

Title:

Development and Implementation of a University Active Shooter Drill Using Cross-Sector Collaboration and Nursing Leadership

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Session Title:

Emergency Situations

Slot:

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Scheduled Time:

3:30 PM

Keywords:

active shooter drill, tabletop exercise and university

References:

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Abstract Summary:

Nurses are at a unique juncture to use their skillsets and expertise in non-nursing activities in academic environments. The nurse leader is a capable participant in developing interprofessional and cross-sector collaborative efforts for the successful development of emergency plans and preparedness efforts that include tabletop exercises and active drills.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
Differentiate a tabletop exercise from an active participatory drill.	1. Tabletop Exercises vs. Active Participatory Drills a. What is emergency preparedness b. Types of disasters; disaster vs. emergency c. Background of importance of emergency preparedness and nursing role d. Definition of tabletop exercises e. Definition of active participatory drills f. Examples of each type: specific to tornado and active shooter g. Efficacy of each type h. EBP of drills/exercises i. Contributions of drills/exercises to nursing, education, and academia
Discuss the ways in which inter-professional and cross-sector collaboration can occur in developing successful emergency and disaster plans.	2. Steps taken to develop active shooter drill a. Garner employer support b. Evaluate stakeholders and role-specific contributions c. Internal and external resources d. Establish collaboration e. Education of emergency preparedness plan – begin with the basics and build the foundation f. Develop, execute, and evaluate tabletop exercise (active shooter scenario) g. Develop, execute, and evaluate active shooter drill • Develop drill as manuscript; include key stakeholders • Communicate with internal and external affected individuals • Garner support from extraneous individuals (include cosmetology, volunteers for role play, use educational resources / courses applicable to target learners who can further gain insight by participating) • Set up emergency reporting system • Drill (with evaluators in place and campus and administration participating) • Evaluate – hot wash • Use hot wash to discuss and determine changes to the emergency plan • Implement changes • Re-evaluate through drills and participation; continue to evaluate EBP for necessary changes between drills

Abstract Text:

Emergency and disaster preparedness is a modern day theme and has changed with increasing technology and the ability to predict natural disasters. Manmade disasters have provided little opportunity to mitigate outcomes except with robust emergency and disaster plans. Hospitals have been good at developing policies, procedures, and protocols in emergency management. Healthcare workers, particularly nurses, practice emergency management and mitigation naturally within the course of their daily work. With this strong skill, nurses are positioned to be a natural leader in higher educational settings' response plans as emergency and disaster preparedness becomes more common. The purpose of this proposal is to discuss the process and nursing skills used to provide expertise to a diverse group of individuals with a common focus on safety and emergency management.

Tabletop exercises can provide a tool to measure emergency management plans (Veenema, 2013). A tabletop exercise is a good starting point when developing an active drill. The use of tabletop exercises is not new to nursing. Tabletop exercises can be likened to simulation that better prepares the learner for real-world action in a comfortable and non-threatening environment (Rega & Fink, 2014; Wittman-Price, Godshall, & Wilson, 2013). Just as simulation allows the learner to make mistakes and then learn from them so does a tabletop exercise. This further develops a comfort level for immediate response to difficult situations of all involved (Jacobs, 2014; Wittman-Price et al., 2013). Learning occurs through finding gaps that exist in the emergency plan and expands the knowledge level of the learners. The interactions during a tabletop exercise enhances the learning experience as the participants glean knowledge from each other and learn where action is needed to make the emergency plan more successful (Rega & Fink, 2014).

Active drills are different in that the entire stakeholder group could potentially be engaged; whereas, in a tabletop drill the participants can be chosen and the drill can be more controlled (Veneema, 2013). Active drills follow a written script with moment-by-moment responses that change based on the actors that become part of the script unknowingly. Skill sets are practiced which include communication, action, interaction, and reaction. Designated observers monitor length of time in communication and response. A hot wash will typically occur at the end of an active drill where the main stakeholders assess and evaluate the witnessed responses. The evaluation includes recommendations and a plan of action to improve the emergency operation plan (Veneema, 2013). Active drills are shown to create continuity between community entities both in the U.S. and globally (Dausy & Moore, 2014).

In a small private university in South Georgia the president of the university appointed as chair to the Safety and Security Committee a nursing faculty member who had previous emergency and disaster experience. The university president tasked the committee to develop active drills to promote safety and mitigate disastrous outcomes. During the first two years the emergency operations plan was updated and tabletop exercises focusing on natural disasters occurred within the committee. Then the tabletop exercise was provided for participation of the administrative team.

After the natural disaster tabletop exercise with administration the committee chair contacted local law enforcement and the local fire chief and garnered support to develop a plan for university education on fire and active shooter safety. After many meetings with community emergency responders the first combined educational endeavor was mandatory training of university faculty and staff that was provided by the Safety and Security Committee, the local Fire Chief, and the local lead Lieutenant of The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) division. Using best practices the training included fire safety, escape routes, fire extinguisher use, active shooter safety, and university reassembly areas (Interagency Security Committee, 2015).

With a foundation for combined educational endeavors the committee chair garnered support for an active shooter drill. An active shooter tabletop exercise was developed and initiated with the lead of the committee chair and SWAT team Lieutenant. Local community agencies and the university administrative team participated. After revising the safety plan, based on the tabletop findings, an active shooter drill was developed by the committee chair and SWAT team Lieutenant. This successful drill took place with comprehensive planning efforts that included inter-professional university divisions and cross-sector community collaboration.

The outcomes of the drill identified the opportunities for improvement within the emergency safety plan of the university and created a working knowledge of the roles of various individuals along with group effort initiatives clearly delineated. As identified in the literature, communication is the most essential component of emergency preparedness success (Veneema, 2013). Lessons learned by the university (and the committee chair) included the vast amount of communication efforts that must occur in developing, initiating, and deploying participatory drills. Other lessons learned included the use of technology for directing a drill including reverse calling systems to notify the public of drill dates and information, perimeter security, signage, campus involvement, and the use of media in conveying messages. Partnering agencies were beneficial in creating a more secure campus with the sharing of up-to-date floor plans that are part of the SWAT teams' computer based program, community partner drilling for acquisition of knowledge of layouts, and evaluation of processes from experts with thorough recommendations that can be evaluated and re-evaluated for functional use. The role of the committee chair as an effective and empowered nurse leader shows that nursing has a way to use clinical expertise in far-reaching ways that impact society positively and create not only inter-professional collaboration but cross-sector collaboration as well.