

## **Mass Casualty Exercise, 11 October 2018 After-Action Review (Disaster Spiritual Care)**

**Situation:** The San Antonio Office of Emergency Management (SAOEM) conducted a family reunification and witness management exercise as part of the annual Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) mass casualty exercise on 11 October 2018. The timeline and locations for the exercise was:

**Freeman Coliseum, 3201 E Houston St, San Antonio, TX 78219**

- SITE OF MASS CASUALTY EVENT
- 8 AM Volunteers serving as witnesses and family members (not Spiritual Care Providers) gather there and will be transported either to the witness process center or reunification center.
- Between 8 and 9 alert will go out for mass casualty event and call for response.

**Blossom Athletic Center, 12002 Jones Maltsberger Rd, San Antonio, TX 78216**

- 11 AM to 1 PM Witness Processing Center
- DSC Team A provides Spiritual First Aid to trauma survivors and staff.

**Heroes Stadium, 4799 Thousand Oaks, San Antonio, TX 78233**

- 11 AM to 1 PM Family Reunification Center – survivors with family
- Death notifications will take place at this location
- DSC Team B provides Spiritual First Aid to family members, trauma survivors, and staff.

The San Antonio VOAD working with the Texas Crisis Resiliency Team (TCRT) responded with Disaster Spiritual Care Teams at Blossom Athletic Center and Heroe's Stadium to assist with the spiritual needs of witnesses, survivors, and family members.

### Preparation / Planning for Exercise

Representatives from the San Antonio VOAD and TCRT participated in various planning meetings conducted by the San Antonio EOC. Members of the TCRT also coordinated with the chaplains of the Bexar County and San Antonio Police and the San Antonio Fire Department.

The San Antonio VOAD and the TCRT conducted a training at the San Antonio Emergency Operations Center on 6 October 2018 from 0900 to 1200 for those interested in caring for the spiritual needs of survivors of a mass casualty event. While some of the training focused specifically on exercise, the focus was on how to care for survivors of a mass casualty event who may have had friends or family members killed or injured. This training was open to everyone and members of the TCRT were encouraged to wear their ID badges and TCRT shirt.

The 6 October training was a requirement for all TCRT members who were going to participate in the 11 October exercise. All those participating in the 11 October exercise were required to have TCRT shirts and ID badges.

The TCRT also was testing a new database management system (GivePulse) that allowed participants to sign up for the training and exercise. This system has the potential to track hours

for those volunteering and serve as a platform to contact all TCRT members. The management of the system can be shared by several coordinators to better ensure the responsiveness of the TCRT to disaster situations.

### **Sustain:**

1. Coordination of the SAVOAD and TCRT with the San Antonio Emergency Management. This includes participation in monthly Emergency Manager's Meetings and planning for disaster response events. This is a challenge since the members of the TCRT are all volunteers but is essential for the integration of spiritual care into the disaster response.
2. Sustainment training prior to the exercise. This training was open to everyone and not just those who could participate in the exercise. This helped reinforce training that TCRT members had previously received and since the training was open to non TCRT members added some interest in the training for others.
3. Coordination with other organizations. This occurred both prior to the exercise and during the exercise. Prior coordination included meeting with fire and police chaplains. Apparently, none of them actually participated in the exercise, but in a real event fire and police chaplains would be present. During the exercise DSC Team members met and coordinated with police and fire officers as well as various other organizations.
4. Team members mingled with the acting family members and witnesses and responded appropriately to simulated needs. This also included a triage of the survivors, where the Team Leader at the Family Reunification Center chose to focus on the possible death notifications, but still leaving a team member to care for other survivors. This recognizes that in a large mass casualty event TCRT members will not be able to respond to all the needs, but must focus on the most critical needs.

### **Improve:**

1. The new data management system utilized by the TCRT worked very well but needs additional development by the TCRT in coordination with GivePulse. The TCRT must continue to revise current rosters and import the rosters into GivePulse and work the GivePulse developers to make maximum usage of the system. This has tremendous possibilities for the TCRT and crisis response efforts.
2. The Victim Processing Center set up a table for the TCRT team, where they could watch witnesses for possible needs. While a table with a couple of chairs might be a could idea for TCRT members to come and coordinate, the idea of a table where the TCRT member sits and waits to respond is not a good idea. The TCRT members work best when they actively engage trauma survivors where they are at instead of waiting for the trauma survivors to come to them.
3. Communication always needs improving. The TCRT did a good job during this by contacting other site leaders and giving them their cell phone number to contact if assistance was needed. This is both a sustain and continue to work for ways to improve communication.
4. On-Call Rosters. For this exercise there were two teams for the TCRT prepared to respond. The TCRT currently does not have an on-call roster, but is considering this as a

possibility. The current system is that when an event happens the TCRT coordinator sends an e-mail or makes phone calls to find out who might be available. While this has worked in the past, it is also a system likely to fail.

**Recommendations:**

1. The major recommendation is that the San Antonio VOAD and the TCRT continue to closely coordinate with the San Antonio Emergency Operations Center and participate in appropriate disaster response training and exercises. A reasonable goal for the San Antonio VOAD and TCRT is to participate in one exercise per year, but also look for other opportunities for training and preparation.
2. The training prior to the exercise worked very well. The TCRT should plan on having at least one sustainment type training per year and if possible connect the training with a planned community exercise.
3. Continue to work with GivePulse to enhance volunteer management and training coordination.

Dan Franklin  
Director, TCRT

APPENDIX 1: Exercise Order

APPENDIX 2: Spiritual Care Plan

THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO AND ALAMO AREA  
FAMILY REUNIFICATION FULL-SCALE EXERCISEOctober 11th, 2018

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**EXERCISE ORDER****IMPORTANT EXERCISE INFORMATION FOR PLAYERS****PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY**

My name is David Schuld, and I am Master Controller for the **Family Reunification Full-Scale Exercise (FSE)**, an innovative operations-based exercise to explore and refine the City of San Antonio's immediate human services response following a mass casualty incident/active threat event. On behalf of the entire Exercise Planning Team (a committee of local representatives across the public safety agencies and supporting partners that guided the design of the exercise), we look forward to your participation in the exercise, taking place on October 11, 2018.

This message has information on your participation in the exercise. Please read all sections of this message thoroughly. If you have any questions or exercise needs, please feel free to contact me at [david.schuld@hagertyconsulting.com](mailto:david.schuld@hagertyconsulting.com) or 202-360-7526.

**For Points of Contact, please distribute this Exercise Order to all players so that they have an opportunity to review prior to Exercise Day.**

**WHY ARE WE HERE?**

Active threat events (such as active shooters) can occur at any time and any place. Public safety agencies and their support partners need to be prepared to respond across disciplines in order to manage the situation after the threat has been neutralized.

The purpose of the FSE is to validate the capabilities of the San Antonio Reunification Plan, which was written by the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) and San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) to prepare for witness/victim management and family reunification in case of a major active threat event, like a mass shooting or bombing.

Thankfully, the Reunification Plan has never been activated. However, public safety agencies and their partners need to validate their planning efforts through a critical review of the plan and testing of the plan through an operations-based exercise. The first activity included the Family Reunification Validation Workshop which took place on July 25, 2018. This workshop's purpose was to critically review the plan. The FSE builds upon this workshop to test the plan through an operation-based exercise. Both activities are critical to ensure that preparedness across stakeholders continues to be strengthened.

The FSE is designed to focus on the mechanics of activated and operating an Investigative Processing Center and On-Scene Family Reunification Center following an active threat. The exercise has been developed to mimic – to the greatest extent possible – the challenges, complexities, issues, and stressors that would be faced in family reunification and victim/witness management in the aftermath of an active threat event.

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The scenario we will be using is that there was a graduation ceremony for Hitchman High School taking place at Freeman Coliseum in San Antonio, Texas. During the middle of the ceremony, aggressors open fire into the seats, causing panic to the thousands of people in attendance. There were numerous deaths and injuries.

**Please note (and this will be emphasized) is that this exercise wasn't designed as a test of capabilities, rather an opportunity to engage in learning and refinement to help improve the existing Reunification Plan.**

We thank you for your participation and support in this important exercise.

#### **WHAT IS THE EXERCISE FOCUSED ON?**

The focus of this exercise is to refine the mechanics of the activation and operation of two facilities critical to the immediate human services response to a mass casualty incident/active threat event: 1) the On-Scene Family Reunification Center (to be located at Heroes Stadium), and the Investigative Processing Center (to be located at Blossom Athletic Center).

Following the operations-based exercise play (to be concluded by 1:00 p.m.), there will be a discussion-based workshop that focuses on action planning for three components of longer-term recovery: 1) Family Assistance, 2) Donations Management, and 3) Economic Recovery. It is not required to stay for the discussion-based workshop.

For additional information, see the "PHASES OF THE EXERCISE" section in this Order.

#### **YOUR ROLE IN THE EXERCISE**

You are a PLAYER and will be part of the validation of witness management and reunification following an active threat event.

Please be aware that there are multiple agencies involved in this exercise. The Exercise Planning Team has spent over eight months preparing this exercise and feel that the exercise provides a valuable opportunity for all stakeholder groups involved. Stakeholder groups participating in this exercise include:

- Law Enforcement
- Fire/EMS
- Human Services
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters
- Private Sector
- Emergency Management

#### **HOW WILL YOU START THE EXERCISE?**

An Everbridge notification will be sent out by San Antonio Office of Emergency Management (SAOEM) that will begin the operations-based portion of the exercise. You will be provided instruction (according to the Reunification Plan) on where to go and what needs to occur.

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Please note that this is an exercise and normal traffic laws are in effect. Please drive safely.

### THE USE OF EXERCISE CONTROLLERS AND EVALUATORS

The exercise has been thoughtfully designed by the Exercise Planning Team and **is not intended to be a test, rather an opportunity to refine a plan.** Controllers and evaluators will be stationed around the exercise play area to 1) maintain the safety of the exercise, 2) control the pace of the exercise, and 3) observe the validation of exercise objectives.

Please listen and comply to the controllers and evaluators as directed.

### PHASES OF THE EXERCISE

The exercise is composed of three phases of exercise play:

Time	Activity	Key Objective
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Phase 1: Activation	Notification and activation of the Investigative Processing Center at Blossom Athletic Center and Family Reunification Center at Heroes Stadium.
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Phase 2: Operations	Engagement with volunteers acting as witnesses and loved ones at the Investigative Processing Center at Blossom Athletic Center and Family Reunification Center
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Phase 3: Transition to Recovery	Discussion and action planning for family assistance, donations management, and economic recovery following an active threat event.

Phase 1 is focused solely on the activation of the Investigative Processing Center at Blossom Athletic Center, and the Family Reunification Center at Heroes Stadium. Both facilities have been planned for and are critical to the effective immediate human services response following an active threat event. Phase 1, which includes communicating the need for the Reunification Plan to be activated, as well as the setup of facilities, is expected to last 2 hours, so we should be done with Phase 1 by 11:00 a.m.

During Phase 2, which is to last another 2 hours, we will be injected volunteers acting as witnesses and loved ones into exercise play. Volunteers acting as witnesses will be transported to Blossom Athletic Center for investigative processing. Volunteers acting as loved ones will register at Heroes Stadium for family reunification. Please go through the processes as you would during an actual event. After reunification, volunteers will be given new personas and go through the reunification process. Volunteers have been given an evaluation worksheet to fill out as they go through the reunification process.

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Following the exercise, you will hear the word ENDEX to signal the end of exercise. At that time, please report back here for a hot wash. We will ask you to complete a participant feedback survey. We will also require you to sign out of the exercise.

For those of you who are staying, the final phase of the exercise is a discussion-based exercise. The exercise will take place at Heroes Stadium, and is estimated to start at 1:30 p.m. Over the course of 90 minutes, working groups will address a series of critical questions to support action planning for three issues in the recovery process following an active threat event: economic recovery, donations management, and family assistance.

**THIS EXERCISE IS NOT A TEST, BUT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REFINEMENT**

To support the exercise objectives, we have a number of sheets of paper known as **Next Step Planning Forms**, where you can write ideas down to help improve the reunification plan. Please lean forward and think critically. We want to improve the Reunification Plan as best as possible, and your feedback will help us do that.

**THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS ACTING AS WITNESSES AND LOVED ONES**

During the second phase of the operations-based exercises, volunteers acting as witnesses and loved ones of those affected by the attack will go through witness management and family reunification. Please engage with volunteers as you would in an actual event.

Volunteers acting as witnesses and loved ones will be provided persona cards. These persona cards are unique and provide the narrative for the volunteers to follow. Once reunification has been complete, the volunteer will receive a new persona card and go through the process again.

Volunteers acting as witnesses and loved ones will be making notes of their experience on the persona card. Please do not take away the persona card and allow the volunteer to complete the card with their observations.

If there is an issue with a volunteer, please locate your nearest controller.

**WHAT TO BRING TO THE EXERCISE**

Please bring the following on exercise day:

- Appropriate shoes and attire as identified by your agency
- Identification
- Equipment that your agency would bring and use when conducting witness management and family reunification operations

Remember to also:

- Leave personal items in your vehicle
- Get sufficient rest before the exercise
- Stay hydrated the day before and the day of the exercise

**UTILIZATION OF RADIOS**

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For public safety agencies: Please be aware that the use of interoperable communications is something that the Exercise Planning Team is seeking to explore. A series of other channels will be made available once incident command is established through a pre-arranged Form 205. Please stay on these pre-designated channels through the duration of the exercise.

**WHERE TO SIGN IN FOR THE EXERCISE**

Upon arriving at either Blossom Athletic Center or Heroes Stadium, a controller will direct you to the registration table, where you will be provided a participant lanyard, an exercise wristband, and if you desire, a Participant Manual for the exercise.

**PARKING**

Please review the parking map at the end of this document to know where to park at Blossom Athletic Center and Heroes Stadium.

**SAFETY**

Safety is the number one priority in any exercise. Please wear your exercise lanyard at all times in the exercise.

If for any reason there is a safety issue, including a medical issue, please announce “there is a real-world emergency”, and locate your nearest controller or evaluator.

While we have controls in place, however, **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING YOUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF EVERYONE ELSE AT THIS EVENT.** If at any time you see or experience any safety concerns immediately report it to any member of the exercise staff, introduced earlier, and announce “real world emergency”.

**LUNCH**

Lunch will be provided at both facilities participating in the exercise. Please let me know if there are any dietary restrictions.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

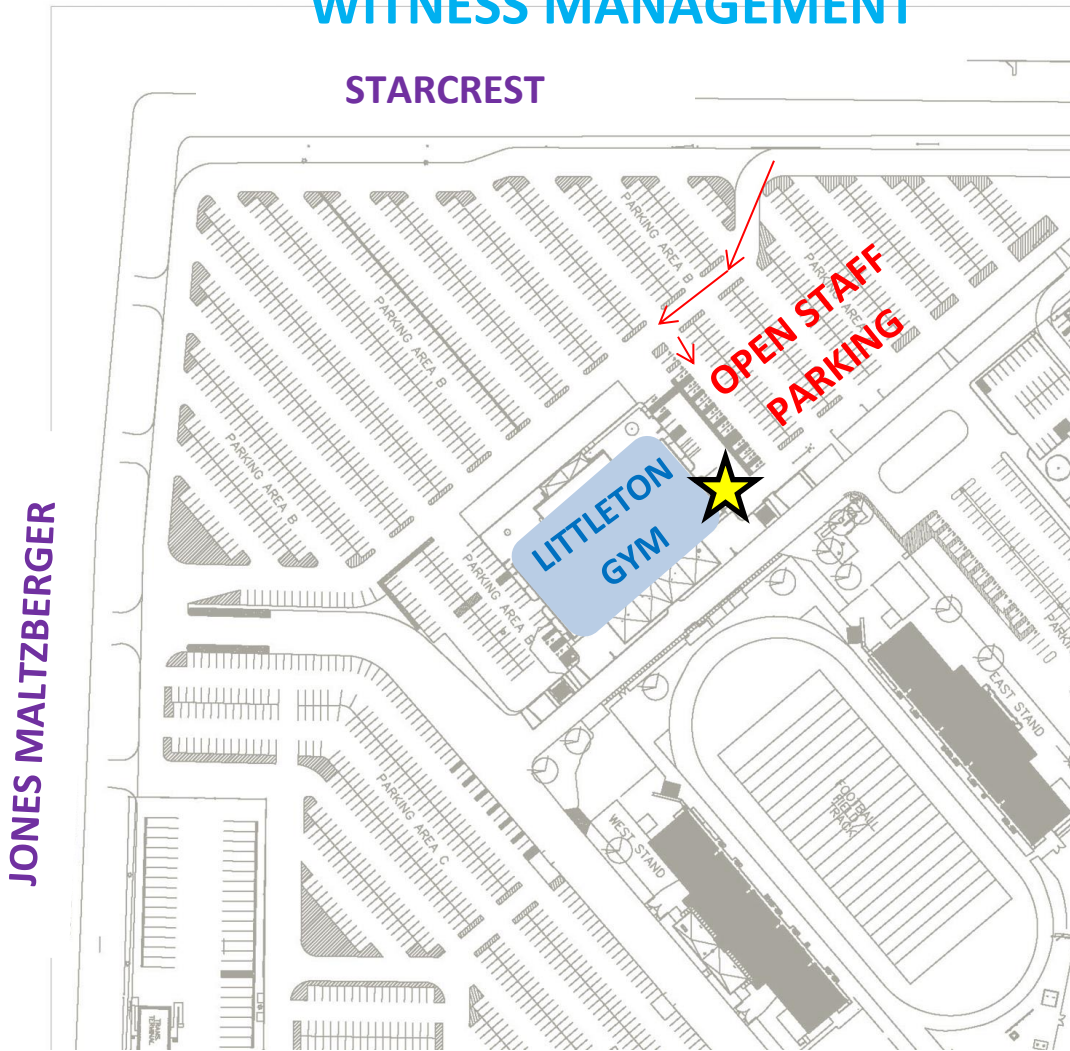
Please note that you should not be posting pictures or updates of this exercise on social media. There is a documentarian who is permitted to take video and camera footage of the exercise.



# PARKING INFORMATION

Parking map for Blossom Athletic Center is below. Participants should enter from Starcrest and proceed to the staff parking area.

## BLOSSOM ATHLETIC CENTER WITNESS MANAGEMENT

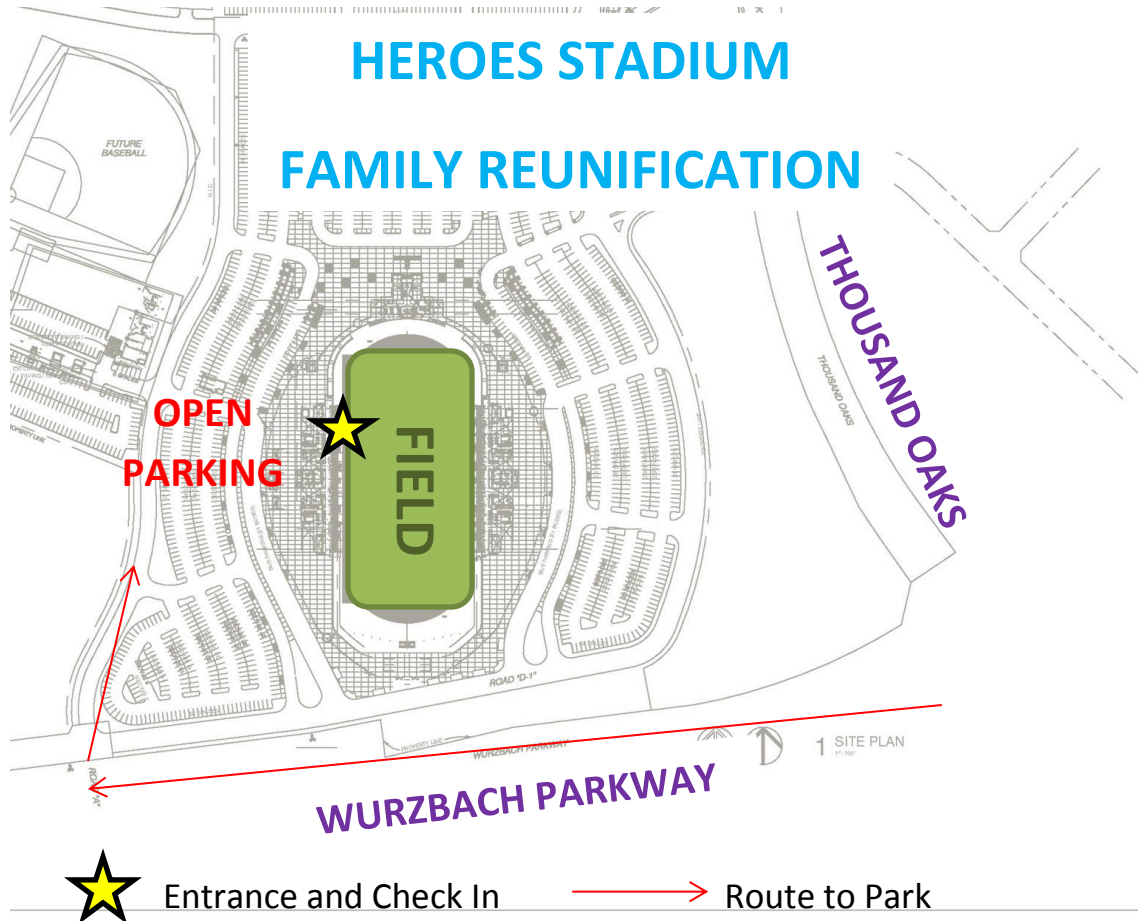


Entrance and Check In



Route to Park

Entrance for the Family Reunification Exercise at Heroes Stadium will be from the Wurzbach Parkway access road. Participants will not be allowed to enter via Thousand Oaks.



## **Spiritual Care Plan Following Mass Casualty Event**

This Spiritual Care Plan is in support of the Reunification Plan of the San Antonio Emergency Operation Center following a mass casualty event. The plan includes:

1. Crime Scene
2. Witnessing Process Center (Blossom Athletic Center)
3. Family Reunification Center (Hero Stadium)
4. Family Assistance Center

The Reunification exercise on October 11, 2018 will focus on the Witness Processing Center and the Family Reunification Center.

There are several agencies / organizations who could be involved in the spiritual care during this exercise and in real events. Most of these individuals are volunteers:

San Antonio Police Department Chaplains  
Bexar County Police Department Chaplains  
San Antonio Fire Department Chaplains  
San Antonio VOAD Emotional and Spiritual Care - Texas Crisis Resiliency Team (TCRT)

The concept of support is that each organization has a primary area of responsibility but works collaboratively with the other groups to provide for the situational needs.

Each organization will have a designated team leader. The TCRT will have a team of five at the Blossom Athletic Center and Hero Stadium and will have a team leader at each site. The police departments and possibly the fire department will have chaplains at each site. One chaplain from each organization will serve as the team leader.

**While each organization has designated responsibilities, the team leaders will work collaboratively to ensure the best spiritual care for trauma survivors and responders.**

### **Responsibilities:**

#### Police and Fire Chaplains.

- a. Provide spiritual and emotional support to police and fire personnel.
- b. When needed assist with spiritual and emotional support to survivors and their families.

#### San Antonio VOAD / TCRT.

- a. Provide spiritual and emotional support to survivors and their families.

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- b. When needed assist with spiritual and emotional support to police, fire personnel and other responders.

### EXAMPLES:

#### **Death Notification**

1. The law-enforcement chaplains of San Antonio and Bexar county do not always accompany officers doing notifications but sometimes go with them on difficult situations such as a suicide or unusual circumstances around a death. A mass casualty event such as this would be this type of event. Since this dynamic is already established. Since this procedure is already established the plan should be for the chaplains to accompany officers doing the notifications to provide support both to the officers and to the survivors.
2. If the law-enforcement chaplains were overwhelmed and unable to participate in the notifications, then members of the TCRT should be available to support during the notification procedures.
3. Procedure: The Bexar County Sheriff's officer or San Antonio Police officer is given the responsibility of notifying the family of a death. If the chaplain is unavailable to do the notification, then the Chaplain team leader requests the assistance of the TCRT team leader and the TCRT team leader designates a team member to accompany the officer in the notification.

FOR EXERCISE: Since the usage of the TCRT is not the normal procedure for death notifications this should be practiced during the exercise. The assumption for the exercise should be that the law-enforcement chaplains are overwhelmed and need TCRT members to do this.

#### **Spiritual Support to Survivors and Family Members**

1. This is the primary responsibility of the TCRT team members.
2. While law-enforcement chaplain's primary mission is to care for law-enforcement officers, they often provide support to family members at the scene of the incident.
3. If available to provide support to families, the law-enforcement chaplain leader should coordinate with the TCRT team leader to find out where they can best provide assistance.

FOR EXERCISE: The law-enforcement chaplain leader should establish cooperative relationship with TCRT team leader to ensure needed support to survivors and family members.

### OTHER ISSUES:

There will also be other people providing emotional and spiritual support. The Red Cross has a bereavement team that might be participating. There may also be mental health professionals at the scene. TCRT team leaders should be aware of these other resources and inform team

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members of what is available. All TCRT team members should be prepared to make appropriate referrals to other helping organizations.

Dan Franklin, DMin  
TCRT Director