



NMVC

National Mass Violence Center

Providing Resources to Victims,
Survivors, & Those Who Serve Them

Cultural Considerations in Mass Violence Preparation, Response, Recovery, & Resilience

December 12, 2024



12th Virtual National Town Hall on Mass Violence

This product is supported by Cooperative Agreement #15POVC-23-GK-00555-AERX awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this product are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

NATIONAL TOWN HALL ON MASS VIOLENCE

Sponsored by the
National Mass Violence Center (NMVC)

Providing Resources to Victims, Survivors & Those Who Serve Them

with support from
U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime



NMVC
National Mass Violence Center

Housekeeping Announcements

- ♥ This National Town Hall is being recorded and has live ASL interpretation.
- ♥ Closed captioning is available to attendees; please go to your setting at the bottom of your screen and turn on "closed captions" (available in multiple languages).
- ♥ After being posted to our website, the recording, slide deck and resources will be available for download at www.nmvvrc.org.
- ♥ **Joining us by telephone?** Please email us at nmvc@musc.edu with your full name and email address to receive credit for attending.
- ♥ Thanks to many of you who sent questions to our presenters in advance – we will save time at the end to answer the most frequently asked questions.



Learning Objectives

- ♥ Identify barriers among diverse populations and communities to accessing quality victim/survivor and behavioral/mental health services in the aftermath of an MVI.
- ♥ Describe the importance and value of cultural competency in mass violence preparation, response, recovery and resiliency activities.
- ♥ Identify and learn how to integrate the critical role of credible messengers and trusted partners who are aligned with diverse communities into these activities.
- ♥ Acquire information about allyship, best practices and “lessons learned” from national experts, and leaders in diverse communities that have experienced a mass violence incident.



National Town Hall Presenters

Michael de Arellano, Ph.D., Moderator
Co-Director, Training & Technical Assistance Division
National Mass Violence Center (NMVC)

Alberto Ruiz, M.Ed., Senior Director of Community Resiliency, United Way of El Paso County
El Paso United Family Resiliency Center

Pearl Kim, J.D.
Special Assistant District Attorney, PA
Consultant, National Mass Violence Center

Thomas Minch, Project Director & Advocate for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Survivors/Victims
Maine Resiliency Center and Disability Rights Maine

Chris Harper, Colorado River Regional Crisis Services
Lead Law Enforcement Victim Advocacy Consultant,
Unified Solutions Tribal Community Development
Group, Inc

Alyssa Rheingold, Ph.D.
Director of NMVC Response, Recovery & Resilience
Division, National Mass Violence Center (NMVC)

Callie Marsh, ASL/English Interpreter

Heather Young, ASL/English Interpreter



Michael de Arellano, Ph.D. Moderator

Co-Director, NMVC Training & Technical Assistance Division



LONG-TERM HEALING IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Alberto Ruiz, M.Ed.

Senior Director of Community Resiliency
United Way of El Paso County
El Paso United Family Resiliency Center



7



EL PASO MASS VIOLENCE INCIDENT - 08/03/2019

Recovery efforts in El Paso had to take into consideration that:

- We are geographically isolated from any other major city.
- **82%** of the population identify as Hispanic.
- One in four people holds a college degree.
- One in five residents does not have a high school diploma.
- **29%** of Hispanic population is uninsured.
- Per capita income is **\$26,011**.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute



8


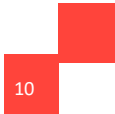

IDENTIFYING DIVERSITY

- Racial minorities
 - Ethnic/cultural minorities
 - Sexual orientation/identity
 - Gender identity
 - Religion
 - Nationality
 - Immigration status
 - Mixed status households
- 
- 
- 

9



CHALLENGES IN THE AFTERMATH OF AN MVI

- Notifying next-of-kin of injured people
 - Identifying remains
 - Communication between family members with Limited English Proficiency and authorities
 - Providing accommodations for family members traveling from abroad
 - Advanced paroles for family members without a valid visa
 - Repatriation of remains
- 
- 
- 

10



RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES

While response efforts are standardized, there are community resources and organizations that will help authorities optimize response and recovery efforts:


- Consulates
- Community organizations
- Advocacy groups
- Religious/Faith communities
- Community leaders
- Public figures
- Word-of-mouth



11



CHALLENGES FACILITATING LONG-TERM HEALING

- Lack of awareness regarding mental health
 - Lack of familiarity with different types of healing activities
 - Mental health is a taboo in many communities.
 - Survivors unable to meet basic needs
 - Distrust of governmental programs
 - Overexposure – people feeling excluded by the “strong” suffix after an MVI
 - Mental health/survivor services are available, but not always accessible.
- 

12



AVAILABLE DOES *NOT* MEAN ACCESSIBLE

- Lack of transportation is a common issue.
- Work schedules may prevent people from accessing services.
- Limited cultural competency may deter people from utilizing services.
- Telehealth can be useful, but certain populations may need assistance with it.
- Paperwork and documentation may become an obstacle from the beginning.

13





RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES

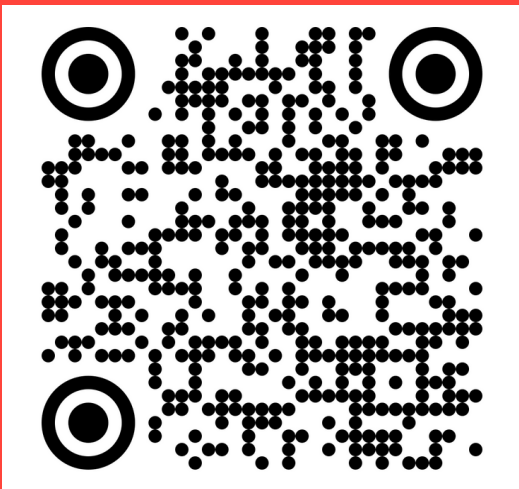
- Identify and engage trusted messengers.
- Promote non-traditional therapies and healing activities in safe spaces.
- Train navigators to have casual conversations with community members.
- Develop a network of community partners to address basic needs.
- Be responsive to the needs of the community and the feedback they provide.
- Use culturally-sensitive marketing strategies.

14



CONTACT US

-  ELPASOUNITEDFRC.ORG
-  (915) 273-3484
-  FRC@UNITEDWAYELPASO.ORG
-  [@ELPASOUNITEDFRC](https://www.instagram.com/ELPASOUNITEDFRC)



UNVEILING THE JOURNEY SHAPING THE COMMUNITY: A Life in Moments, Memories, and Milestones



Pearl Kim, J.D.

Special Assistant District Attorney, PA
Consultant, National Mass Violence Center



17

BACKGROUND

- January 21, 2023, a gunman killed 11 people and injured 9 others at Star Dance Studio located in the city of Monterey Park, California. He then fled the scene to Lai Lai Ballroom, about two miles away, intending to continue the shooting spree. Luckily, the ballroom owner was able to disarm him.
- Largest mass violence incident in Los Angeles County
- Mainly impacted the Asian/Asian American community in the San Gabriel Valley
 - 61.3% of the population in Monterey Park is Asian American

18

BARRIERS

Barriers among diverse populations and communities to accessing quality victim/survivor and behavioral/mental health services in the aftermath of an MMI.

1

Learning and understanding available resources

2

Prevention and intervention treatment

3

Integrating mental health in engagement

CULTURE & MENTAL HEALTH INTEGRATION

Identify and learn how to integrate the critical role of credible messengers and trusted partners who are aligned with diverse communities into these activities.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BALLROOM DANCE WORKSHOP

RECREATION VS. MINDFULNESS

FAITH-BASED ACTIVITIES

ETHNIC FOOD

CORE SERVICES

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Active engagement in the format the community is familiar with
2. Collective learning and strengths-based strategies
3. Connections among and within communities

21

Lesson Learned?- Aftermath of October 25th, 2023



DISABILITY
RIGHTS
MAINE 

Thomas Minch, Project Director &
Advocate for Deaf and Hard of
Hearing Survivors/Victims
Maine Resiliency Center and
Disability Rights Maine

22

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING- WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

- **deaf:** The sense of hearing is non-functional for the purpose of communication and the individual must depend primarily upon visual communication.
- **“D” Deaf** signifies that the individual identifies as a member of the Deaf Community, uses American Sign Language to communicate and values Deaf Culture, focusing on abilities and successes
- **Hard of Hearing:** Hearing loss in the mild to moderate range. One may be able to hear sound, but has difficulty distinguishing specific speech patterns in a conversation
- **Hearing Loss:** Anyone with any degree of hearing loss from mild to severe/profound, bilateral or unilateral

23

DEAF CULTURE

- Strong pride in Deaf Identity, language, and community
- Participate in the language, culture, and community of Deaf People, based on a signed language
- Degree of hearing loss (mild, moderate, severe, profound) or speech ability matters less than the person’s fluency of communication in ASL
- Use of ASL is central to American Deaf identity.
- Positive and proud of Deaf identity- do not consider themselves “handicapped,” “disabled,” and do not want to become “hearing.”
- Wide range of communication skills/levels among individuals

24

WHAT FAILED DURING OCTOBER 25TH, 2023?

25

WHAT COMMUNICATION ACCESS?

- Law enforcement
 - Failed to recognize the people who themselves are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, not communicating with the 911 dispatchers to request communication access for interviews or witness statements.
- First Responders
 - That night was chaotic; their primary focus was on getting survivors/victims the help they needed, but they failed to communicate with hospitals to ensure interpreters are being requested.
- Hospital
 - Hospital on lockdown mode, ASL interpreters were at the site attempting to enter to provide communication access, but they didn't have credentials to do so. Heavy use of Virtual Remote Interpreter- not effective.

26

FAMILY REUNIFICATION CENTER/MEDIA

- FRC was set up, did not account for requesting interpreters when there were some Deaf spouses or loved ones who were looking for their loved ones.
- Press Conference: The first press conference was not 100% accessible; there was no captioning, no ASL interpreters or Deaf Interpreters being provided.

27

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER

- FBI established one around October 28th - FBI has its own interpreting team, forgot to request them; they did not arrive until three days later.
- FAC depended on local interpreters - while access is being given, but they are dealing with their loss and grief of losses in the Deaf community.
- FBI interpreting team arrived and took over from local interpreters.
 - Gave the local interpreters a break from the stress.

28

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PROVIDED

- Interpreter agencies from Massachusetts and Rhode Island provided support for scheduling and coordinating interpreters to take some burden off the local agencies.
- Sorenson Communication flew in their own interpreters to take over some of local interpreters' jobs to give them the chance to be with the community.
 - Sorenson has been supporting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community here in Maine by providing support and space to gather.

29

STEPS BEING TAKEN

- Working with Maine Criminal Justice Academy
 - Expanding the trainings from one hour to 37 hours on Disabilities
- Developing training programs for law enforcement
 - An annual refresher training for law enforcement
- Working with State agencies to modify their policies to ensure improvement on communication access
 - Working with Department of Health and Human Services to develop a new protocol of requesting communication access

30

STEPS BEING TAKEN (CONT.)

- Maine Association of the Deaf, along with myself, contacted all news media in Maine to ensure communication access is being provided, and ensuring interpreters are in the frame along with the person giving remarks.
- Worked with the National Association of the Deaf to work with National News Media to follow.
- Worked with the State of Maine to improve access at the State House.
 - They upgraded their technology to ensure full access for all.

31

JOSHUA SEAL, WILLIAM BRACKETT, BRYAN MACFARLANE, AND STEPHEN VOZZELLA



32

Integrate the Critical Role of Credible Messengers and Trusted Partners



Chris Harper

Colorado River Regional Crisis Services
Lead Law Enforcement Victim Advocacy Consultant
Unified Solutions Tribal Community
Development Group, Inc.



33

Learning Objective:

- Identify and learn how to integrate the critical role of credible messengers and trusted partners who are aligned with diverse communities into these activities



Credible Messengers and Trusted Partners in Communities

Western Culture

Religious Leaders

Law Enforcement

Social Services

Political Figures

Tribal Communities

Tribal Leaders and Elders

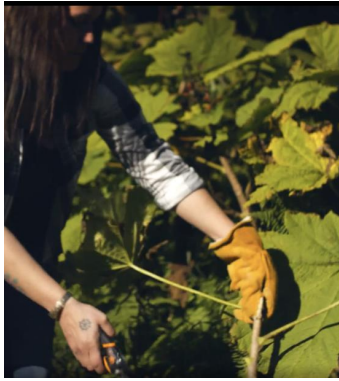


Role of Tribal Elders



Photo by Ca





Tribal Leaders and Elders ensure that members of their community are safeguarded through:

- Vetting key community figures
- Providing guidance to Spiritual Leaders and Traditional Healers
- Sharing knowledge of traditional ways of life



The Value of Tribal Leaders in Relation to Mass Violence Preparedness

- Increase community collaboration.
- Raise community awareness.
- Allow for the sharing of resources and ideas that are *specific to the community*.
- Enhance our understanding of the audience, allowing easier determination of the best ways to offer culturally specific support in instances of mass violence.





39

THANK YOU

Unified Solutions Tribal Community Development Group, Inc.



Acquire Information about Allyship, Best Practices and “Lessons Learned”



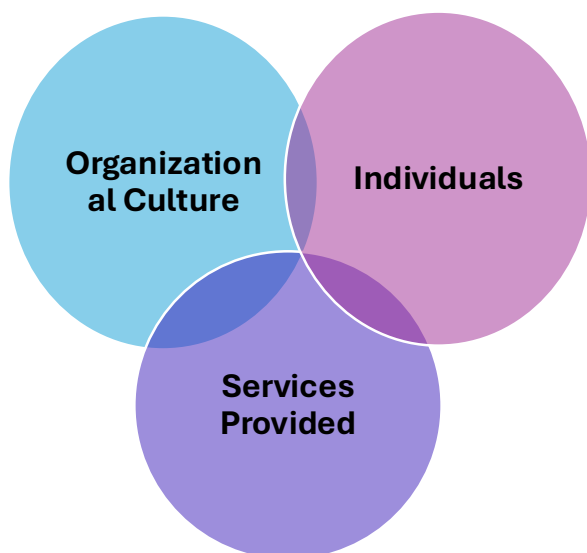
Alyssa Rheingold, Ph.D.
Director of Response, Recovery, and
Resilience Division, NMVC

40

Concepts to Consider

- **Allyship** – actions, behaviors, and practices that we can take to support and amplify the voices of others who are “not like me” to promote equity and collaboration
- **Cultural competence** – ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultural or belief systems different from one’s own
- **Equity** - The term “equity” refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from “equality:” Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and adjust imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

Spheres of Trauma-informed Care



A trauma-informed program values all people and their ability to transcend experiences of trauma.

This approach is multidimensional and can be seen throughout the various spheres of an organization, including:

- Organizational culture
- The services provided
- The individual staff, volunteers and interns, and their commitment to self-care and growth.

Trauma Informed Programs and Services



43

Trauma-Informed Strategies

Location of program and services

- Away from law enforcement or courthouse services and the MVI site
- Hours of availability
- ADA accessibility

Counseling strategies

- Traditional methodology might not be best – there maybe a need for a different approach - *Racial-based Traumatic Stress (RBTS)*

Staff

- Anybody look like me?
- Can they talk to a client, and not be intimidated or intimidating?

44

Considerations

- Beliefs about concepts of justice, equity, and victimization
- Beliefs and interactions with the justice system, both directly and historically
- Individual control and responsibility of actions, vs. pre-determined and unchanging actions
- Views and impact of death rituals, grief, crime, and mental health

Actions and Practices to Support

Get to know your community NOW –

- Who are the main allies invested - grass roots, NGOs, credible messengers?
- Events – attend, support, validate, & collaborate

Read/learn – do *not* put responsibility on a victim you are serving.

- History of populations you are serving with systems (historically and locally)
- Religious or spiritual views on death, grief, loss, or the justice system
- Cultural approaches to death, grief, loss, or the justice system

MVI Plans and Protocols

- Include specific, proactive and culturally-centered activities when preparing for and responding to MVIs.
- Consider all aspects of culture and peoples:
 - Gender
 - Faith/spirituality
 - Ethnicity
 - Race
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Age
 - Gender and gender identity
 - People with disabilities
 - Geography/location of survivors, and access to services

ONE STRATEGY OR SKILL

Questions from the Field

Thank you for submitting questions in advance.



Let's answer a few frequently asked questions...



To Request an NMVC Consultation or Technical Assistance:

♥ For Consultations: nmvc@musc.edu

♥ For Technical Assistance: ICP-TTA@musc.edu



WRAP-UP & EVALUATION

Upon ending your session, a survey will appear.

We ask that ***you please take the time to complete this brief survey.***
Your feedback and suggestions are appreciated, and helpful to improve our National Town Hall series, and to identify National Town Hall topics for the future.

We appreciate your time and attention.



Next National Town Hall #13

MARCH 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

Topic: "TBD"
Date: Thursday, March 27, 2025



