Multidisciplinary Responses to Families and Communities in Complex Homicide Cases

Training & Technical Assistance Outline
Homicide is defined by the FBI as the willful killing of one human being by another, and encompasses both murder and non-negligent manslaughter. According to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report, the overall homicide rate in the U.S. has steadily declined since 1990. However, homicides continue to plague our nation and certain demographic groups are disproportionately affected. In 2014, there were 14,249 homicides committed nationwide, a per capita homicide rate of 4.5 per 100,000 people. This represented a .5 percent decrease from 2013 and a 3.2 percent decrease from 2010, indicating that the homicide rate in the 50 largest U.S. cities rose by 17 percent - the greatest increase in 25 years. Every homicide case is unique and all have devastating effects on families. Certain types of homicides have an increased level of complexity that requires specialized and coordinated multidisciplinary responses from law enforcement, victim service providers, and other criminal justice professionals. These cases include but are not limited to: intra-familial Homicides; child witnesses to homicides; gang related homicides; and DUI/impaired driving deaths. Victim service providers must therefore be equipped to offer holistic approaches addressing the complexity of victimization and foster long-term individual, family, and community healing.
Learning Objectives

- Gain an understanding of the various types of homicide, including the unique dynamics of each type, their effects on individuals, families, and communities; and the resulting need for specialized and coordinated multidisciplinary responses.
- Identify the organizations and agencies needed for successful MDT’s and understand the role of each in responding to complex homicide cases.
- Provide a best practices model for victim service providers, law enforcement, victim advocates, and clinicians on victim-centered responses to families and communities who have experienced a homicide.
- Provide training data from a wide range of subject-specific workshops established under an OVC-funded complex homicide project.

Methodology

The principles and practical steps outlined in the following are based upon a range of feedback garnered through public school training on dating violence, victim focus groups, webinars, academic journals, research studies, and substantive content provided by the Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. This training will be delivered either live or via webinar/PPTX. The course will begin with a presentation covering various topics including: (1) an overview of TDV and why it is an important issue to address, (2) ways to identify signs of TDV, (3) effective intervention and prevention methods, and (4) law enforcement specific tactics for intervention. Finally, the training will include an interactive quiz, in which we provide a range of hypothetical situations and ask trainees to point out signs of TDV, signs of healthy adolescent relationships, and warning signs of adolescent relationships on the verge of becoming unhealthy. We will also request responses for the trainees and have a class discussion to consider possible courses of action for each hypothetical situation. Upon certifying your responses, the trainee will receive a formal certification for the course.

This training will use research, discussion questions, and various PowerPoint presentations, with audience participation and videos, to present the material in an engaging format. It will be presented by the Project Coordinator and Project Manager of the Complex Homicide Project, and may be augmented by various other subject matter experts. Due to the breadth of topics, this training is designed to be presented in portions, depending on what is most relevant to the site seeking technical assistance. Before conducting the training, presenters would discuss specific areas of interest/need and desired length of the training with the requesting organization. Course modules can be presented in person or in a digital format via webinar or other available methods. If more training on a specific topic is requested, a subject matter expert can be proposed to conduct a more in-depth presentation (also in-person or in a digital format).
Introduction: brief overview of multidisciplinary teams

**Law Enforcement/First Responders**
- Providing Death Notification to Next of Kin
- Case Study: Cleveland’s Partnership Serving Homicide Co-Victims
- Trauma-Informed Witness Response in Homicide Cases
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Victim Assistance Training Institute (VATI) Training
- Case Study: Responding to the Pulse Nightclub Shooting
- Trauma-Informed Victim/Witness Interviewing for the Justice System

**Attorney/Legal**
- Civil Justice for Victims of Homicide
- Restitution in Homicide: A Crime Victim’s Right to “Prompt Restitution”

**Therapist/Clinicians**
- Evidence Based Treatments for Traumatic Grief
- Guided Principles of Trauma-Informed Care
- Skills for Psychological Recovery
- Trauma and Grief Component Therapy
- Introduction to Prolonged Exposure for PTSD & Evidence-Based Approaches for Traumatic Grief

**General Topics (applicable to all professions)**
- Intervention After Notification
- Cultural Awareness and Implicit (Unconscious) Bias
- Gullah Geechee Communities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives
- Meaningful Access for Latinx Survivors
- Spiritual Sensitivity in Homicide Cases
- "You must be a saint! Nope, just a victim services provider"
- Culture at the Center: Working with Immigrant Crime Victims and Their Families
- Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents
- "Tell it your way: How to prepare and empower survivors to talk (or not talk) to the media"
- Domestic Violence-Related Homicide in Philadelphia: Using a Fatality Review to Understand and Respond to Complex Homicides
- Case Study: Victim and Family Assistance Efforts in Response to the Pulse Nightclub shooting
- Transgender Equality and Engagement
- Impact of Intrafamilial Homicide on Families and Communities
- Working with Distressed Victims/Survivors and Bereavement 101
- Restorative Retelling Model