



#### The Critical Roles of State VOCA Assistance and Victim Compensation Programs in Mass Violence Readiness, Response, Recovery & Resilience ELIZABETH CRONIN, ESQ. ALYSSA RHEINGOLD, PHD ANNE SEYMOUR

## **Learning Objectives**



- Describe and readily access national, Federal, Tribal and state resources for mass violence readiness, response, recovery and resilience.
- Identify the specific planning, response, recovery and resilience roles of SAAs and their staff.
- Identify the specific planning, response, recovery and resilience roles of state Victim Compensation Programs, and best practices.





# Four Phases Before, During & After Mass Violence

- 1. Readiness
- 2. Response
- 3. Recovery



4. Resilience





#### Icebreaker



# What are any *challenges* you have faced in preparing for or responding to mass violence or terrorist crimes?







#### **Mass Casualty Event**

- Is a crisis whether criminal, man-made or natural disaster
- There is no one size fits all response.
- What do these events have in common death, injury, fear/terror, needs, trauma, chaos





#### What else do they have in common?

- The impact of the event extends well beyond those individuals directly affected
  - Families
  - Friends
  - Bystanders
  - Entire communities
  - Responders





#### **Mass Casualty Response**

- Plan
- Prepare
- Practice
- Pivot





#### You need to be

- Nimble
- Flexible
- Creative
- Able to react and redirect
- Resilient
- Responsive





### Planning, Preparing and Practicing

- Coordination
- Communication
- Expectation Setting
- Chain of Command





### Challenges

- All emergencies, including mass violence, are local (National Incident Management Structure)
- Every locale is different and unique
- Resources vary
- Those responding are often from the location affected
- Will likely need ongoing response after crisis



### Challenges

- Leadership
- Funding
- Assets/Resources
- Those Who Do/Those Who Say They Do
- Swooping in and leaving
- Press





#### **Stages of Response**

- Immediate Response
  - Who is being deployed
  - Who needs to be involved on the ground
  - Do you have what you need
  - How long will this response be





#### **Stages of Response**

- Secondary Response
  - Who can be engaged to offer services or provide support such as schools, VAPs, faith community, community programs
  - Who will assist in identifying local resources and leaders





#### **Stages of Response**

- Long Term Response
  - On going support
  - Funding
  - Resiliency Centers





#### Before

- All responses are local
- Coordinate ahead with your state partners
  - Emergency Services
  - Governor's Office
  - Victim Assistance Programs





#### Before

- Declaration of Emergency (state and local)
- Go Kits Preparation
- Plan for in person response
- Knowledge about funding
- Culturally appropriate response preparation
- Engage local leaders ahead of time



#### Before

- Work with state partners on which agencies will do what tasks in an emergency
- Contact or coordinate with OVC TTAC on possible assistance





#### On the Ground

- Expect Chaos
- Multiple responders coordination
- Assessing need
  - Maslow's Hierarchy





#### On the Ground

- Constantly reassess
- Stay nimble
- Find the helpers
  - There are those who do and those who say they do





#### What do they have in common?

- Death
- Injury
- Fear/Terror
- Chaos
- Trauma
- Needs





#### Use your network creatively

You may not think of things ahead of time but be creative in how you continue to shift

- Buffalo SNUG
- Local VAPs
- Who else?







#### everyone

### Long-Term

- Resiliency Centers
  - Pitfalls
  - Considerations
  - Listen to the experts (but not too much)





# "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places." **Ernest Hemingway**





#### **CRIME VICTIM COMPENSATION**

#### Thinking Ahead....

- It is *essential* that comp programs be involved in advance planning and training for mass violence readiness and response!
- Greater awareness about the important services & support provided by comp programs is needed at the state & local levels!
- The NMVVRC principal partners at the national level, are also key partners at the state & local levels:
  - American Hospital Association (hospitals & healthcare systems)
  - National Governors Association (Governor's Executive Team & Emergency Planners)
  - U.S. Conference of Mayors (statewide Mayor's Association)
  - IACP Mass Violence Advisory Initiative (statewide Police Chiefs' Association) Your comp program is a KEY STAKEHOLDER in MV planning!





## **Advance Training**

#### Offered by your program to key partners:

- As a component of MV planning strategies
- Stand-alone training programs held regionally in your state



#### Incorporate as part of State Victim Assistance Academy:

 Example: DC Victim Assistance Academy, two-day "Mass Disaster Training" for victim service professionals (including victim compensation as a topic)

#### Comp program participation in "real-time" planning exercises:

- Crisis response
- Friends & Relatives Center (FRC)
- Family Assistance Center (FAC)



## Hawaii Advance Planning & Training



- 2000, The Crime Victim Compensation revises statutory changes to ensure mental health services are available to victims/ witnesses/survivors
- October 2017, Two-day Honolulu/Big Island MV Training Meeting the Needs of Victims, Survivors and Affected Communities: Coordinated and Collaborative Response to Terrorism and Mass Violence Crimes, (Funding Source: CVCC/US Attorney/FBI)
- December 2017, OVC Issues "Role of VOCA Administrators and Compensation Programs in Incidents of Mass Violence"
- February 2018, Letter to Stakeholders requesting written feedback on the Mass Violence Response Plan
- June 2018, Lt. Governor Stakeholders Meeting breakthrough from low-level staff to policy makers
- June 2018, first discussion with HI-EMA Emergency Support Function 6 (ESF 6) to integrate victim services into the state's response plan
- March 2019, the Commission was awarded VOCA funding for monthly stakeholder Mass Violence Planning Workgroup





## Hawaii Advance Planning & Training (cont.)

- April 2018, Two-day Maui MV Training Meeting the Needs of Victims, Survivors & Affected Communities: Coordinated & Collaborative Response to Mass Violence & Terrorism Crimes, (Funding Source: Maui County)
- May 28 31, 2019, An OVCTTAC Consultant conducted a three separate Mass Violence Trainings for different stakeholder groups, *Mass Violence Emergency Response Training* (Funding Source: OVCTTAC/CVCC)
- May 2019, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Mutual Aid with county Victim Assistance Units signed by four county prosecutors.
- September 2019, Streamlined Compensation Application for Mass Violence Incidents Translated to 12 Languages
- December 2019, Three-day Honolulu and Big Island MV Training, Responding to Victims of/Survivors of Mass Violence and Terrorism (Planning for a Assistance and Reunification Center) (Funding Source: CVCC/Homeland Security)
- September 2021, Two-day Refresher Mass Violence Training with OVCTTAC (virtual), *Responding to Victims of/Survivors of Mass Violence and Terrorism*, (Funding Source: CVCC/Homeland Security)
- February 2022, Hawaii Emergency Management, Emergency Support Function (ESF6) Annex acknowledges victim services in the State response plan
- February 2023, Behavioral Health Response to Mass Violence Victims (two-Island, two-day training program) with support from NMVVRC





### **Best & Promising Practices**

- Agency "Go Kit" (<u>https://www.nmvvrc.org/media/hdnh0cnu/victim-assistance-agency-go-kit-checklist.pdf</u>) Comp information for survivors prepared in advance, to bring to the FRC and FAC:
  - Brochure
  - Application forms (shorter, and/or a "compensation quick card")
  - Information about who can help survivors with their applications
- Proactive on-site collaboration with comp staff and local law enforcement:
  - Immediate validation of "reporting" and "cooperating"
- Plans for FRC and FAC include designated space for victim compensation staff





### **Best & Promising Practices (***cont.***)**

- Technology foundation prepared in advance for *immediate* initial documentation & submission of comp claims:
  - From FRC and FAC
  - Computer hardware and software for uploading to comp program
  - WiFi, hotspots, Ipads & Iphones, chargers, paper shredder
- OK: The VOCA Board changed its policies to maintain a \$500,000 balance for the purpose of responding to MV crimes
- FL: Provides different colored bracelets for VSPs and first responders, which indicate the language(s) they speak.
- CO: Every MV survivor is assigned a personal victim services professional to assess & address their needs (including victim compensation)
- CO +: Ongoing contract with statewide travel agency to immediately book hotel spaces; and assist with transporting out-of-state victims and survivors



#### **California Crime Victim Compensation Board**

#### (https://victims.ca.gov/for-victims/victims-of-mass-events/)

#### **Recovery from mass violence events**

#### HOME » FOR VICTIMS » RECOVERY FROM MASS VIOLENCE EVENTS

If you or a loved one have been a victim of mass violence, CalVCB can help you with the costs of recovery.

GoFundMe money is not in conflict with CalVCB payments. You can receive both. But you cannot get CalVCB payment for expenses already paid by GoFundMe or any other source.

Click on an event below to find out how to get compensated.

#### Half Moon Bay shooting

For the shooting in Half Moon Bay on January 23, 2023, you may qualify for compensation if you are a:

- · Victim who was injured
- · Family member of those killed or injured
- · Witness to the crime

Call CalVCB Customer Service for help: 1-800-777-9229.

You may qualify for up to \$70,000 in reimbursements.

#### Services covered include:

- Grief counseling
- Emotional support
- Medical appointments
   Income loss

Income loss

CalVCB can give



- Provides information for specific MVIs
- Explains "Go Fund Me" vs. victim compensation
- Provides overview of comp services & reimbursements
- Offers toll-free number and "click to application"
- Offers brochure in English & Spanish



#### **MVI Resources**











#### Office for Victims of Crime Mass Violence & Terrorism Toolkit





www.ovc.gov/pubs/mvt-toolkit/index.html



#### National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center (NMVVRC)



We serve as the source for best evidence to achieve a social understanding of mass violence upon which civic leaders, mental health professionals, journalists, policy makers, and victim assistance professionals can rely. Our vision is to provide communities access to evidence-based information and resources needed to effectively prepare for and respond

to mass violence incidents.



#### www.nmvvrc.org



#### **NMVVRC** Mission

To improve community preparedness and the nation's capacity to serve victims and communities recovering from mass violence through research, planning, training, technology, and collaboration.

The NMVVRC was created on October 1, 2017 at the Medical University of South Carolina, with support from the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime.





# Focus Groups with VOCA and Comp SAAs

- May 2018: three focus groups
   to held
  - Clarify roles in assisting states with readiness, response, recovery
  - Lessons learned
  - Recommendations in the field



### SUMMARY REPORT

Combined Focus Group of The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators &

The National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards

*May 31, 2018* Charleston, South Carolina

The National Mass Violence & Victimization Resource Center

National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Medical University of South Carolina 67 President Street, MSC 861 2nd Floor, IOP South Charleston, South Carolina 29425

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The NAVAA and the NACVCB are Partners of the National Mass Violence & Victimization Resource Center

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# **Over 60 Tip Sheets Developed for:**

- MVI victims, survivors and witnesses
- Victim service professionals
- Mental and behavioral health professionals
- First responders
- Criminal justice professionals
- Community and civic leaders
- News media professionals

https://www.nmvvrc.org/media/nmvvrctip-sheets/



### Twelve Self-help Tips for Coping in the Aftermath of Mass Violence Incidents

When a mass violence incident (MVI) occurs, it has a devastating and destructive impact on victims (including those who were physically or psychologically injured, and the family members of those who were injured or killed), witnesses, first responders, news media professionals, community leaders, and people who live in the community where it occurred. As MVIs occur with increasing frequency in the United States, there is often a national, collective level of sorrow, distress and anger that results from repeated acts of mass violence.

Experiencing traumatic events can have a cumulative negative

effect for some individuals. MVIs can become a "trauma cue" for

many people who have previously endured mass violence, criminal

victimization, racial, ethnic, religious, and/or anti-LGBTQI violence,

Simply put, a trauma cue can be anything that reminds you of a

traumatic event that you previously experienced. There are often

aspects of MVIs that could serve as trauma cues whether someone

experienced it in person or vicariously through extensive media coverage. Experiencing trauma cues can heighten distress and impede recovery from previous violent victimization experiences. This brief "bip sheet" offers practical things that can be done to

help reduce the distress created by MVIs as well as some self-help

 First, recognize the feelings and reactions you are having – as long as they are not destructive to you or others – are normal and okay. MVIs can cue a wide array of emotions including shock,

fear, worry, anger, sorrow, sadness, hopelessness, and confusion, to name a few. You may also have physical reactions such as stomachaches, heart racing, headaches, tremors, and being jumpy. Whatever you are feeling is okay. Know these intense emotions and reactions will not remain with you forever. Take positive action

to address these feelings by following some of the proactive

Accept what you witnessed or experienced may have been frightening and disturbing, and it felt like a serious threat to

the safety and security of the affected victims, witnesses, first responders and community. In addition, when MVIs are motivated by hatred, there is often a higher level of distress for people who are members of the entire "community" targeted with hate.

or other traumatic life events.

resources you may find useful.

steps below

3. Talk to a trusted friend, family member or spiritual advisor. They can help you talk through your feelings and validate that you are not alone in your feelings and reactions, as well as help you to process your feelings. Social support can be especially helpful as you navigate this difficult time. Victim service professionals may be available in your community as an additional source of support or they can help connect you with others if you are feeling alone and isolated.

 Check in with others - by text, email, phone, or in-person. The simple act of reaching out and asking, "How are you doing right now?" can be helpful. Check in as often as necessary.

5. Do something practical. In situations where we feel are out of our control, sometimes it is helpful to focus your attention on things that are small, practical, and within your control. Whether it is just taking a shower, picking up necessary victim-related paperwork, or checking in on a loved one. Take it day by day and even minute by minute.







# **Useful NMVVRC Publications**

- MVI After-Action Report Review
- Victim-centric MVI After-Action Report: Recommendations & Template
- The Role of Police Executives in Assisting Victims of Mass Violence: Lessons From the Field (2020) Police Executive Research Forum



The Role of Police Executives in Assisting Victims of Mass Violence: Lessons from the Field

September 2020







### **Immediate Response Resources**

- List of resources
- Resources posted on social media and distributed to key stakeholders and partners

### Readiness - Response - Resilience

November 22, 2021

Following the tragic deaths of five people, the physical injuries to at least 48 people and regardless of the perpetrator's intent in Waukesha, Wisconsin on November 21, we at the National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center believe the resources below may provide some guidance for the community in the coming days and months.

### Resources for Victims, Survivors, Families and Community Members

- The NMVVRC self-help app, Transcend NMVC, is available on both <u>Apple</u> and <u>Android</u> mobile phones
   Twelve Self-Help Tips for Coping in the Aftermath of Mass Violence Incidents | Read <u>here</u>
   Managing Distress: Grounding Tips For Crime Victims, Survivors And Family Members Of Mass Violence
- Managing bistress: strounding lips For Crime victims, Survivors and Family Members of Mass violence Incidents (MVIs) | Read <u>here</u>
   Tips For Survivors: Coping With Grief After A Disaster Or Traumatic Event via the Substance Abuse and
- Mass Volence resources from The National Child Traumatic Stress Network | Read here
- Mindfulness and Meditation to Support Resilience after Mass Violence | Read here
- Suggestions For Parents Mass Violence Incidents | Read here

### **Resources for Community and Civic Leaders**

- Timeline of Activities to Promote Mental Health Recovery: Recommendations Before, During and Following A Mass Violence Incident | Read here
- Tips for Community Leaders: Managing Donations | Read here
- Tips for Community Leaders: Managing Volunteers | Read here

### **Crime Victim Compensation**

- Wisconsin Crime Victims Compensation Program | Read here
- Victims only toll-free calls: (800) 446-6564; Local: (608) 264-9497; Fax: (608) 264-6368

### United for Waukesha Community Fund

Waukesha County Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County
have created a fund to support the needs of impacted families | More info here

### About the NMVVRC: The National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center is located at the Medical University of South Carolina, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, and receives funding from the U.S. Department

of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime. Learn more about us on www.nmvvrc.org

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### 

### Frequently Asked Questions About the Transcend NMVC Mobile App

What is the Transcend NMVC Mobile App? This free app was developed by the National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center to help those who have been affected by mass violence. Designed to help reduce the risk of developing problems and enhance recovery if you already have problems, Transcend NMVC: • Provides information about common reactions to mass violence, crime, and other highly stressible invents. • Guides you trough state-of-the-ariselih-teristic stress-related behavioral health problems and promote recovery if you already have problems. • Connects you with access to victim/survivor services, financial, legal, and mental health resources.

### Is the Transcend NMVC app just for survivors of mass violence? The app was designed for those

directly affected by mass violence and their families and friends, but it may also be useful for: • Victim service providers, law enforcement officials, other first responders and health care professionals who respond to mass violence incidents, mass casually incidents, or other violent crimes • Others in communities that have experienced mass violence • Vicenct crime victims and their family or friends

· Anyone who had an extremely stressful experience with which they are having trouble coping

What topics are covered? Transcend offers written explanations, active exercises, and animated videos that highlight strategies to help reduce stress and mental health difficulties for mass violence survivors. Topics include:

About - An overview of common reactions to mass violence and paths to recovery.
 Calm Your Body - Highlights the impact of mass violence on your body and provides ways to promote relaxation sleep and physical well-being.

Ease Your Mind - Explains how mass violence can affect the way you think and strategies to ease your stressed mind.
 Get Up and Move - Explains the importance of remaining active and involved with others, while also helping to generate ideas for re-engaging with people and the world around you.

Cope with Loss - Provides coping strategies and activities to help those who are grieving a loss.
 Reach Out - Highlights the role of social support in recovery and walks through personal strategies you can use to increase your social support network as you recover.

and takes your older applied treated is an applied treated in the provider of the provider information and strategies about how to help survivors of mass violence.
• Get Help Now - Provides information about accessing victim, financial, and legal assistance. This section can also help you get immediate help or connect you with a therapits in your area.

How can I find the app? From a smart phone or tablet, download the Transcend app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. As mentioned, it is free.

### How do I get started? Once you create your account, you can get started in one of two ways:

The "Personalized Recovery Plan" option: If you select the "Personalized Recovery" plan option, you will be asked to
complete a brief assessment. You can complete this assessment immediately, come back to it later, or sip it allogether.
When you complete the assessment, the app generates a recovery plan that doftess you you peolf needs. Then, just
follow the plan that is recommended for you.
 The "Explore notion" You Com "Option" you can also choose to navigate the app on your own. If you pt out of the

assessment, you will go to the main dashboard to explore what's most interesting to you.





## **Transcend NMVC**



Although the app was developed specifically for mass violence victims, people exposed to other types of stressful events are also likely to find the strategies and techniques in the app to be useful in their recovery, as well.

### DOWNLOAD FOR FREE:









# **MVI Core Compendium**

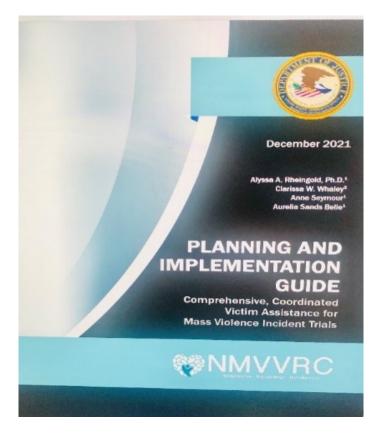
- 26 training/learning modules
- Offers comprehensive training guidelines for victim service providers, mental/behavioral health professionals, community leaders and others based on:
  - Readiness
  - Response
  - Resilience/Recovery

https://www.nmvvrc.org/learn/mvi-core-compendium/





## Planning and Implementation Guide for Comprehensive, Coordinated Victim Assistance for Mass Violence Incident Trials



Co-branded with USDOJ, U.S. Attorney of South Carolina

<u>https://www.nmvvrc.org/community-</u> <u>leaders/rebuild-your-community/court-</u> <u>planning-guide/</u>





# **Quarterly MVI National Town Halls**

- Hosted six Quarterly 90-minute virtual Town Halls
- Recorded and available with extensive resource list at:
- Topics:

MVI	Recovery
Resources	Hate-Based MVIs School-Based MVIs
Preparedness	
Response	

## • UPCOMING TOWN HALL: Aug 24, 2023 3pm EST





# **Virtual Resiliency Center**

Mission: to provide *online, centralized resources* to help professionals and communities create and strengthen individual and collective resiliency in the aftermath of MVI or terrorist attack.

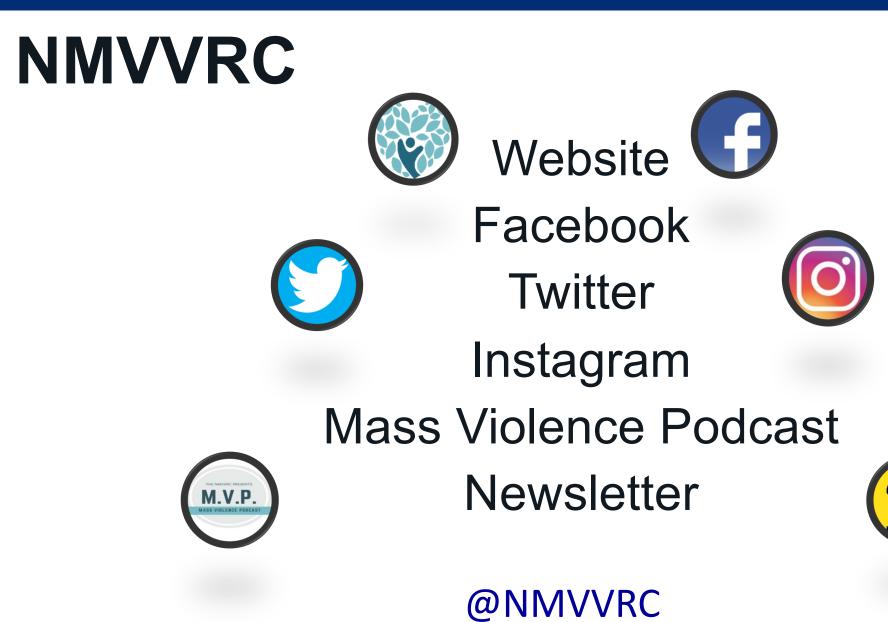
Four areas of focus:

 Managing Trauma & Grief
 Victim & Survivor Resources
 Personal Health & Wellness
 Connection and Support





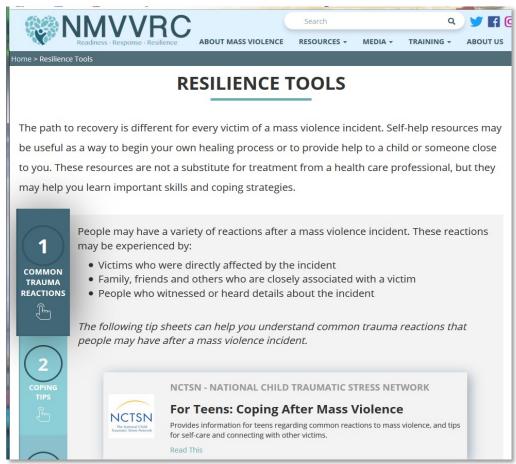


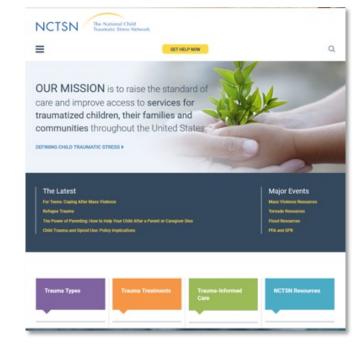






## **Resource Websites**







### www.ptsd.va.gov





### www.nmvvrc.org

### Communities and Victims Vary and Need Different Services















# Questions & Comments