

## **TRANSCRIPT — Helping Victims of Mass Violence and Terrorism: Response**

**Krista Flannigan, Adjunct Professor, College of Criminal Justice, Florida State University:** A good response has to be well organized. It has to be practiced, has to include victim services, and it has to be respectful of the fact that people have very defined roles.

**Herman Millholland, Former Director, Crime Victim Services Division, Texas Office of the Attorney General:** It is a multi-layered process. It involves federal, state, local government, non-profit organizations, all serving a role and serving as partners in that response.

**Nancy Feldman, Retired Office for Victims Programs Manager, Colorado Department of Public Safety:** Colorado—we've had, unfortunately, numerous situations here.

**Robin Finegan, Regional Volunteer Services Officer, American Red Cross:** We have learned a great deal because of incidents like Columbine. You can't establish relationships on site. You have to know who these folks are before you arrive on scene.

**Steve Siegel, Director of Program Development, Denver District Attorney's Office:** On July 20th, when the Aurora theater shootings occurred, the word got out pretty quickly that there was a need to come together.

**Robin Finegan:** The community did a really good job of pulling together the professionals that had subject matter experts in large-scale disasters.

**Nancy Feldman:** Aurora put out a call to other victim advocates and had them meet the following day, and they probably had about a hundred victim advocates that showed up.

**Steve Siegel:** One of the early successes was the superintendent of schools of Aurora knew that there needed to be a physical, central command location from which to launch a supportive response. They were committed to building this resiliency center, and they were able to make a call out to the public and say, "If you were impacted, then here's a place where you can come and gain more information." First responders—the police departments, the fire departments, the EMTs—they knew that they were going to face a tough recovery battle of their own in having seen that kind of pain, and so each of those departments have internal capacity to provide support services. And the same is true of victim advocates.

**Herman Millholland:** A response needs to be timely, comprehensive. It also needs to be victim-centered.

**Nancy Feldman:** Having a victim assistance unit within the law enforcement agency is really key, and was key in Aurora, because you have that direct communication with the investigators.

**Sandy Phillips, Victim Advocate:** With a mass shooting there's so much confusion, and you're trying to figure out, "Is this real?" Victims are often so shocked by what's happened to them that they don't know where to turn. So when someone does reach out to them and say, "We're here for you," that is incredibly helpful.

**Krista Flannigan:** In Aurora, they did something quite unique. The public information officer from Aurora Police Department came in, and she said, "What would you think about having a public information officer assigned to every family?"

**Nancy Feldman:** So the media had to go through the Public Information Office to have access to the victims.

**Man:** We need help!

**Herman Millholland:** The response to the Boston bombing, that is a perfect example of the wonderful partnerships that were created well in advance, through their planning effort and their preparedness.

**Richard Serino, Former Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency:** You bring together the hospitals, you bring together the public safety, you bring together public health, you bring together the private sector, from the businesses to the faith-based communities. Bringing the whole community together is very important.

**Kathleen Hall, Retired Victim Program Specialist, Office for Victim Assistance, Federal Bureau of Investigation:** The number of victims kept getting larger by the minute. The people who are traumatized by what they saw, what they heard, what they witnessed—it put a lot of pressure on us to make sure that victim list was kept updated.

**Liam Lowney, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance:** We were very aware that we needed to be smart and broad in defining who needed to be served.

**Richard Serino:** The first responders—the police officers, firefighters, paramedics, the public health folks, the nurses and the physicians in the hospitals and the emergency rooms—were very impacted by this event as well.

**Krista Flannigan:** They've responded to crisis incidents in the past. But with an incident of mass violence it's exponentially much more significant, and it can be just as impactful on the responders as it is to the victims.

**Kathryn Turman, Assistant Director, Office for Victim Assistance, Federal Bureau of Investigation:** Our goal was to try to assess what was going on, what resources were available. We started reaching out to counterparts, U.S. Attorney's Office, the Massachusetts Organization of Victim Assistance, just to let them know we were here.

**Kathleen Griffin, Victim-Witness Specialist, U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts:** Early on, particularly when people have been traumatized and they're in a crisis, it's important for the victims to know who those people are in the agencies and what the agencies can do for them.

**Liam Lowney:** We immediately developed a Family Assistance Center where family members could go and access a multitude of services.

**Kathleen Griffin:** The Family Victim Assistance Center gave us the opportunity to learn what the other agencies were doing, what the other agencies had available, and to really start prepping ourselves for being advocates for the victims once the case was charged.

**Liam Lowney:** As time passed after the marathon, we ended up calling together a group of anyone who was interacting with bombing survivors. We called it a Continuum of Care Working Group. We created a Victim Navigator position to help survivors understand their uniqueness and their needs. And out of that came the Massachusetts Resiliency Center, a one-stop multidisciplinary program where survivors of this event could go to access navigation assistance, behavioral health assistance, but also community. Our work in particular is very reactionary by nature. We serve those who've been impacted by crime. And as we have built our response to the Boston Marathon bombing, we've kept an eye towards building infrastructure that would exist for next time.