



**Just in Time Training:
Behavioral Health
Response to Mass Violence**

Introduction

Meet Your Trainers

- April Naturale, PhD
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Introduction

April Naturale, PhD, MSW

- NYS Office of Mental Health **Critical Incident Responder** (1984-2003)
- World Trade Center Terror Attack (2001) **Statewide Director, NY Mental Health Health Response**
- **Program consultation, training and crisis intervention services** in over 45 U.S. states (2003-2011)
- DOJ/OVC **Needs Assessments and Victim Forums** for Boston Marathon Bombing (2013); San Bernardino Terror Attack (2015); Las Vegas Rte. 91 shooting (2017); Thousand Oaks shooting, Parkland Shooting, Tree of Life and Poway Synagogues' shooting events (2018); Virginia Beach, El Paso Walmart and the Highland Ranch Shooting events, (2019); USDOJ Uvalde Critical Incident Review Team (2022-present)
- On the ground **application of Psychological First Aid** in the U.K and Brussels (Paris bombing), Manchester (concert bombing) Italy, Ukraine, Portugal (Madrid bombing), Dubai & Cyprus (terrorist event), Uganda and Sierra Leon (civil war) as well as **virtual video based services** in Afghanistan, India, Southern Sudan, Madrid, Malaysia and Indonesia.
- **Curriculum development and in-person training** on PFA for the Refugee Population for the European Union Humanitarian Aid volunteers (2014-2019) and PFA for the Ukrainian Military (2015, 2019)
- **Victim Services Training of Trainers for the European Union's Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terror**

Introduction

Amy Carol Dominguez, MPA

- **Program Development, Training and Disaster Behavioral Health Response (2010 - present)**
 - **Coordination of Clinical Disaster Volunteer Responses:**
 - **Nashville Covenant School Shooting (2023 - active)**
 - **Appalachia Flooding (2022)**
 - **US Border Crisis (2022, 2023)**
 - **Operation Allies Welcome (2021)**
 - **Various COVID-19 related responses (2020, ongoing)**
 - **Puerto Rico Hurricane Maria (2017)**
 - **Nepal Earthquake (2015-2016)**
 - **Hurricane Sandy (2012)**
 - **Haiti Earthquake (2010)**
 - **Led the launch of Vibrant's Crisis Emotional Care Team (2020)**
 - **Just in Time Training Curation (2011-present)** Most recently for Ukraine, Afghan Refugee crisis, 2021 mass violence and racial violence
 - **Cross-sector coordination on federal, state and local level**

Goals

- Crisis intervention strategies
- Establish context and methods of healthy response and care
- What to expect (self, victims and community)

Unique Reactions to Mass Violence

Communities impacted by
incident of mass violence have a
longer recovery trajectory

Unique Reactions to Mass Violence

Individuals have a harder time making meaning of a random act of violence; Sense of safety in their daily life is disturbed; View of their world changes

Reactions Unique to Crime Victims

- Humiliation (especially around interpersonal crimes)
- A sense of responsibility for another's death
- Survivor guilt and self blame
- A sense of being unworthy of assistance
- An inability to make sense of the randomness of the crime
- Exhibit denial of emotions or lack memory of events

Crisis Intervention Strategies

Disaster Behavioral Health Support

- Brief review of Disaster Behavioral Health
- Providing disaster survivors and responders...
 - Psychological first aid and Skills for Psychological Recovery
 - Coping, Stress Management and Resilience Building
 - Mental health resources and referrals
- Unique aspects of mass violence responses



Crisis Intervention Strategies

Disaster Behavioral Health Support

- Be a...
 1. Compassionate human being/social support
 2. Health care responder
 3. Mental health crisis counselor
 4. Think ***Triage*** and ***Support***, not Diagnosis

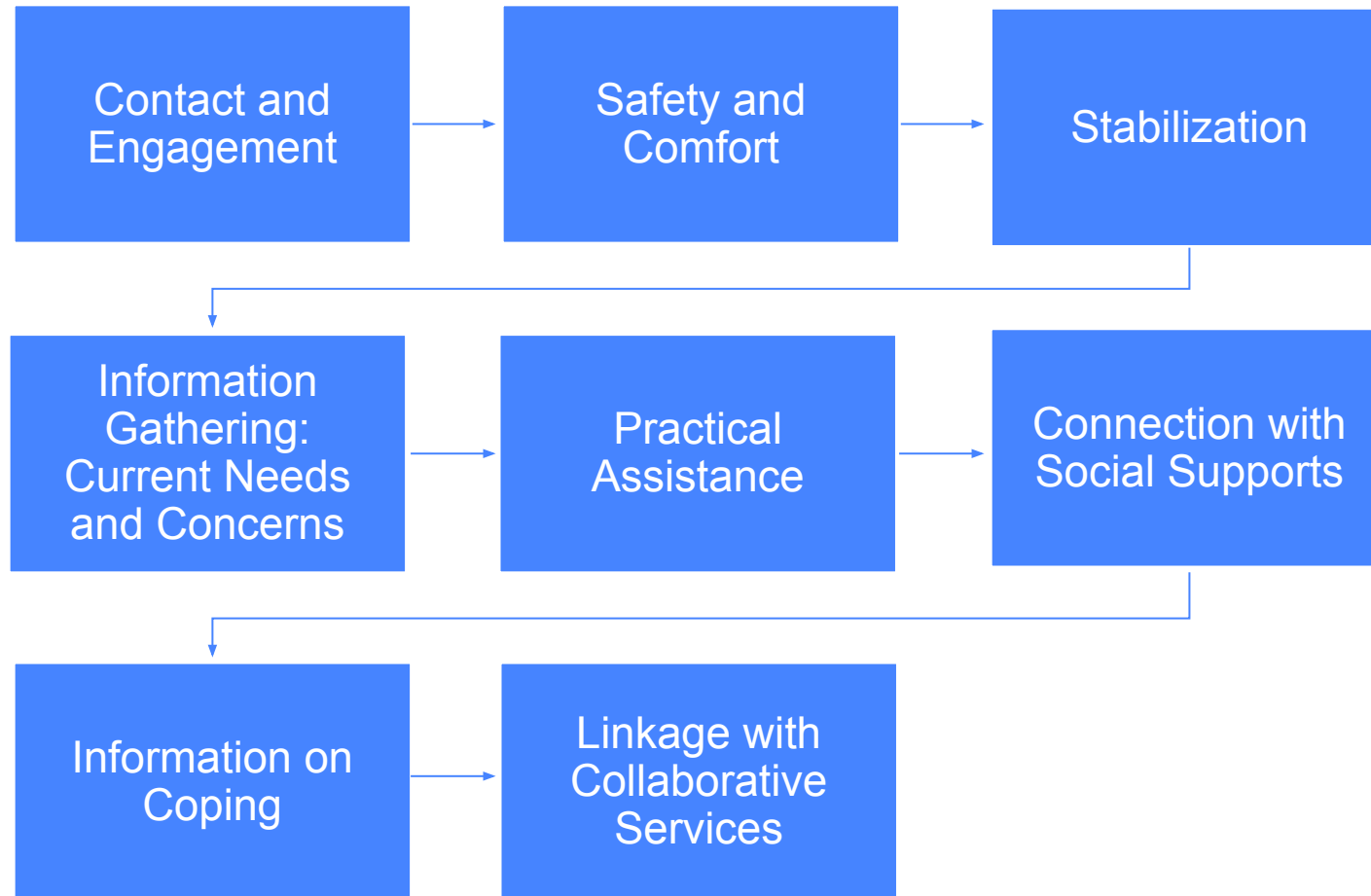
Crisis Intervention Strategies

Evidence-Informed Best Practices: Psychological First Aid, Monitoring and Surveillance, Resources and Referrals

- Approach to help in the *immediate aftermath* of disaster or terrorism
- Appropriate for survivors, witnesses, and responders
- Reduces initial distress and fosters short- and long-term adaptive functioning
- Does NOT assume development of severe mental health problems

Crisis Intervention Strategies

Evidence-Informed Best Practices: Psychological First Aid



Crisis Intervention Strategies

Evidence-Informed Best Practices: Skills for Psychological Recovery

- Designed with a focus on the weeks and months after a disaster
- Appropriate for survivors, witnesses, and first responders
- Aims to provide skills to manage and reduce ongoing distress and effectively cope
- Understands survivors will experience a variety of reactions over differing periods of time

Crisis Intervention Strategies

Evidence-Informed Practices: Skills for Psychological Recovery

- Skills include:
 - Gathering information and prioritizing assistance
 - Building problem-solving skills
 - Promoting positive activities
 - Managing reactions
 - Promoting helpful thinking
 - Rebuilding healthy social connections



On the Ground: Responding to Mass Violence

Critical Communication Skills

- Engage in active listening
 - **Understand** what is being said
 - **Respect** the people you speak with
 - **Be nonjudgmental**
 - **Establish trust**
 - **Be patient** as people work through their feelings
 - Consider the **subtext**



What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

- Assessment Basics
 - Check in with yourself first
 - Utilize humanity; Be a social support
 - Ask the victim what they need
 - Apply Psychological First Aid and stress psychoeducation
 - Skills for Psychological Recovery

Addressing Community Wide Needs

- Identify and utilize **Family Values** and **Support Systems**
- Understand the community's concept of **Health, Well-being, Mental Health, Illness, Coping and Recovery**
- Access **Bilingual and Bicultural** workers providing information in primary languages
- Use humility in your approach and respect differences

What to Expect: Responding to Incidents of Mass Violence and Community Violence



Enduring Continuing Stressors

Chronic Stressors

Poor Population Health

Housing Instability

Political Dynamics + Tension

Community Violence

Racism

Overlapping Disasters (pandemic, natural incidents)

Unending Mass Violence

Lack of access to proper mental health providers

Tools

The Four Core

Safety and Security

Messaging

Supervision

Social Support

Cognitive
Strengthening

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Contextual Awareness

- Increase in political discussions
 - Prepare neutral reactions for political statements you may not agree with
- Heightened police presence
 - Community may feel further threat from:
 - Police
 - ICE
 - Other law enforcement agency presence

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Self-Care for Providers

- Being a provider can be
 - stressful and overwhelming in the best of conditions
 - even more stressful and overwhelming during a disaster
- Remember to set and maintain boundaries

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Self-Care for Providers: Boundaries



Connect with friends & family



Set work hours



Practice mindfulness



Carve out time for yourself



Move your body



Limit news intake

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Self-Care for Providers: Boundaries



Ask for help



Get support



Spend time in nature



De-brief with colleagues



Recognize burnout



Experience your feelings

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Contextual Awareness

- Compounding factors for psychological distress of survivors/community
 - History of traumatic events
 - Immigration status
 - Racial and ethnic identity
 - LGBTQIA+ identity
 - Socioeconomic status
- Continuing psychological distress can be caused by
 - Reason for the violence (i.e., racism, homophobia, etc.) underlying social issues
 - Persistent reminders via social media
 - Lack of help seeking or access to care

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

The 5 Domains of Common Reactions

Behavioral Signs

- Anger and Irritability
- Hyperactivity or Lethargy
- **Sleep Problems**
- Substance Misuse
- **Avoidance (people and places)**
- Appetite Changes

Physical Signs

- Muscle Twitching/Tightness
- Panic/Increased Heart Rate
- Headaches/Stomachaches
- **Nightmares and Flashbacks**
- Inability to Focus

Emotional Signs

- Sadness/Crying
- Distant/Unfeeling/**Numb**

Cognitive Signs

- Confusion/Inability to Follow Instructions/Poor Judgement

Spiritual Signs

- Questioning Faith
- **Looking for Meaning in Events**
- Hopelessness
- Making Changes

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Emotional and Behavioral Responses

- Anxious energy, nervous, agitated
- A sense of helplessness, fearful, sad or angry
- Feel detached or unconcerned about others
- Feel numb and unable to experience love or joy
- Feel that things are unreal; dissociate
- Feel hopeless about the future

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Physical Reactions

- Experience a pounding heart, rapid breathing, sweating, or severe headache when thinking about the disaster
- Have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Have an upset stomach, eat too much or too little, or have other gastrointestinal problems
- Have a worsening of chronic medical problems

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Cognitive Reactions

- Mental exhaustion
- Constantly on guard, jumpy and alert, startle easily
- Have trouble concentrating
- Elicit poor judgment
- Exhibit denial of emotions or lack memory of events

What to Expect: Responding to Mass Violence

Spiritual Reactions

- Questioning the meaning of purpose; of life; of work
- Doubting current religious and other closely held beliefs
- Anger at God/Higher power
- Pervasive hopelessness



On the Ground: Responding to Mass Violence

Connection

- Follow the Incident Command Structure
 - Stay in communications; Report as required
- Create social supports on the ground
 - Use the buddy system in the field
 - Meet regularly with other volunteers
 - Mentor others and be a mentor yourself



On the Ground: Responding to Mass Violence

Safety and Security

- Follow Directions
 - Be aware of your environment and refrain from exposure, hot zones or active conflict areas
 - Work only within your area of knowledge and expertise
 - Take breaks as assigned; hydrate and nourish yourself
 - Ask whenever you are uncertain

On the Ground: Responding to Mass Violence

Collaboration

- Disaster mental health is a team effort
 - We work in concert with our fellow volunteers, other response workers, leaders on the ground, and back at Vibrant
 - More effective to work with different agencies than parallel or in competition; Turf battles are harmful
 - Always ask where you are most needed, do not assume
 - **REMINDER: DO NOT SELF DEPLOY**

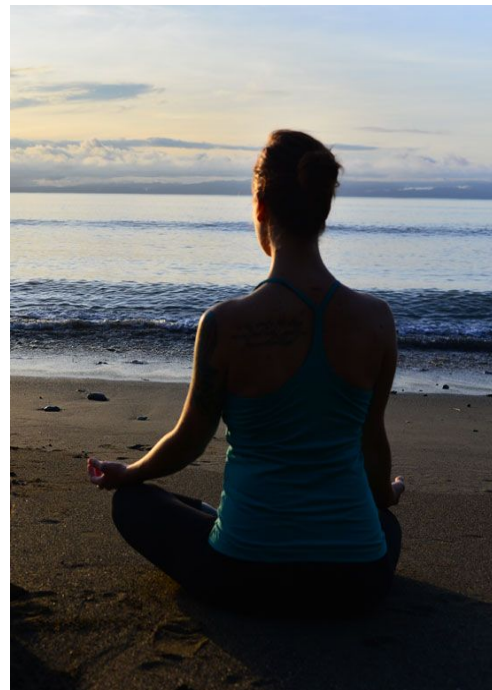
Action Steps

Action Steps

Post-Event Experiences

- Compassion Satisfaction
- Strength
- Self Knowledge
- Self Confidence
- Spiritual Connection
- Community Connection
- Social Connectedness
- Respect for Human Resilience

- Compassion Fatigue
- Secondary Traumatic Stress
- Vicarious Trauma
- Burnout



Action Steps

Importance of Self-Care

- Recognize & value meaning in day-to-day
- Practice self-reflection
- Resilience & compassion satisfaction
- Vibrant Self-Care Action Plan

Self-Care Action Plan

#StayingInBalance

ACTION PLAN EXERCISE

Fill out the self-care assessment checklist by putting a number from 1-5 in the checkboxes next to each item.

Self-care, like the term suggests, is what we do to take care of ourselves. When we're stressed out or feel as though there are too many things to do in our lives, many of us stop paying attention to the things that might make us feel better. We stop being engaged in our own lives and well-being.

As you consider your own stress levels, it's worth taking a minute to see how well you're taking care yourself right now. It might help you decide how to take care of yourself going forward.

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Eat regularly (i.e., breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthy foods
- Avoid use or misuse of tobacco and alcohol
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly
- Take time off when sick
- Dance, swim, walk, run, or do some other physical activity that I enjoy
- Get enough sleep
- Wear comfortable clothes

Action Steps

Learn More

- For a full list of our resources and references, visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/cectresources>

Action Steps

Keeping in Touch with the CECT

- Join our cadre
 - <https://cectvolunteers.force.com/s/interest>
- Perks
 - Monthly newsletter
 - Access to our Digital Resource Library
 - Be the first to hear about our events and deployments

Or email us at crisiseotionalcare@vibrant.org



**Vibrant
Disaster Behavioral
Health Symposium**

**The Power of Community and Connection
in Disaster Behavioral Health**



Join us May 24th to May 26th, 2023 in Washington, D.C., for our 3rd annual symposium.

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Questions?

