Shrinking the change also involves looking for high leverage points, meaning points in the criminal justice system where relatively small actions lead to big results. We can’t always know a high leverage point in advance. But high leverage points often emerge when we bring together diverse groups of stakeholders.

“People know intuitively where leverage points are. These people can also assess ripeness or identify windows of opportunity to start change.

“High leverage points can be counterintuitive. They can be symbolic actions that carry a great deal of meaning for people. We are also looking at resilience: for bright spots, things that are already working.

“Again, do not worry if the proposed solution seems small. Even though there is an obvious urgency to building the rule of law after conflict, for instance, what multiple experiences show is that quick-fix solutions usually do not work. Instead, we commit to smaller, local solutions within immediate reach, where we know we can achieve small wins.”

Slide 11

Say: “Finally, think about the following: How can I support the people required to make this change a success?” [Refer to the section of the Module #9 Handout on supporting change. Instructor may wish to refer back to the previous point that change is often not linear—it involves some chaos and discomfort.]

“Consult widely to

- Build relationships and trust—expect mistrust at first
- Connect and create change networks
- Share new information through networks
- Encourage wide participation from diverse perspectives
- Celebrate the small wins
- Address resistance to change—each type of resistance needs its own strategy:
 - Some people want things to stay the same. The status quo benefits them (e.g., because of power, financial benefits)
 - Some resist because of a lack of clarity or confusion about the change
 - Some resist because they feel excluded or not heard
 - Traumatized individuals may resist because they find it difficult to engage with that particular problem or change

“Be aware of political realities. Find allies and make alliances. Stay connected to the opposition, even though it is hard. Engage the voices of those who disagree with you. Involve yourself with those who have opposing views, and try to understand their perspective. Sell pieces of your idea first. Wait for *ripeness*, meaning a time when people are most receptive to your idea.”

Action Planning Worksheet and Discussion (60 minutes)

Slides 12–15

Instructor should introduce the Action Planning Worksheet in the Module #9 Handout and explain to participants that they will begin the action planning process with a situational analysis (considering potential risk factors, warning signs, and triggers as well as opportunities and resiliencies in their own context) followed by an analysis of key actors. Framing for this exercise should emphasize the challenges of reflecting on our own contexts and that each country has some level of risk. Participants may wish to

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have the Module #2 Handout available for reference during this exercise with the risk factors, warning signs, and triggers.

For each of the three sections of the worksheet, participants should be given 10 minutes to fill out the section and 10 minutes to discuss with a partner, in small groups, or with the larger group. Points for the instructor to highlight in each section include

- Situation Analysis and Key Actors (slide 12): It is important to note that participants do not have to agree with their partners about which risks are present or which risks matter; the purpose of the exercise is simply to better articulate how each individual views the risks in their own context. To the extent that differences of opinion exist, this provides an opportunity for the instructor to highlight the potential for our own biases to affect situation analysis and for the group to discuss what they can do to mitigate their own biases and seek out alternative opinions when doing an analysis like this.
 - This exercise draws on concepts from Module 2 (Prevention: Identifying Risk Factors, Warning Signs, and Triggers), Module 4 (Before Mass Atrocities: Criminal Justice Tools for Prevention), and Module 5 (Deeper Dive: Dangerous Speech OR Community Dialogues).
- Agency and Individual Role (slide 13): Instructor can frame this exercise in relation to the discussion of the iceberg model and “high leverage points” from the change management section.
- Recommendations (slides 14–15): Participants should identify whether their recommendations target the period before, during, or after mass atrocities and identify steps for implementation. Instructor may also encourage participants to think back to the leadership principles introduced in Module 6 (Leadership, Motivations, and Rationalizations during Mass Atrocities) to consider what leadership qualities might be important for implementation.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Instructor may conclude with a discussion of how planning and preparation can help prevent mass atrocities or limit their impact on innocent civilians. Instructor should emphasize the frontline role criminal justice professionals play in mass atrocity prevention, and how they are positioned to recognize warning signs and take actions that protect vulnerable groups and preserve human dignity. Instructor should highlight the ways participants may already be involved in prevention through their current work or initiatives. Participants should be encouraged to share the action plans created during this session with colleagues or supervisors as appropriate.

Cover: United States Army Sergeants Major Academy group of International Officers visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on May 5, 2011. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*