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I am available to assist with :

Executive Crisis Simulations (scenario-based exercises)

Incident / Crisis Management Training (including CIMS)

Corporate and Association Keynotes and Workshops

Parent/Student Breakfasts – stories from the rescue helicopter

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Book a Zoom Call: <https://calendly.com/dave-greenberg/quick-zoom-catchup>



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Te Whakarōpūtanga
Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa
New Zealand School Boards Association

e tipu e rea...

From Chaos to Control

Applying the BRACE Framework in Real School Scenarios



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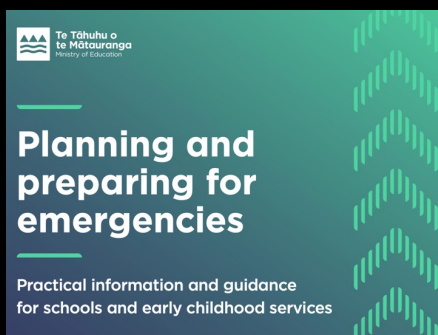
Assumed Readiness reflects belief.

Observed Behaviour reflects reality.



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Your Assumed Readiness



4

Your Observed Behaviour

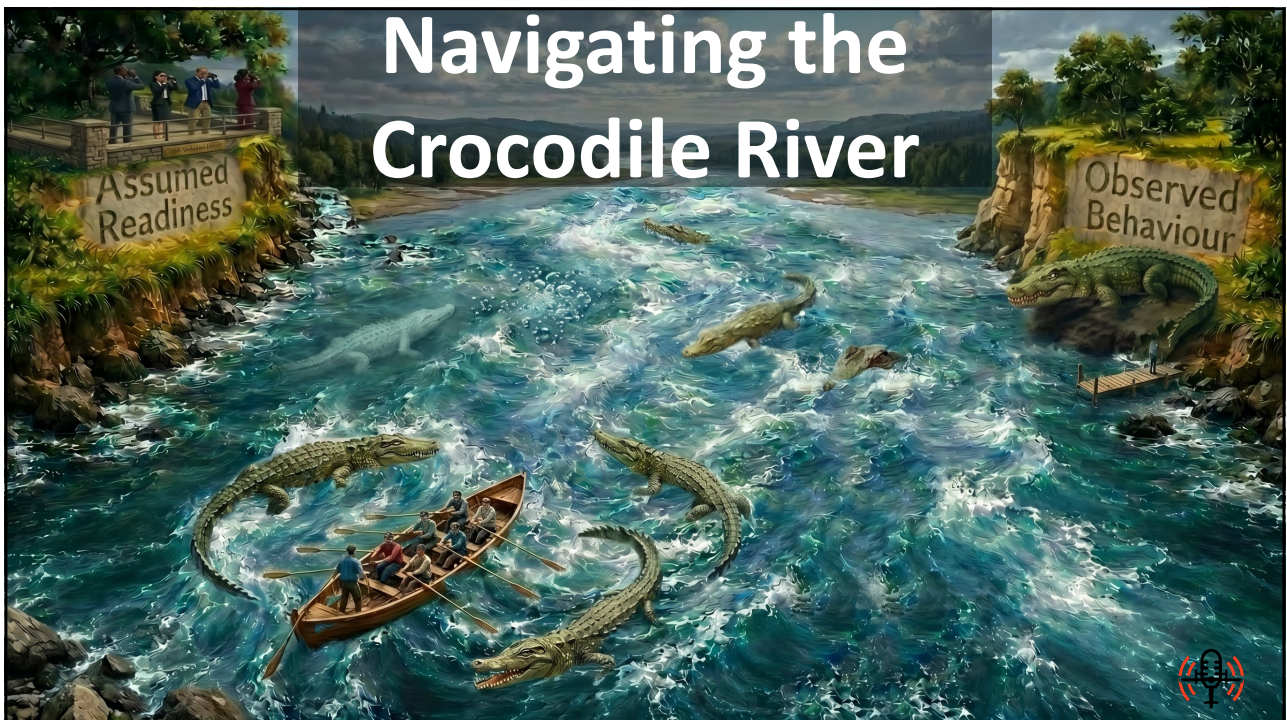


- Accounting for people
- Communicating clearly
- Maintaining continuity
- Coordinating response
- Making decisions under uncertainty



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Navigating the Crocodile River



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***“River leadership is about making sure
your organisation can keep doing its
job...
no matter how strong the current...
or how many crocodiles are in the river.”***

 **Dave Greenberg**
Face Crosses Differently

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B – Business as Usual
R – Rapid Assessment
A – Activate the right teams
C – Communicate
E – Executive Oversight

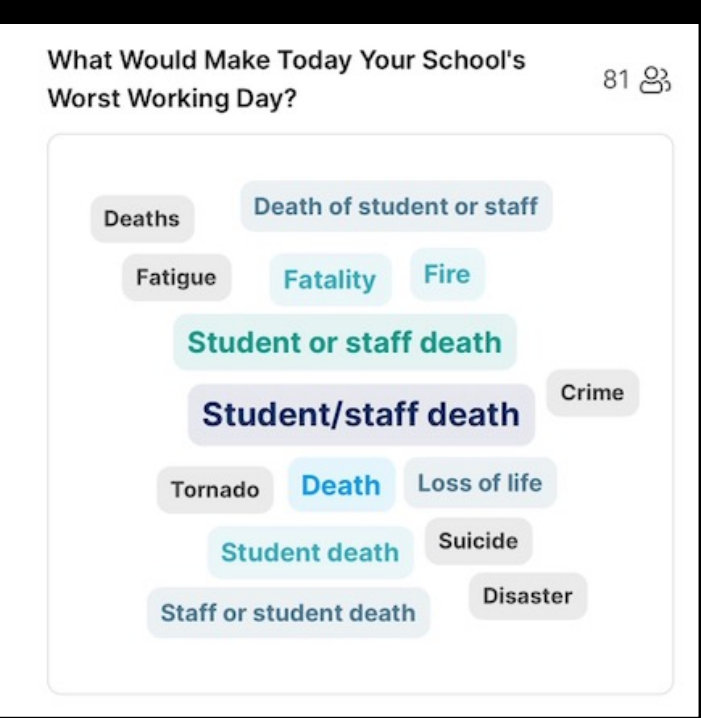
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The Size-up Framework (Rapid Assessment)

- 1. What is the nature of the situation?**
- 2. Who is leading our response**
- 3. What do we know to be a fact?**
- 4. What don't we know or what are we assuming**
- 5. What do we need to understand, and when?**
- 6. When do we need to act, and how?**

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Independent Schools NZ
Sept 2025



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Avoiding the Common Traps

Role	Trap	What you'll Observe	Ask Yourself...
Governance	Comes off the cliff	Starts directing operations instead of governing it	Are we governing the response, or trying to manage it?
Governance	Gets in the boat	Becomes part of the response instead of providing strategic oversight	How does our involvement help the people already in the boat?
Governance or Leadership	Watches the Wrong Crocodile	Focuses on the most visible issues while other risks go unnoticed	What are we missing, or not seeing?
Leadership	Grabs a Paddle and Starts Rowing	Stops steering the boat and starts doing someone else's job.	Who is steering the boat?
Leadership	Grabs a Paddle and Starts Fighting Crocodiles	Becomes consumed by the incident instead of leading the response	What should only a leader be doing right now?
Business as Usual	Nobody Rows	Business As Usual slows or stops because people are waiting for direction	Has Business As Usual stopped?

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Student / Staff Death

Governance comes off the cliff

The Board begins directing the school's operational response instead of providing strategic oversight. Board members start telling the principal how to communicate with students, which counsellors to use, or how memorials should be managed.

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Student / Staff Death

Governance gets in the boat

Individual Board members attend response meetings, contact staff directly, speak to media, or make promises to parents without going through the principal. The distinction between governance and management disappears.

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Student / Staff Death

Watching the wrong crocodile

The Board becomes consumed by reputation, media coverage, or potential legal liability while losing sight of whether the school is effectively supporting students, staff, and families. Alternatively, it focuses entirely on the tragedy while ignoring other significant risks emerging elsewhere in the school.

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Student / Staff Death

Leader grabs a paddle

The principal spends the day personally answering phones, arranging counselling appointments, or handling logistics instead of coordinating the overall response, setting priorities, and ensuring the leadership team is functioning.

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Student / Staff Death

Leader fights crocodiles

The principal becomes focused almost exclusively on the suicide itself—media enquiries, police, family liaison, investigations—and loses oversight of the broader school. Other critical issues, staffing, teaching, and student wellbeing across the school receive insufficient attention.

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Student / Staff Death

Nobody rows

Staff are unsure what they're expected to do. Classes become unstructured, normal routines stop unnecessarily, decisions are delayed, and everyone waits for direction because attention is fixed on the crisis.

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Student / Staff Death

Everyone fights crocodiles

Almost every available staff member becomes involved in the response. Teachers abandon teaching to help with counselling or administration; leaders are pulled into meetings all day, and essential functions such as attendance, supervision, learning support, payroll, or planning begin.

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Student / Staff Death

None of these traps are about people caring too much!!

The trap is that, if everyone responds instinctively, the organisation can lose its ability to do the very thing the community needs most: remain a stable, functioning school while responding compassionately to the tragedy.

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Downloadable Resources



- PDF of this Presentation
- Useful resources
- Free e-copy of Emergency Response: Life, Death and Helicopters

