



NMVC

National Mass Violence Center

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

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Providing Sensitive Trauma Notifications with Professionalism, Dignity and Compassion

This online training course is designed to help law enforcement officers, medical examiners, victim service professionals and other professionals make sensitive trauma notifications.

Content developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Victim Services Division. To participate in the full-length training, please visit the site by using the QR code or using the [direct link](#).

Special Circumstances & Key Considerations

1. Mass Casualty Incidents: Providing Multiple Trauma Notifications

- Notification is an important part of the process, it has to happen, it has to happen correctly with care and compassion.
- Each family should have its own trauma notification team, ideally two trained individuals working together.
- Provide notifications in private.
- Create realistic expectations for the next-of-kin.
- Ensure effective communication among jurisdictions
- In person notification is preferred and should only be handled remotely if necessary.

2. Social Media

- Social media can challenge the trauma notification process.
- The next-of-kin may already be aware and need confirmation.
- The next-of-kin may be angry at the team due to lapse of time for formal notification.

3. Children

- Make sure children are not present for the initial notification.
- Never use children to translate.
- The notification should be delivered by a person who the child trusts.

4. When the Criminal Suspect Is Deceased

- It is a best practice to use a different notification team for the victim's family and the deceased subject's family.
- Victim Service Professionals are not able to trauma notifications to the subject's family because they are funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and cannot serve those accused of a crime.

5. Cultural and Religious traditions should be taken into consideration when making a death notification

- Religious groups may have specific customs surrounding death and burial.
- Some cultural groups may have additional practice of which you need to be aware.

6. Address Victims in a Trauma-Informed Manner

- Victims need to feel safe and their boundaries are to be respected.
- It is important to be transparent and honest with the victim.
- Offer to call someone who can provide the victim with support.
- Provide victims with choices and recognize their strengths.
- Recognize victims' needs and reactions may be influenced by culture.

7. International Victims

- Contacting the foreign national's embassy or consulate to assist with trauma notifications may be necessary.

Make Sensitive Trauma Notifications Using a Four Step Process:

1. Plan
2. Prepare
3. Deliver
4. Follow-up

Trauma Notification Training:

