



SAVIN Critical Event Management Webinar

March 12, 2013

Q&A

1. At what point to you consider an event to be a critical event? Ten or more missed notifications or 500+ or 1000+?

Every State and every agency is unique. You would be able to establish with your service provider what you feel is a threshold with which you are comfortable. Thresholds will be different based on the size of a notification system. I may have a threshold of one or two that I am considering as critical which obviously, every one of us knows one erroneous call is one too many, but at the same time if you look at the mass information exchange that occurs when a notification happens, you may opt for somewhat of a higher number. So I really encourage you to look internally at what you all might be comfortable with as an agency and identify your own threshold of what you consider a critical event. For systems such as ours within the correctional agency in Ohio, we would consider 75/100 as extreme critical events we'd want to know about. If there is a difference of information and notices going out beyond what normally might occur....we may actually have an average of 100 phone calls a day. If I am picking a number, and if it varies by 50 or 75, we may say "that makes me feel uncomfortable"I want to stop the call, look at it and analyze if there is something wrong. So great question, but I really encourage you to determine within your own stakeholders and within your state what you feel is a number with which you are comfortable.

2. How do you coordinate media outreach with all the stakeholders and SAVIN service providers?

The most effective way to coordinate media outreach during a critical event is to have an understanding beforehand that every stakeholder and agency involved agrees to work together in the event of a crisis...that individual agencies won't send out their own press releases or make statements to the media without first discussing it with other agencies/service providers involved. It would be important to agree that the agency that is most directly impacted should probably take the lead, with all others collaborating during the actual event. This would obviously change depending on each situation, but the agencies must agree to have flexibility ahead of time and commitment to work together so expectations are clear when faced with a critical event.

The SAVIN agency should always be the "point of contact" for all media inquiries, and a designated spokesperson should be identified and prepared in advance. In its contract with any



service provider(s), clear guidelines for media relations (including those related to critical event management) should be clarified. Any media outreach related to a CEM should be approved by the SAVIN agency in advance of dissemination, and the pre-designated spokesperson should be the primary point-of-contact for all media inquiries and media outreach.

During pre-event planning, strategies can be identified about how media outreach would be done...including media outlets that would be contacted or email distribution lists created ahead of time that could be used for outreach during a critical event.

3. How do you engage victims and survivors in the entire CEM process?

One way to engage them: I mentioned earlier the importance of the governance body or the advisory board including survivors directly on that group basically to look at your critical event plan and contribute to the protocol. They will look at it through the lens of the survivor and give you insight into how that might feel if implemented in the way you are writing it. Another, depending on the accessibility you have in your community or state, you may want to engage survivors around your jurisdiction or state in focus groups or roundtable discussions talking to them and just gathering information almost in a research project way to understand how they feel about notifications and the important input they would give you in putting together a plan.

I would like to highlight the New Hampshire approach. We did some technical assistance as they were developing their own program and we did exactly what Karin said. We had a roundtable focus group of survivors asking their expectations of the system. The survivors enjoyed it so much that they all volunteered to be on a victim advisory committee to the governance committee in New Hampshire which also includes survivors, but they have a separate committee of only survivors. They were some of the most remarkable people I have had the opportunity to meet because they made no bones about being clear on their expectations and on what they wanted the system to provide, and I am sure they will be involved also as New Hampshire looks to develop its CEM. And that's included in the online library, if you want to look at the goals and the questions we asked the folks. It's on the SAVIN Online Community Virtual Library, www.savinonline.org

4. When you talk about a trauma trigger, what do you mean?

That is based on a lot of research that has happened in the victim assistance field. A trauma trigger is simply something that occurred that brings the victim back to the feelings they had at the time the crime was occurring and shortly thereafter. We all have probably taken courses on the immediate long and short term impacts, and a trauma trigger often takes place long-term



after the crime has occurred and you've gone through assistance. Literally it will take you back to, as some victims describe it, "the scene of the crime," so you experience it over and over again. It can create anxiety and great fear and, for some victims, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. And I don't know if that's the best term, "trauma trigger," but it is what some victims have told me personally happened when they get the *correct* notification, so you can imagine what an erroneous notification would do them as well.

5. Are registered persons routinely given notice when a facility is temporarily offline?

It varies from state to state based on what policies and protocols have been established. In Ohio, for example, if a local jail is offline, if they are changing a booking system, or for whatever reason, if there is a temporary stoppage of service, it is available on the VINE Link website for our state. It's certainly something that is there which we share so that when anyone goes into our system and tries to look online, they will see automatically what counties are not available for service at that point. I think it's a very important factor to include in any plan with your service provider.

6. Will there be any grants offered in the future to make enhancements to our current VINE system?

At this time we're not aware of any grant funding available specifically for enhancements; however, we encourage you to attend the next SAVIN webinar on funding and sustaining your SAVIN program. We will be addressing creative approaches states have taken to support their status programs in the next webinar on sustainability.

7. Lessons learned from the vendors? Based on Karin's vendor and her experience...

A couple of things come to mind. One is it's easy to point fingers back and forth in the middle of a situation and just reminding everyone that the vendor, as well as your staff are all impacted, and everyone wants to work together to resolve the situation so including them in the planning involves debriefing. A "lessons learned" debriefing or review is easily identified in your contract with them. If you can build in any planning ahead of time about expectations for protocol and what responsibility might be in your pre-event planning with the literal contract that you are developing, it would be important.



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