

Lessons from Mass Violence: Best Practices for Community Preparedness

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Communities that have experienced the devastating impact of a mass violence incident (MVI) consistently report that the more prepared a community is before an incident occurs, the more resilient individuals and systems are in the aftermath. Although many communities have developed emergency response plans for MVIs, victim services and behavioral health supports are often not fully integrated, despite their critical role in supporting victims, families, and responders.

This session, led by the National Mass Violence Center, will focus on mass violence preparedness for emergency managers and community partners, with particular attention to planning for Friends and Relatives Centers (FRCs) and Family Assistance Centers (FACs). Participants will learn about the 16 Best Practices for MVI Preparedness, including lessons learned from communities that have experienced these events and strategies for integrating victim services, behavioral health providers, law enforcement, and emergency management into coordinated response plans.

The session will include an interactive tabletop exercise focused on activating and coordinating FRCs and FACs following a mass violence incident. Participants will also receive practical tools, planning templates, and resources from the National Mass Violence Center to help strengthen preparedness and response efforts in their communities.