

AFTER THE CRIME: ENSURING TRAUMA INFORMED, VICTIM- CENTERED SERVICES



Julia Fuller-Wilson, MSW

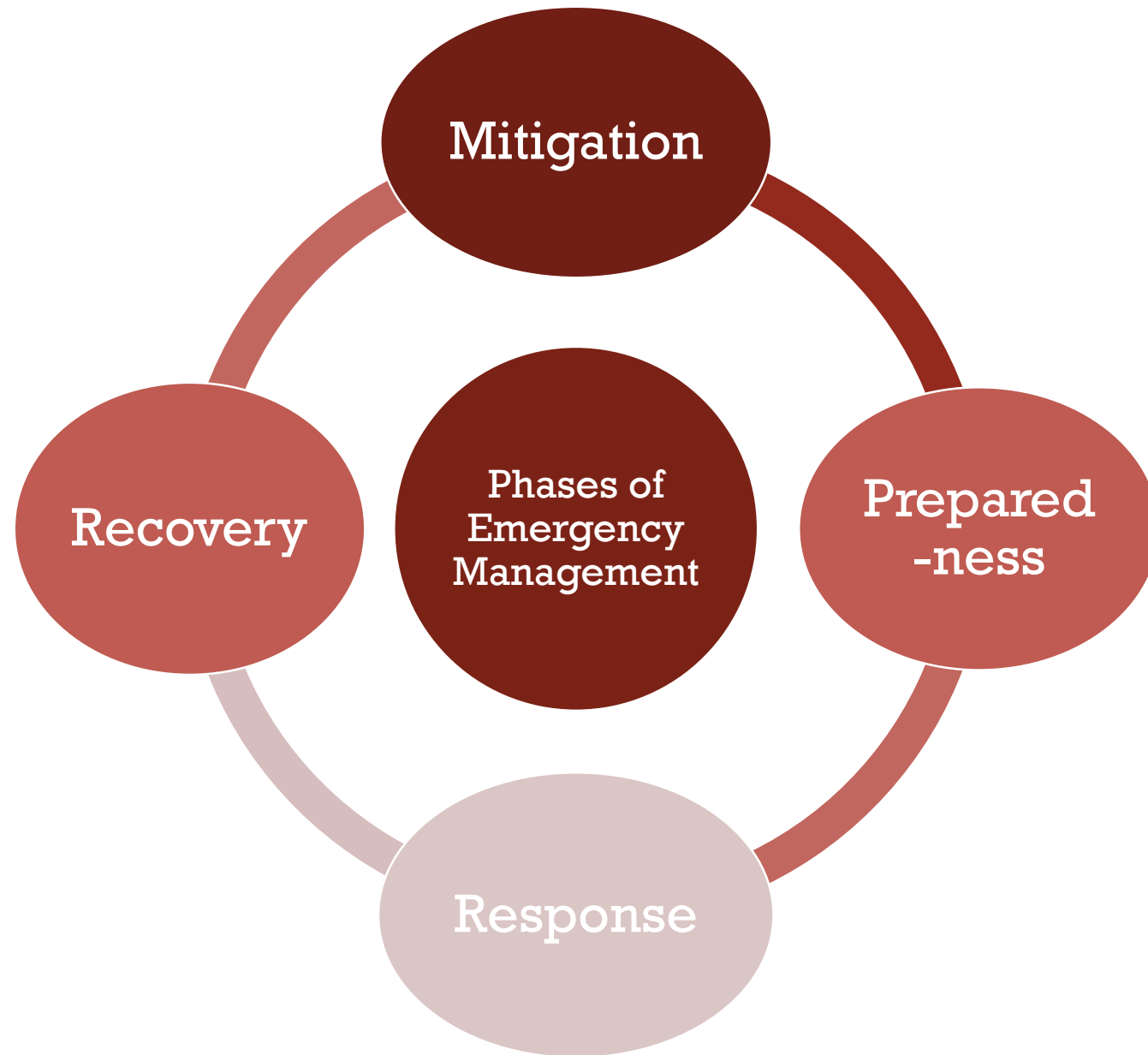
Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)



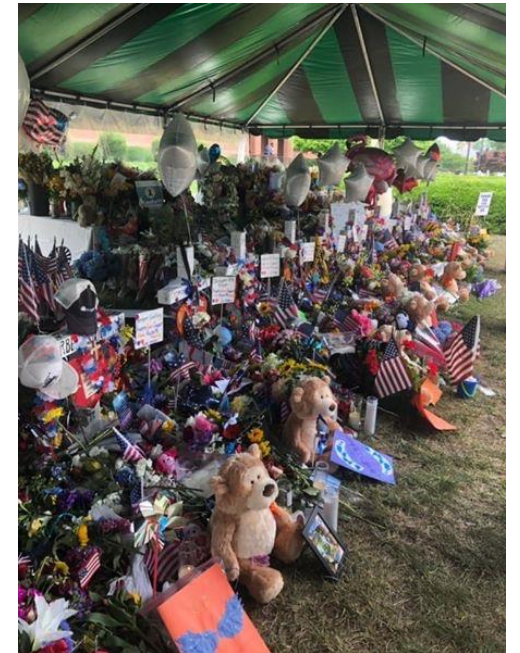
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Defining and understanding how trauma impacts an individual and community
- Identifying the short and long term needs of victims after a mass casualty event and the resources available
- Understanding the Crisis Response Team as a trauma-informed, victim centered recovery protocol following criminal mass casualty events
- Understanding the codified requirements of local emergency management agencies, hospitals, K-12 schools, and higher education.
- Discuss lessons learned from past crisis response efforts, to include the Virginia Beach mass shooting in May 2019





RECOVERY



TRAUMA INFORMED?

Trauma-informed services identifies and responds to the signs, symptoms, and risks of trauma to better support the needs of the individual and/or community.

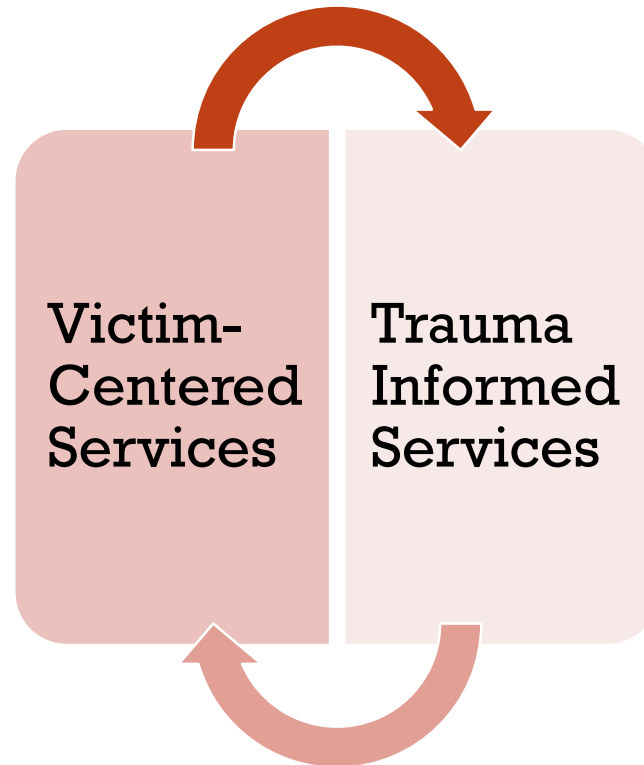
A Trauma-informed framework involves:

- Understanding how trauma effects an individual and/or community and its impact on health, behavior, connection, and resilience;
- Training our leaders, providers, and staff on responding to victims in a trauma-informed manner;
- Translating what we know about trauma into our policies, procedures, planning, and practices;
- Decrease re-traumatization by supporting victims who have experienced trauma in a non-judgmental manner;
- Understanding that the victim's perspective is the only one that matters for him/her/them and letting them decide what is best for them



VICTIM-CENTERED SERVICES

This approach is defined as the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner.



PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY TRAUMA

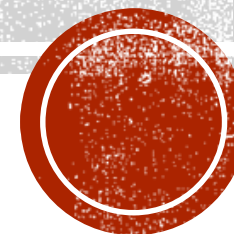
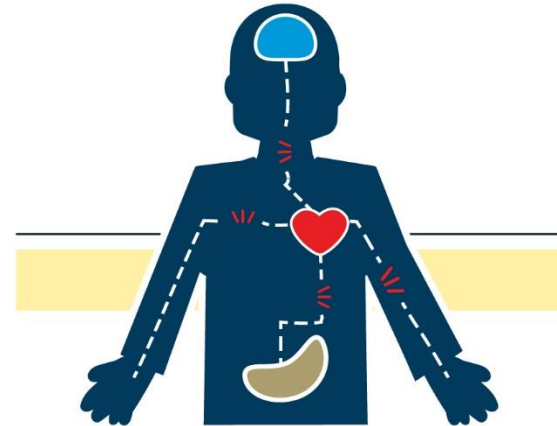


DIAGRAM OF POST-TRAUMA IMPACT



COMMON TRAUMATIC STRESS REACTIONS



COMMON TRAUMATIC STRESS REACTIONS

EMOTIONAL

- Shock
- Terror
- Irritability
- Blame
- Anger
- Grief
- Emotional Numbing
- Helplessness
- Difficulty feeling happy
- Survivor's guilt

COGNITIVE

- Impaired concentration
- Impaired decision making
- Memory impairment
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Self-blame
- Intrusive thoughts
- Dissociation



COMMON TRAUMATIC STRESS REACTIONS

PHYSICAL

- Fatigue/exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Cardiovascular strain
- Startle response
- Hyper-arousal
- Increased physical pain
- Reduced immune response
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal upset
- Decreased appetite
- Decreased libido
- Vulnerability to illness

INTERPERSONAL

- Increased relational conflict
- Social withdrawal
- Reduced relational intimacy
- Alienation
- Impaired work or school performance
- Distrust
- Decreased satisfaction
- Overprotectiveness
- Feeling abandoned/rejected



IMMEDIATE VICTIM'S NEEDS

- Information
- Questions answered
- Support- individual and community
- Expectations for healing
- Empathy
- Time to grieve
- Community resources
- Short and long term care
- A self-determined plan
- Coping strategies



EMPATHY → CONNECTION → RESILIENCY



QUALITIES OF EMPATHY

1. Understanding that a person's perspective is their truth
2. Practicing non-judgement
3. Recognizing emotions in others
4. Communicating emotions



RISK FACTORS FOR LONG TERM TRAUMA

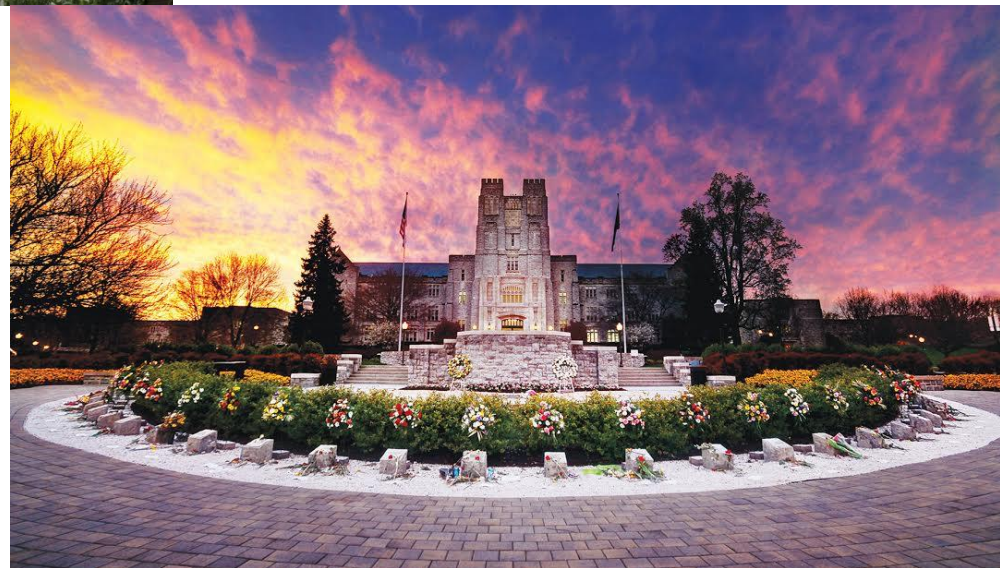
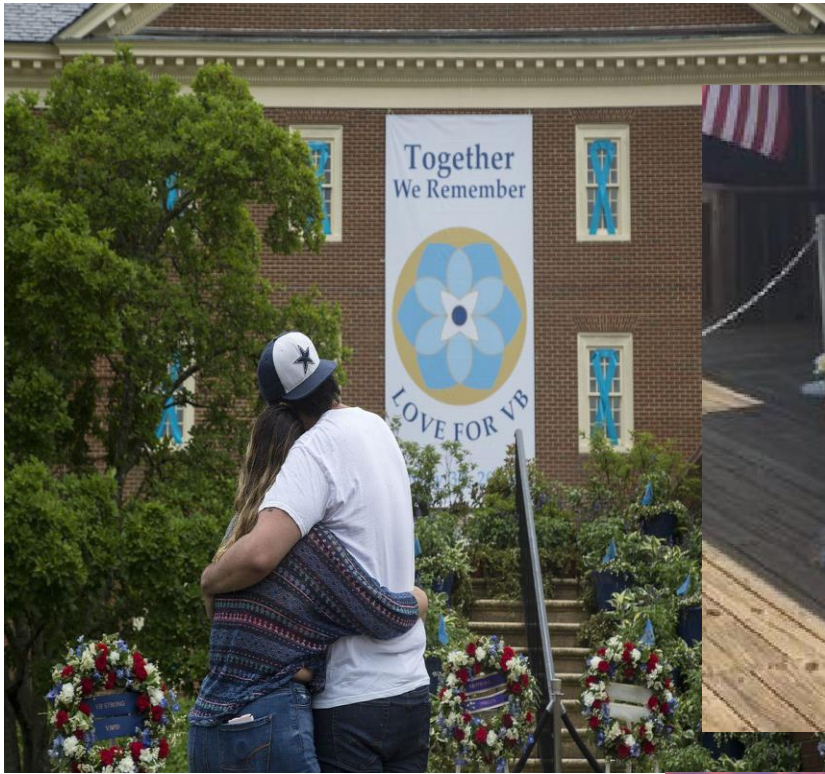
- Survivor's proximity to the incident
- Prior trauma exposure
- Women are more likely to develop PTSD than men
- Victim's coping strategies and support systems are strong predictors of their long-term health and wellness



MENTAL HEALTH AFTER MASS SHOOTING

- Research suggests that mass shooting survivors may be at greater risk for mental health difficulties compared with people who experience other types of trauma, such as natural disasters.
- The National Center for PTSD estimates that 28 percent of people who have witnessed a mass shooting develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- After the 2008 shootings on NIU's campus, although a large percentage of mass shooting survivors were either resilient or displayed only short-term stress reactions, about 12 percent reported persistent PTSD.





WHAT IS THE VIRGINIA CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM?

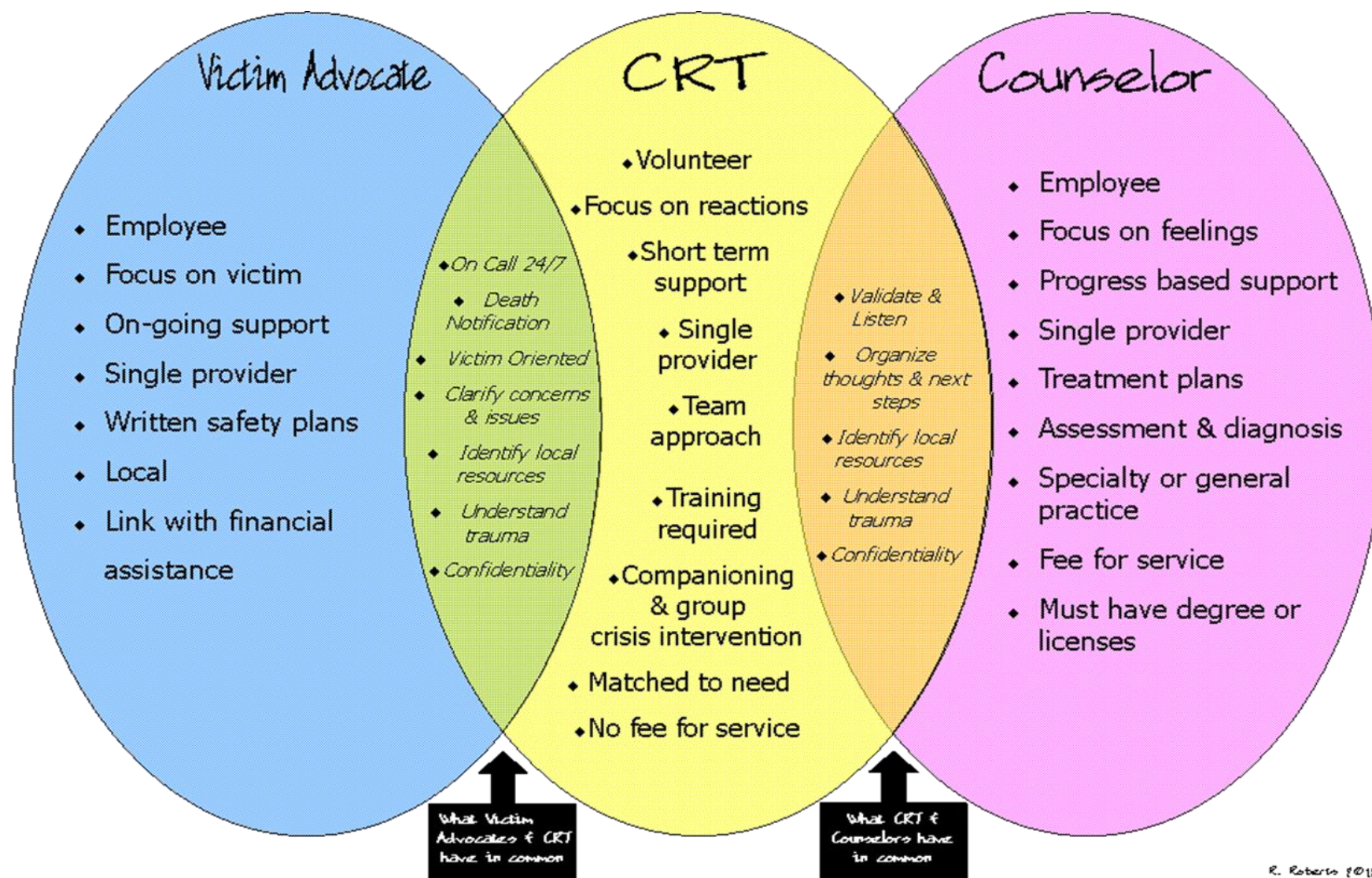
Composed of volunteers trained to provide trauma mitigation and education in the aftermath of a critical incident

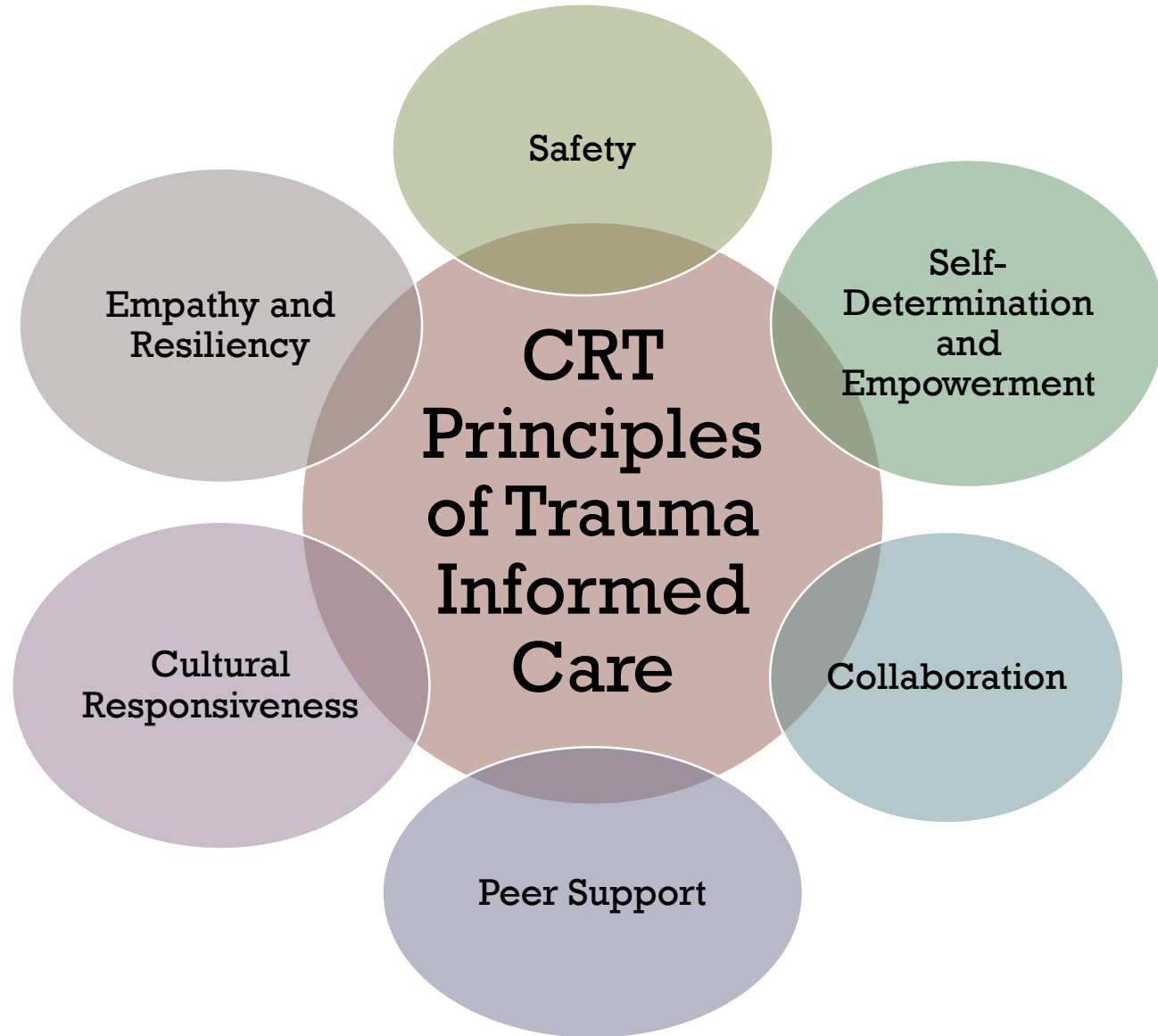
Team members have received a minimum of 24 hours of skills-based, field tested training developed by the National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA)

Team members are called upon to provide assistance to those affected in both large and smaller-scale incidents

CRT training covers techniques and protocols for providing crisis intervention, focusing on the fundamentals of crisis and trauma as well as psychological first aid and response during a catastrophic event.







CODE OF VIRGINIA §§ 22.1-279.8, 32.1-111.3, 44-146.18, AND 44-146.19

Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (VVF) shall be contacted immediately to deploy assistance in the event of an emergency as defined in the emergency response plan when there are victims as defined in §19.2-11.01.

Victims defined in §19.2-11.01 include “a person who has suffered physical, psychological, or economic harm as a direct result of the commission of a felony or of assault and battery...”



CODE OF VIRGINIA §§22.1-279.8, 32.1-111.3, 44-146.18, AND 44-146.19

Both shall be the lead coordinating agencies for those individuals determined to be victims.

Local plans shall also contain current contact information for both agencies



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRT'S

Immediate uses for the CRT (first 1 – 5 days)

Short-term opportunities for response (up to 6 months from the incident)

Long-term opportunities for response (6 months and beyond)



STATE CRISIS TEAM RESOURCES

- Coordination of victim advocate response

- Provide group and individual crisis intervention services

- Respond to Family Assistance Center (ESF6) to provide assistance to include:

 - Assisting the locality in scaling the FAC to meet the needs of the specific incident

 - Provide advocates/companions to assist families in understand the process and agencies they will encounter at the FAC

 - Assist local law enforcement with providing death notifications

 - Supporting victims by explaining the criminal justice process



STATE CRISIS TEAM RESOURCES

Ensure victims and family members are aware of the FAC and services available to them

Assign victim advocates to assist victims/family members after the FAC (liaison/companionship)

Provide support to local Victim-Witness programs that do not have the capacity to provide services to victims in a mass casualty event/critical incident

Work with the locality to develop plans to address the needs of victims (short and long term)



STATE CRISIS TEAM RESOURCES

Work with the locality to ensure that their policies and procedures are victim-centered
(Mitigation/Preparedness)

Access federal funding through the Office on Victim's Assistance (OVC), if applicable

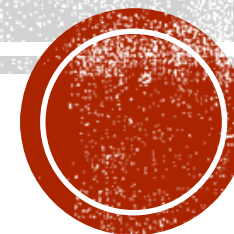
Work with federal consultants to assess community and victim needs

Anniversary/Memorial Planning

Other victim-centered services requested by the locality or organization



VIRGINIA BEACH RESPONSE



MASS CASUALTY OVERVIEW



- Friday, May 31st at 4:00pm
- A City employee killed 12 people and critically injured 4 others
- 11 of those killed were City employees that worked in the same building as the perpetrator
- 1 deceased victim was a contractor for a private company
- Shooting happened in a City building, building #2, that is within a government complex with other buildings in close proximity
- Building #2 was primarily Public Utilities and Public Works employees, with IT in the basement
- Many people witnessed the shootings
- Workers in other buildings were instructed to shelter in place until it could be resolved
- Victims and witnesses within the building were evacuated without being able to grab their personal belongings- cell phone, purse, car keys, etc.

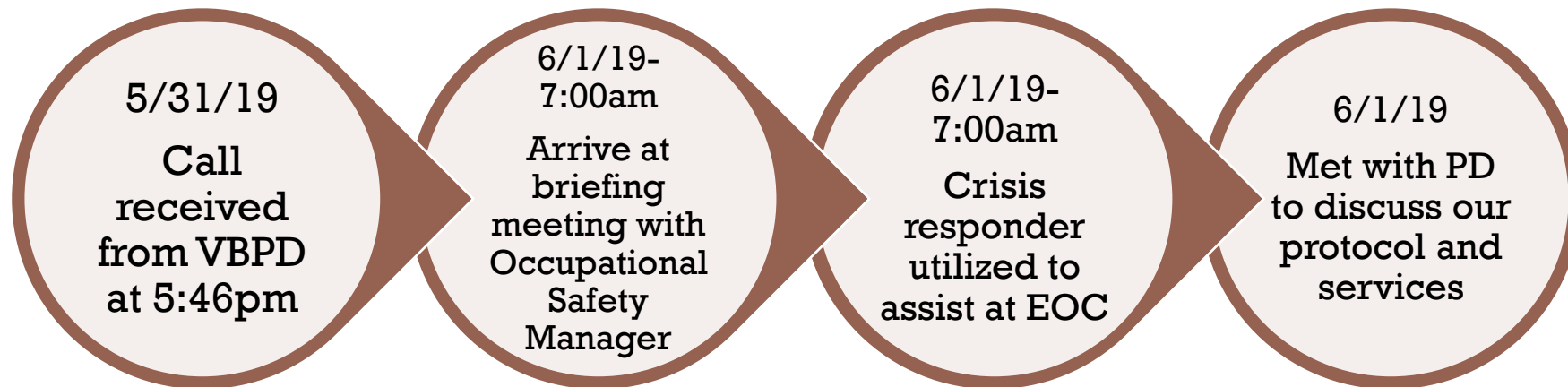


FIRST AND FOREMOST...

- Virginia Beach coordination and thoughtful efforts have made a huge difference
- Extending grace
- City wide events and memorials to encourage a strong sense of community
- Trauma training for supervisors/managers
- Creation of a Recovery Manager position
- Needs assessment
- Outside independent investigative team to review case
- Creation of the Resiliency Center through Sentara
- Creation of pins to honor victims and community
- Utilizing supportive services throughout the entire process



INITIAL RESPONSE



FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER

- Utilized 31 responders
- Responded to 14 different work stations
- Services included:
 - Assisting law enforcement with victim interviews
 - Assisting law enforcement with property retrieval/returns
 - Crisis intervention and support to city workers
 - Compensation education and advocacy
 - General advocacy



MEMORIAL EVENTS

- Initial event to come together during first week
- Large memorial event for those killed
- City flew in families
- Crisis responders at both events to provide support and crisis intervention



COMPENSATION EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE

- Provided on-sight compensation education sessions
- Conducted open forums for questions about compensation
- Assisted victims in completing compensation forms
- Provided advocacy for victims and their families
- Coordinated financial relief efforts



BUILDING #2 EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

Assisting
employees
retrieve
their items
from
building #2

2 weeks of
response

13 crisis
responders

1352 hours
of direct
response
time



GROUP CRISIS INTERVENTION

- National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) model
- Groups of 2-30 people
- Attendees should have like experiences
- Voluntary
- Clarity about purpose of group
- Confidentiality
- Peer support
- Ensuring culturally responsive services



GROUP CRISIS INTERVENTION (GCI)

Group Crisis
Interventions

30 groups

29 crisis
responders

2610 hours of
direct
response
time

218 victims
served



BUILDING #2 FAMILY SUPPORT

Led by Virginia Beach PD leadership

Allowed families to revisit where their loved one passed away

Provided victims with information



INFORMATION RELEASES: THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Privacy
- Freedom to express feelings
- Safety
- Leadership present
- Offer answers to the best of your ability
- Prepare for a range of emotions
- Media



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- \$3 million in VOCA Bridge Funding
- Anti-terrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP)
- Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Funds (EFLEA) from DOJ in the amount of \$500,000 to reimburse the city for first responder overtime expenditures
- Needs assessment and Supervisor training on trauma



RESILIENCY CENTER



- A Resiliency Center is a safe place to provide ongoing services and assistance to victims, family members, first responders, and community members.
- The FAC may transition to a Resiliency Center within weeks or months after the event, depending on the nature and scale of the event.



ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

- Virtual Memorial events
- Building #2 memorial
- 5 responders assisted victims and those impacted



FINAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT RELEASE

- The final investigation report was released on the City website for all to view
- Advanced notice to 16 victims
- Advanced notice to all employees in building #2
- Families of the 12 deceased victims were provided the opportunity to meet with the Police Chief to ask questions and discuss the report
- Crisis responders were present to provide additional support



VIRGINIA BEACH CRISIS RESPONSE EFFORTS

- **55 responders** from across the state
- **2 years** of response efforts (including annual anniversaries)
- **5450 *direct* response hours**
- **Over 200 victims served**



LESSONS LEARNED

Early intervention can help to promote a positive recovery environment by promoting safety, calm, self-efficacy, social support, and hope.

Promoting a positive recovery environment may also involve protecting survivors from punitive or blaming others, or an intrusive press.



LESSONS LEARNED

Immediate intervention or crisis counseling can be especially useful for those with risk factors which include experiencing death of a loved one or personal injury, witnessing violence, or being a lone survivor.

Early intervention could include: psychological first aid, advocacy, crisis counseling, referrals, and public health messaging.



LESSONS LEARNED

Community connections are crucial for victim's resilience in the aftermath of mass violence and that they have ongoing support available to them.

Memorial events—particularly those that are student or community initiated and led—are most helpful to survivors in terms of recovering after a mass violence event



KEY CONCEPTS

Immediate response defines the event for victims & public

Understand that the needs of victims are very different from individuals that survive other types of disasters

Rely on outside experts in the field for short-term, larger scale assistance

“victims taking care of victims” is never a good model

Ensure that assistance efforts have clear leadership with decision making authority



QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

- [Aces Aware \(n.d.\) *Principles of trauma informed care*. https://www.acesaware.org/treat/principles-of-trauma-informed-care/](https://www.acesaware.org/treat/principles-of-trauma-informed-care/)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (n.d.) *Animals in disaster: the four phases of emergency management*. https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/downloads/is10_unit3.doc
- Novotney, A. (2018, September). *What happens to survivors*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/09/survivors>
- Office of Justice Programs. (2015, August). *Helping victims of mass violence and terrorism: planning, response, recovery, and resources*. Office for Victims of Crime. <https://www.ovc.gov/pubs/mvt-toolkit/about-toolkit.html>
- Reifels, L., Pietrantoni, L., Prati, G., Kim, Y., Kilpatrick, D. G., Dyb, G., Halpern, J., Olf, M., Brewin, C. R., & O'Donnell, M. (2013). Lessons learned about psychosocial responses to disaster and mass trauma: an international perspective. *European journal of psychotraumatology*, 4, 10.3402/ejpt.v4i0.22897. <https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v4i0.22897>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency. (n.d.). *Phases of disaster*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/recovering-disasters/phases-disaster>
- Virginia Law (n.d.) Code of Virginia. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode>
- [Warner, L.M., Gitierrez-Dona, B., Angula, M.V. & Schwarzer, R. \(2015\)](https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2014.955018). Resource loss, self-efficacy, and family support predict posttraumatic stress symptoms: a 3-year study of earthquake survivors. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 28, No. 3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2014.955018>
- Wiseman, T. (1996). A concept analysis of empathy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 23, <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.12213.x>



CONTACT INFORMATION

Julia Fuller-Wilson, MSW

Virginia State Crisis Response Coordinator

Julia.fuller-wilson@dcjs.virginia.gov

Office: (804) 371-0386

After hours cell: (804) 840-4276

