

**EMERGENCY FAMILY ASSISTANCE
CENTER PLANNING**


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INTRODUCTION

When a mass casualty incident (MCI) occurs, the immediate focus is on life-saving medical care, but the disaster doesn't end there. There is often much chaos surrounding the desperate needs of friends & families seeking information. This presentation provides a closer look Erie County's journey of creating and enacting a Family Assistance Operations Plan. We will explore the collaborative multi-agency framework required to staff these operations. Participants will gain actionable insights into the practical considerations and steps for planning for their community needs.

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OBJECTIVES

- Why?
- The Journey
- Collaboration
- Planning Considerations
- Resources

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WHY?

- **The Catalyst: Real World Events**
 - Route 91 Harvest Music Festival Shooting, Las Vegas, October 1, 2017
 - Tops Friendly Markets Shooting, Buffalo, May 14, 2022
 - Duncanville Fieldhouse Active Shooter, Texas, June 13, 2022
 - Buffalo Sabres TTX exercise in the Fall of 2023
 - NTSB Family Assistance Operations Workshop hosted by the Buffalo Niagara International Airport

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ERIE COUNTY'S JOURNEY

- **The Framework: How we developed plan/formatting and partnerships included**
 - Research
 - County & Response Partners
 - NGO Partners
 - Goal to create a comprehensive plan
 - What resources are out there and how we can use them?

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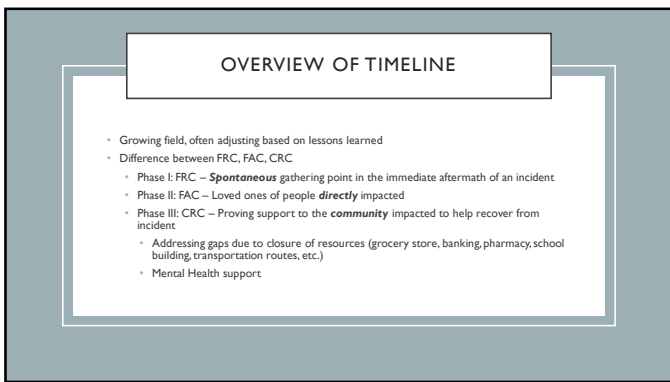
ERIE COUNTY'S JOURNEY

- **Actionable Insight: "Blue-sky" planning and coordination**
 - Assessed our capabilities and capacities – what can we do and when will we need additional help?
 - Plan and train with partners – local & state response agencies, support services, NGOs
 - Scout locations and service gaps. Develop MOUs (hotels, community centers, vendors, etc.)

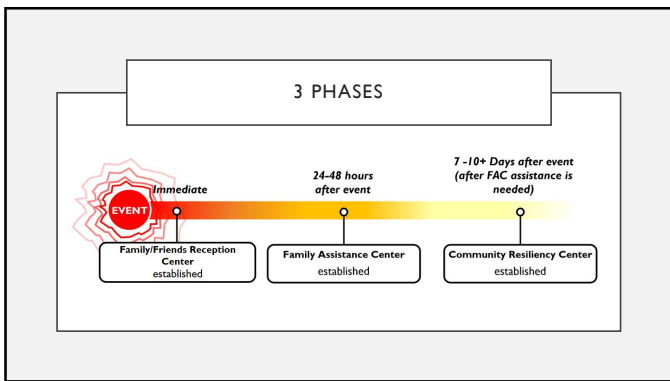
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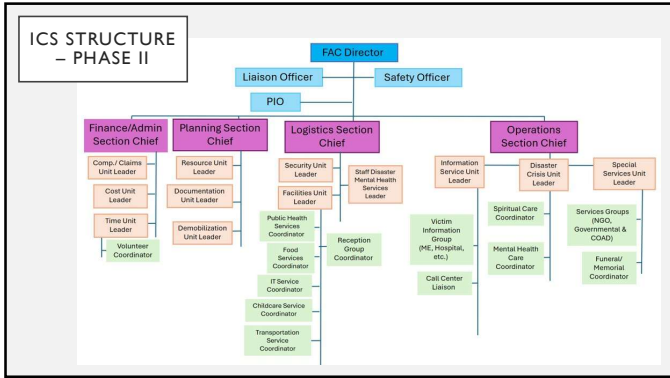
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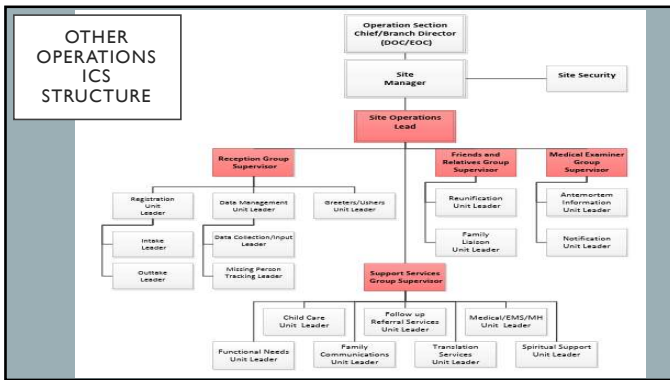
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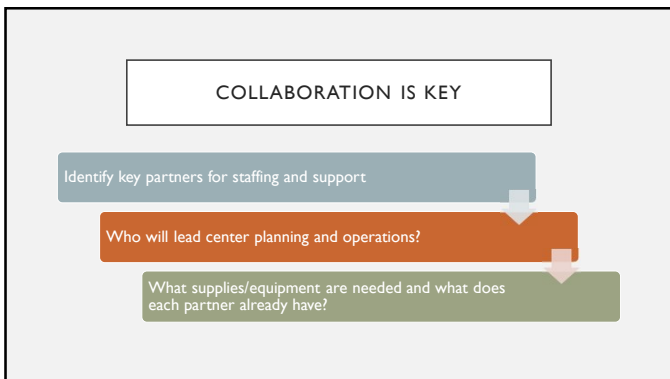
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**PRACTICAL
PLANNING
CONSIDERATIONS**

- **Site Selection Logistics**
 - Proximity: Close to the incident for accessibility, but with a "sensor buffer" from the morgue or incident site
 - Functional Space: Must have separate, private rooms to support proper space for death notifications and law enforcement interviews
- **Victim Identification Support**
 - Establishing a Victim Information and Identification Center (VIC) to reconcile family provided data with forensic findings
- **Virtual Assistance Services**
 - Virtual FAC: Essential for families that cannot travel
 - Call Center: Utilizing a dedicated number and staff can consolidate incoming information and inquiries while also avoiding surge on 911 dispatch system

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**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL PLANNING
CONSIDERATIONS**

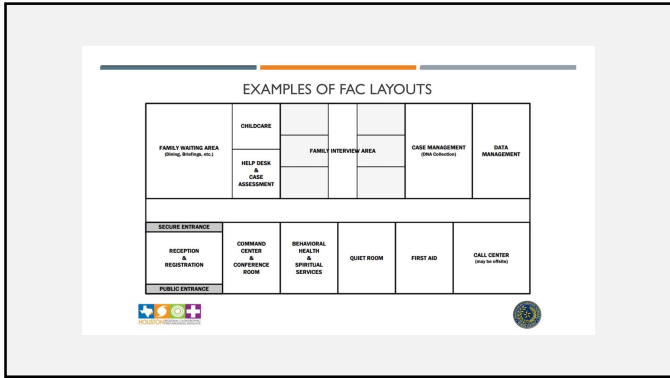
- Notification of the FAC
- Activation
- Donation Management
- Communications
 - Family Briefings
 - Media
- Maintenance of the Plan

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SAMPLE LAYOUT

- Public/Private facility
 - Hotels
 - Conference centers
 - Schools/churches
- Important components:
 - Separate briefing room
 - Flexible space/ Rooms or ability to create rooms
 - Secure
 - Space for staff to decompress
 - Enough space for services needed

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PLANNING RESOURCES

- [NYS OEM Course-Family Assistance Center](#)
- [NTSB Legislation & Planning Resources](#)
- [NTSB Guidance & Resources](#)
 - [Air Incidents](#)
 - [Rail Incidents](#)
 - [Prepare and Train for Transportation Accidents](#)
- [Federal Family Assistance Framework -ARC Designation](#)
- Info sharing & privacy ([HIPAA](#) authorizes release of pt data from covered entity to PH authorities)
- [U.S. DOJ MFI FAC Operations – Recommended Strategies for Local and State Agencies](#)
- [NMVC-Overview of Three Centers.pdf](#)
- [North Central Texas Family Assistance Center Toolkit](#)
- [U.S. DOJ MFI FAC Recommended Strategies for State & Local Agencies](#)
- [Purdue University FAC Plan](#)
- [Texas FAC Toolkit](#)

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ERIE COUNTY'S
LESSONS
LEARNED &
NEXT STEPS

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