



GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

This overview describes how Extreme Event is played and explains the facilitator’s role. When you’re ready to start, use the [Game Setup](#) guide to assemble your materials and prepare for your game!

The Snapshot

Extreme Event is an in-person game played in groups. Players adopt the worldview of a character living in a fictitious city. After a brief introduction to set the stage, players must work with others in their sector to decide which resources to invest in to help make their city more resilient. Then, a simulated disaster occurs, complete with sound effects and narrative drama! The game becomes more intense as players use their resources—and collaborate with each other—to solve challenges in neighborhoods around the city. Time is short and surprise events occur throughout the game, requiring participants to adapt and reprioritize to help their neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The game ends with a thought-provoking discussion to uncover lessons learned throughout the game.



The Facilitator's Role

Anyone can facilitate Extreme Event. The facilitator's role is to:

- Read aloud from a script to create the role-playing narrative,
- Provide rules and instructions,
- Manipulate the game's level of difficulty, and
- Lead a reflective discussion about disaster resilience.

The facilitator should have 1-2 helpers to manage audio/visual effects and distribute materials at various points in the game.

A Note on Improvising: We designed Extreme Event to be an engaging learning experience for many different types of groups. Feel free to tweak the script to better align with your group's learning goals and level of knowledge, modify the materials for your specific setup or resources, or integrate the game with other activities. If you make modifications or develop supplemental materials that work well, please share them with us so we can include them in future editions!



The facilitator uses a digital or printed script to guide players through the game.

Game Phases

The game takes about an hour and unfolds in four phases: Prepare, Respond, Recover, and Adapt.

Prepare

As players enter the game room, you'll give each player a Character Name Tag that indicates the player's unique role in a fictitious city, which sector they belong to, and which neighborhood they live in. Each city has six neighborhoods and six sectors.

Players begin the game by sitting at a table with the other players in their sector: Households, Community Groups, Businesses, First Responders, Local & State Government, or Federal Government. When everyone's ready, you'll start the game with some fun sound effects. Then you'll read from the script to set the scene. Early in the script, you'll ask players to introduce themselves (in character) to the other players at their table and start learning about their sector's role in the city.

You'll then distribute to each sector a set of 24 cards representing resources they may invest in to help make their city more resilient. Players will have several minutes to discuss the resources and decide which 12 resources to keep and which 12 to discard. Players can reference information provided to help inform their choices. Combined with the narrative, this information provides clues about what types of disasters pose the biggest threat and helps players understand the options and trade-offs as they decide which resources to invest in.

This phase mimics aspects of real-world disaster planning and preparation, reinforcing the notion that all people in a community—from individual households to large government agencies—have a



responsibility to prepare and plan for disasters, and that everyone brings something to the table. Players must work together and consider short- and long-term investments, their city's vulnerabilities, and the unique responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses of their character and their sector.



Players use information about their city and sector to weigh trade-offs and decide which resources to invest in.

Respond

After everyone has made their resource card selections, you'll read from the script and use exciting sound and visual effects to dramatically announce the arrival of a disaster. From here the game picks up speed and becomes more chaotic to simulate the experience of responding to a disaster.

You'll reveal six Challenge Boards, each of which represents a dilemma (such as a power outage or dangerous flooding) faced in one of the six neighborhoods around the city. When the Challenge Boards are revealed, you'll instruct players to leave their sector tables and find their neighborhood's Challenge Board. Players are mixed into new teams as they relocate from their sector groups into neighborhood groups.

Players then work together to solve their neighborhood's challenge. To solve a challenge, players must discuss and pick one of two options presented on the Challenge Boards and then find the resource cards required to complete that option. The script provides detailed instructions about goals and scoring for this phase.



Example excerpt from a Challenge Board.



As the disaster unfolds, players relocate to their neighborhood groups (top left), exchange resources (top right), and solve challenges. Challenge Boards can be digital (bottom left) or printed (bottom right).

The dynamics that develop during this phase mimic different ways communities may work effectively—or ineffectively—to solve problems during disasters. For example, some players may hoard resource cards or refuse to give them to players in other neighborhoods, while others freely share resources or even invent creative ways to get them to the neighborhoods where they are needed most. Some players may focus entirely on their own neighborhood’s problems, while others focus on building coalitions and work to benefit the city as a whole. Resource shortages, ethical quandaries, and trade-offs are built into the Challenge Boards to force players to work together and make tough decisions.

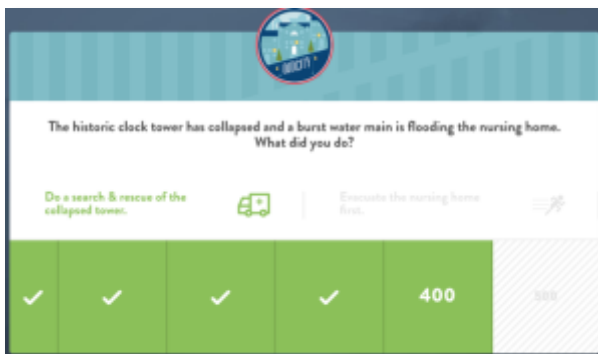
During this phase, you’ll issue additional surprise challenges to the city as a whole and to individual neighborhoods. These challenges mimic the unexpected events that occur during real-world disasters, such as gridlocked traffic, loss of communication, or difficulty moving supplies to where they are needed. They also increase the game’s difficulty and add to the suspense and chaotic atmosphere of this phase.



Surprise challenges enhance the game’s difficulty and suspense.

Recover

During this phase, you'll announce that the disaster has passed and ask players to stop exchanging resources and return to their tables. Each neighborhood will report on how successful they were at solving their challenge and explain their decision-making process. You'll tally each neighborhood’s final score and determine the city’s overall score.



Neighborhoods report their scores and discuss their decision-making process.

Adapt

This phase is a reflective discussion in which you'll help players draw lessons about what it takes to build community resilience. Players will discuss what happened during the game and consider how the game's elements relate to problems encountered during real-world disasters. The discussion wraps up with a quick summary of key goals related to community resilience.

This phase is crucial to achieving the game's learning outcomes, so be sure to leave enough time for a fruitful discussion. Feel free to add your own discussion questions to better meet the needs of your group or use it to segue into other activities. We hope you'll find the game to be a useful tool to inspire deeper discussions about community resilience!



The game wraps up with a guided discussion about community resilience in the game and real life.