SAFETY TRAINING CURRICULUM
CD 4 – Part 4
Dealing with the Aftermath of a Crisis

Presented by: The University of Washington,
The Department of Social and Health Services,
The Washington Institute of Mental Health Research and Training.

About This Training
This training will teach you the skills you need to effectively deal with the aftermath of a crisis event.

The information in this training was submitted by:
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Joseph Fountain, Consultant.
And other researchers (see list of references in your handout).

We gratefully acknowledge their contributions.

DISCLAIMER
Although the information in this presentation has been tested through years of clinical practice, it is not enough to simply repeat what you see here in rote fashion. As professionals, you have the responsibility to assess the situation and the person you are dealing with to best determine how to create a peaceful resolution, or barring that, as safe an outcome as is possible.

Pre-Requisites
Clinical Skills (risk assessment, treatment planning)
Centering – Maintaining Self-Control
De-escalation Skills
Personal Safety Techniques
Safe Outreaches

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this training you will:
1. Know how to take charge of the incident management process following a violent event.
2. Understand the complex way that client violence can affect staff.
3. Have strategies for helping yourself, your clients and your organization recover and grow after a crisis.
Opportunities to reflect.
Chances to talk with your colleagues
Aim High
TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

Why Training on Dealing With the Aftermath of a Crisis Event?

Crises are highly stressful events and can affect many people:
1. The client
2. You
3. Other clients
4. Your peers
5. The agency

Crises can be dangerous: they can overwhelm us and lead us to make wrong decisions.

A Core Belief

After an incident occurs, the real challenge begins.

Crises are also opportunities

When you manage these events well, you help plant seeds that will benefit:
1. The client
2. You
3. Other clients
4. Your peers
5. The agency

CONTENT

1. In case of a sentinel event
2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back to better than ‘normal’
4. Being prepared
1. In case of a sentinel event
2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back
4. Being prepared

Incident Management

Following a violent event you must immediately begin the process of incident management.

1. One person must take charge.
The other workers must follow the lead.

“I got this! Here is what we need to do.”

Incident Management

2. Next, focus on making the scene safe (even before giving medical attention).

Contain the problem: keep the problem isolated.

Incident Management

3. Only then attend to life safety (medical, fire, electrical).

Incident Management

4. Request assistance: call 911

Speak in a voice that is clear, urgent, deliberate.
State your name.
State the nature of the problem.
State the address.
Specify the type of assistance you need.
“I am …. 
An assault occurred at <name of agency>, <address>.  
The scene is safe now.  
We need medical assistance for a 40 year old 
male struck in the face. He did not lose 
consciousness.”

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In Case of Emergency
Call 911

Your voice is clear, urgent, deliberate.

Your Name

Our Address: 5678 King Street

What happened?

What is going on now?

We need …

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Incident Management

5. Account for all the patients, account for all the workers.

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Incident Management


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Incident Management

7. Reassure clients who witnessed the event

Tell them it’s OK to sit down.

Position yourself between the area where the incident occurred and the client.

Redirect to thinking rather than feeling.

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Your turn to be taken care of

You are worthy of the same compassionate care that you extend to your clients.

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**Management will**

Provide you with the emotional support you need.

Arrange for other staff to step in to relieve you from your duties, on a temporary basis.

Arrange for emotional debriefing opportunities in the days following the incident.

Arrange for debriefings of third parties, if applicable.

**You will be asked to**

Give a *brief* account of the facts.

Fill out an incident report.

Document the incident in the charts of clients who were involved in the incident.

**CONTENT**

1. In case of a sentinel event
2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back
4. Being prepared

**A Core Belief**

An event that causes strong emotional reactions, even though the event may be over, has the potential to interfere with your ability to function normally for a while.

**Signs and Symptoms of Critical Incident Stress**

**Cognitive**

Trouble concentrating, memory lapses, confusion, visions of the incident, distressing dreams.

**Emotional**

Anxiety, fear, guilt, depression, avoidance, anger, irritability, feeling numb.
Behavioral
Withdrawal, increased alcohol consumption, change in usual communications.

Physical
Nausea, dizziness, increased blood pressure, headaches, sleep disturbance, change in appetite, easily startled.

Violent incidents can affect our feelings and practices on the job
Increased awareness of how violent clients can be, in spite of our best intentions.
Increased caution, including increased fear, anxiety and hyper-vigilance.
Change in the way we approach clients (more guarded, less empathetic, less emotionally involved).
Anger at the agency, system, or type of practice.

CONTENT
1. In case of a sentinel event
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Emotional Debriefing Session
Within 2 to 3 days of the event
It’s voluntary
It’s not supervision
It’s not therapy

Do you have a fair witness?

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Three stages of trauma resolution

Disorganization of self
Characterized by feelings of shock, dismay, disbelief, numbness or chaos.

Period of struggle
Characterized by feelings of fear, anxiety or anger.

Readjustment of self
Circumstances and meaning of violent incident are put into perspective.

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A sentinel event can just be too powerful for us to manage by ourselves.

We will need:
The understanding and support of our loved ones.
Support of and for each other.
The support from our agency.
Compassion for ourselves.

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Things you can try
Within the first 24 – 28 hours: periods of exercise, alternated with relaxation.
Reaching out: people do care.
Give yourself permission to feel rotten.
Keep a journal: write your way through sleepless hours.
Do things that feel good to you.
Don’t make any big life changes.
Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don’t have an appetite).
Etcetera.

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A good dose of reality
There are some things that are beyond our best abilities to fix.

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CONTENT

1. In case of a sentinel event
2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back…
   - The client
4. Being prepared

Our Responsibility

We still might have to provide services to the individual who became assaultive.

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Setting limits and offering consequences is different from “holding a grudge.”

Educative follow-up

The team reconvenes, with the client, if appropriate.

What is the underlying condition?
What was the trigger?
What were some of the unmet needs?
What was this client’s decompensation pattern?
What were the warning signs that the person was getting sicker?
What de-escalation strategies were useful?
What does the client think would be useful in the future?

Deeper commitment to help troubled clients.
Increased sensitivity to a client’s situation.
Increased efforts to help client with practical skills.
Avoidance of labeling clients as “violent”.

Clients who should not have follow-ups:
Developmentally delayed individuals.
Clients with dementia or cognitive impairments.
Sharing the information

Know the Criminal Justice System

Criminal justice procedures
Handout for family members
See also CD#3 on Working in Correctional Settings
And CD #7 that addresses various legal questions you might have.

CONTENT

1. In case of a sentinel event
2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back… Your organization
4. Being prepared

Stress reaction in the organization

Over-reactions
Rumors
Discord
Blame
Concerns about being punished

In difficult times everyone wants to know what to do to help

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assurance</th>
<th>Truth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Neutralizing</td>
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<td>Information</td>
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<td>Support</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
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Procedural debriefing

What happened?

The debriefing includes staff involved in the incident and anyone else who may have input.
Full incident review
A critical incident event requires that the agency take stock of its procedures and its safety plan, and make the necessary corrections.

Root causes are system causes
Design weaknesses:  
Missing or inadequately designed programs, policies or procedures.

Accountability weaknesses:  
Failure to initiate or carry out programs, policies or procedures.

Purpose of the incident review:
Determine surface causes of the incident.
Determine root causes of the incident.
Make recommendations for procedural improvements.

Your documentation is invaluable.

The 4 Cs
Cooperation
Communication
Coordination
Collaboration
Damage control and damage prevention is the responsibility of all hands.

We are joint owners.
We are joint stewards.

Pre-conditioning
Remember to take care of yourself not only after an incident, but all the time.

Keeping yourself balanced and healthy, physically and mentally, means you will be more resilient when a stressful incident occurs.

Know your own triggers when stressful events occur.

Practice centering yourself.

Use your own calming strategies after an incident. Think about what works for you in advance.

Practice your de-escalation skills as a group, and by yourself.

Run frequent drills.

Imagine you are the one charged with incident management. Do you know the steps? Practice with others, practice by yourself.

If you were part of a sentinel event before, review the aftermath. What worked well? What did not work well? What would you do differently? What would your contribution be to the 4Cs in the future?

Volunteer to be a crisis debriefer and get the training.
Volunteer to sit on your agency’s Safety Committee.
Encourage your peers not to go underground with their concerns.
Model joint ownership, joint stewardship.

A Core Belief
98% of damage control is done before the damage occurs.

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2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back (you, organization, client)
   4. Being prepared
Looking back over this pre-conditioning list, how can you as a team support each other so each one of you is well prepared should a crisis occur?

**SUMMARY**

1. In case of a sentinel event
2. Effects of violence on staff
3. The road back (you, client, organization)
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**SAFETY TRAINING CURRICULUM**

CD 4 – Part 4

Thank you for participating in this training!

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**PDF documents found on the main disc menu:**

- Staff handout
- Trainer handout
- 7 steps in incident management
- Example of 911 call poster
- The criminal justice system
- Handout about the criminal justice system for families
- Creative Team questions