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Strategies Prior to a Mass Shooting to Improve Collaboration

Mass killings involving an active shooter have increased in the US over the last 20 years. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, around 16 active shooter incidents occur annually. The need for collaboration among the first responders is imperative in order to efficiently respond to such situations. This study delved into strategies that responders can use to increase collaboration efforts in such cases. The study used a qualitative participatory action research methodology to improve or change policies for county first responder agencies. The sample included 18 first responders from the county Sheriff's Department, Fire, and EMS agencies. A reflective thematic approach was used to analyze the data and identify themes. The findings show the need for increased regular and formal training sessions within a group setting involving the law enforcement, fire, and EMS participants. Improved communication between department heads and revising the current local emergency response plan are also needed to identify potential shooting threats. There is also an increase mandated in the workforce to implement the Rescue Task Force Model, as well as more personal protective equipment. These findings will not only potentially improve collaboration between first responding agencies, but they can also improve their response to other daily emergencies and improve relationships between departments.

Presentation Theme: The study was conducted with 3 public safety departments and gaps in their current response. Based on the results of the data collection, an action plan was developed for the county agencies to improve collaboration.

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Eric Russell EdD, Harold Cohen PhD , Nathan Moran PhD, David Dibiasi PhD.