Surviving a Crisis

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**Background:**

On June 30, 2017 a gunman killed a physician and wounded six other people on an inpatient floor of BronxCare Health System (formerly Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center). Following the shooting, staff had to work through their grief and shock while simultaneously continuing in their role as primary care and behavioral health providers, and serving as a vital community resource.

*“It felt fulfilling to help others; however it was an emotional roller coaster.  It was painful to see others break down.”*

**Interventions Used**

* Immediately following the shooting:
  + One person was designated to inform patients

of deceased doctor

* + Schedules of physicians and staff were lightened (if

requested)

* + Grand Rounds with Psychiatry
* Over the next few weeks and months:
  + Department and clinics held meetings/support groups to process feelings
  + Received support from hospital resources and outside organizations (Department of Psychiatry, Department of Pediatrics, Office of Victim Services, Good Dog Foundation therapy dogs, massages, acupuncture)
  + Department social workers were available at all clinics and on the inpatient unit to offer emotional support
  + Schedules were adjusted for those who couldn’t return to work immediately
  + Department  held a memorial service to honor the doctor who was killed

**Lessons Learned**

* It is important to have an emergency plan (to address both physical and mental health)
* You can grow from a crisis – individually and as a team
* Don’t be afraid to reach out for help
* People need time to process and express themselves, don’t stop checking on each other
* Burnout and PTSD accelerate in people who aren’t acknowledging it
* Reinforce that it’s ok to not be ok
* Established wellbeing activities can provide strong basis for post-crisis self-care/healing (if a concrete emergency plan does not exist yet)



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