

Rangers High-Severity Leadership & Performance Program

Program Snapshot

Audience: Senior support engineers / escalation owners who regularly handle P1/P2s.

Cohort size (recommended): 6–8 participants per cohort.

- Small enough for intense simulations and individual coaching; large enough for diverse styles and active peer learning.

Duration: 8 weeks (1 “Week 0” + 7 content weeks), approximately 4–5 hours per person per week.

- 1.5–2 hours self-paced (books + LinkedIn Learning).

- 90 minutes live cohort session.

Format: Hybrid (remote-friendly), using self-paced content plus live simulations and debriefs.

Program Objectives

- Build reliable performance under pressure for high-severity incidents.
- Strengthen leadership behaviors based on Extreme Ownership (ownership, prioritization, decentralized command).
- Upgrade executive communication and difficult-conversation skills.
- Establish sustainable personal operating systems (time, boundaries, recovery).

Delivery Model

1) Self-paced learning

- Short book excerpts, summaries, or chapters from:

- The Emergency Mind (Dan Dworkis).
- Extreme Ownership (Jocko Willink).
- Crucial Conversations and HBR Having Difficult Conversations.
- Optional: Perform Under Pressure, Dialed In, Peak Performance, High-Stakes Leadership.
- LinkedIn Learning modules on high-stakes communication, executive communication, resilience, and time management.

2) Live cohort sessions

- 90 minutes weekly, remote or hybrid.
- Mix of: incident simulations, role plays, debriefs, small-group breakouts.
- Led by a Lead Facilitator plus rotating Guest Leaders (directors / VPs / senior ICs) for realism.

3) On-the-job application

- Participants apply tools during real incidents each week (e.g., using the executive update template, running debriefs, experimenting with boundaries).
- Capture short “micro-cases” for discussion in the next session.

4) Peer partner system

- Each Ranger paired with another cohort member.
- 20–30 minutes per week to review one incident, one behavior change, and one personal habit (recovery/boundaries).

Curriculum Structure (8 Weeks)

Week 0 – Selection, Baseline, Expectations

- Purpose: align stakeholders, select participants intentionally, establish baselines.
- Inputs:

- Manager nominations based on observed behaviors (ownership, composure potential, communication).
- Simple self-assessment on key skills (communication, decision-making, stress management, leadership).
- Short questionnaire aligned with desired psychological profile: emotional stability, adaptability, internal locus of control, service orientation, comfort with ambiguity.
- Outputs:
 - Final cohort of 6–8 participants.
 - Baseline “Ranger Readiness” scores (self + manager).
 - Clear agreement on time commitment and expectations.

Week 1 – Emergency Mindset & Extreme Ownership

- Core question: What does it mean to be a Ranger in a critical incident?
- Self-paced:
 - Emergency Mind concepts: emergencies = uncertainty + high impact + high pressure.
 - Extreme Ownership overview: no excuses, prioritize and execute, decentralized command.
- Live session:
 - Map emergency structure to the last 3–5 P1 incidents.
 - Discuss moments of freezing, thrashing, or blame; identify where ownership was missing.
 - Short tabletop scenario: participants practice naming the emergency structure and stating what they own.
- Key skills: ownership mindset, situational awareness, basic emergency framing.
- Achievable: 1-page reflection on a past incident: “What I should have owned and how I would run it now.”

Week 2 – Cognitive Tools: Not Cracking Under Pressure

- Core question: How do I stay clear-headed when everyone else is anxious?
- Self-paced:
 - Selected Emergency Mind materials or similar performance-under-pressure readings.
 - Optional: Perform Under Pressure or Dialed In chapters.
- Live session:
 - Teach 2–3 core tools: breathing protocol, micro-checklist, outside-view reset.
 - Simulation: escalating P1 with rising ambiguity and pressure. Participants must call time-outs to reset, re-prioritize, and communicate.
 - Debrief on early warning signs of overload for each person.
- Key skills: emotional regulation, decision-making under uncertainty, self-awareness.
- Achievable: each Ranger defines a personal “pressure protocol” and uses it at least once that week.

Week 3 – Executive Communication & High-Stakes Conversations

- Core question: How do I talk to executives and angry customers under fire?
- Self-paced:
 - LinkedIn Learning: high-stakes communication and executive communication mindset.
 - Crucial Conversations intro or summary; HBR Having Difficult Conversations overview.
- Live session:
 - Co-design an incident executive update template (Situation, Impact, Actions, Risks, Next Steps).
- Role plays:
 - Short “live calls” with a VP-level stakeholder asking tough questions.
 - Difficult conversation with a frustrated stakeholder (customer, sales, product).
 - Feedback against a simple rubric (clarity, brevity, empathy, assertiveness).
- Key skills: executive communication, high-stakes conversation framing, de-escalation.
- Achievable: each Ranger runs at least one real incident update using the template and

collects quick feedback.

Week 4 – Prioritization, Triage, and Delegation

- Core question: How do I avoid drowning when everything is urgent?
- Self-paced:
 - Extreme Ownership chapters on Prioritize and Execute, Cover and Move, Plan, Decentralized Command.
 - LinkedIn Learning on time management and managing competing priorities.
- Live session:
 - Scenario: three competing incidents plus noise requests. Participants triage, decide what to defer, and delegate explicitly.
 - Create a shared triage ladder aligned with business priorities.
 - Micro-practice: 60-second stand-ups focusing on priorities only.
- Key skills: task triage, delegation, boundary setting, working under multiple constraints.
- Achievable: each Ranger documents one real case where they dropped or delegated a task to protect focus on a more critical problem.

Week 5 – Boundaries, Saying “No”, and Sustainable Performance

- Core question: How do I be available for crises without burning out?
- Self-paced:
 - Readings from Peak Performance on stress and recovery.
 - Resilience-focused LinkedIn Learning content.
- Live session:
 - Scripted practice for saying “no” or “not now” to non-critical requests while tying back to mission and priorities.
 - Design micro-recovery patterns: breaks, rotations, and handoffs in long incidents.
- Key skills: boundary-setting, assertive communication, sustainable work habits.
- Achievable: each Ranger pilots one boundary or recovery habit and reports impact.

Week 6 – Leadership in Crisis: Team Orchestration

- Core question: How do I lead others through chaos, not just myself?
- Self-paced:
 - Selected content from High-Stakes Leadership and crisis leadership articles.
- Live session:
 - Simulation: complex incident with cross-functional teams (SRE, product, support, comms).
 - Each Ranger rotates as Incident Lead while others play functional roles.
 - Focus on giving direction, inviting dissent, keeping stakeholders informed, balancing short-term fixes with long-term risk.
- Key skills: crisis leadership, inclusive decision-making, multi-stakeholder coordination.
- Achievable: each Ranger receives 360-degree feedback on leadership behaviors in simulation.

Week 7 – Capstone: Full Incident Exercise & Ranger Operating Manual

- Self-paced:
 - Review notes and select one real incident for deeper analysis.
- Live session (2–3 hours if possible):
 - Full P1 simulation from first page to post-mortem, combining all skills.
 - Structured debrief and lessons learned.
- Program closure:
 - Each Ranger writes a 2–3 page Ranger Operating Manual describing how they operate in high-severity incidents, their early warning signs and countermeasures, default communication templates, and 2–3 development targets.

Measurement and Success Criteria

Cohort-level indicators:

- Increased use of standard executive update templates during P1 incidents.
- Improved stakeholder ratings on communication clarity, timeliness, and ownership.
- Reduction in thrash and conflicting instructions noted in post-incident reviews.

Individual-level indicators:

- Demonstrated Extreme Ownership in at least one real incident.
- Successful delivery of at least one executive-level incident update using the template.
- Application of pressure protocols, triage, delegation, and boundaries in real incidents.

This program is designed to be realistic for high-severity support operations while deeply developing the mental, communication, and leadership skills needed for Rangers to perform consistently under pressure.