Family Assistance Center
&
Community Assistance Center
Operations Manual

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1. Family Assistance Center

The Family Assistance Center (FAC) is a private space for victims’ families to congregate and receive information and services.

1.1 Location

The ideal location for a Family Assistance Center will vary depending on the nature and location of the incident. The location should be either on or near campus so that family members can access other university offices and services. The Family Assistance Center should not be located within viewing distance of the incident site or the media staging area/joint information center.

The most ideal place for a Family Assistance Center is in a hotel conference or meeting space. This way you can collocate the FAC with lodging accommodations for the families. The space should be able to accommodate the following:

- Single point of entry/exit for reception and access control
- A space large enough for briefings
- Separate rooms for private interviews or counseling
- Area for refreshments
- Internet accessibility and electrical outlets
- Convenient bathroom facilities

1.2 Setup

While the layout and content of the Family Assistance Center will differ depending on the needs of the effected family members and nature of the incident there are several components that all FACs should have in common. These are:

- Clear signage for the location
- A registration table at the entrance
- Briefing area or room
- Private rooms for interviews/counseling
- Refreshments Area or Table

1.2.1 Signage - The FAC should be clearly sign posted “Boston University Family Assistance Center”. This should be placed outside the designated area so that new incoming family members can find their way to it. An announcements board should also be set up inside the FAC that vital information (such as the briefing times) can be posted.

1.2.2 Registration – Registration should be set up at the entrance to the FAC. It is important to note that this should be the only entry/exit point for the FAC. All other entry/exit points should be secured and prohibited from use except in the
event of an emergency. A table and chairs should be used so that people can fill out paperwork. At a minimum there must be a registration worker and security person manning the registration desk at all times. This is not only to prevent unauthorized access but also to protect sensitive documents that may be at the registration desk.

1.2.3 Briefing Area – The briefing area is a room or location where officials will provide information updates to the family members in the FAC. The Briefing area should have sufficient seating for the number of families, arranged theater style facing the speakers. The use of audio/visual equipment or a podium should also be considered.

1.2.4 Private Rooms – Private Rooms must be available for interviews, mental health counseling, or private briefings. These rooms should be away from the main area, have a door, and not have easily observable interior or exterior windows.

1.2.5 Refreshments Area – Simple refreshments such as water, juice and coffee should made available for families and FAC staff in the Family Assistance Center. Snacks and meals should also be considered as the needed.

1.3 Staffing

The Family Assistance Center staff is separated into Groups based on job function. Examples of these groups would be the Family Liaison Group or Logistics Group. Each group reports to a Group Supervisor. The Group Supervisors in turn report to the FAC Unit Leader who runs the FAC as a whole.

FAC staffing should be arranged in shifts and drawn from University departments as outlined in the Active Shooter Emergency Response Plan (ERP). Each shift should be 4 to 8 hours long depending on staffing requirements and FAC hours of operation. Each shift begins with a staff meeting led by the incoming and outgoing (if applicable) FAC Unit Leaders that addresses important information and updates from the University EOC as well as priorities for the day. Incoming and outgoing shifts should overlap by 30 minutes to allow for these meetings.
Every Family Assistance Center should contain the following staff:

- FAC Unit Leader
- Group Supervisors
- Reception Worker
- Logistics Worker
- Family Liaison
- Mental Health Counselor
- Spiritual Care
- Public Safety Officer
- Medical Personnel

1.3.1 FAC Unit Leader – The FAC Unit Leader oversees the site’s operations and staff. The FAC Unit Leader also arranges the daily briefings and additional recourses as needed. This person reports directly to the human services branch in the operations section at the University Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Only one FAC Unit Leader is required per shift.

1.3.2 Group Supervisor – The Group Supervisor manages a specific group or groups within the FAC and reports directly to the FAC Unit Leader. For smaller operations there should be two Group Managers. First is the Family Services Supervisor who will manage the groups providing direct services to the victim’s families (i.e. Family Liaisons, Mental Health Counselors, and Spiritual Care). The second is the Support Services Supervisor who oversees those supporting the FAC (i.e. Logistics Workers, Reception Workers, Public Safety Officers, and Medical Personnel). Group Supervisor positions can be further divided (i.e. Family Liaison Supervisor, Logistics Supervisor, Mental Health Supervisor, etc.) as needed by the FAC Unit Leader.

1.3.3 Reception Worker – Reception workers will work at the registration table at the entrance to the FAC. These individuals will be responsible for greeting and registration of families, and maintaining a sign in/out log for people entering and exiting the FAC and controlling access. There should be a minimum of 2 reception workers per shift.

1.3.4 Logistics Worker – Logistics workers will provide material support for the FAC in its daily operation. This can include, but is not limited to, the arrangement or setup of rooms and areas, procurement of supplies, liaising with facilities and dining services, etc.

1.3.5 Family Liaison – The family liaison work directly with the victims’ families to address and needs and concerns they may have and provide university services. Each family will be assigned a liaison who will be their primary point of contact for the duration of the response phase. The number of families requiring assistance will dictate the number of family liaisons. Family liaison should never
be assigned more then two families each to prevent overly burdensome caseloads and emotional strain. Incidents with less then 10 families should have dedicated family liaisons. Any incident with more then 10 families requiring assistance should begin to double up family liaison assignments. A family liaison supervisor may be assigned by the FAC Unit Leader to help manage and coordinate the family liaison staff on larger incidents.

1.3.6 Mental Health Counselor – Mental Health Counselors will be in the FAC to provide psychological first aid and crisis counseling to the families. There should be a minimum of 2 counselors in the FAC.

1.3.7 Spiritual Care – Religious representatives from the university may be included in the FAC to provide spiritual care to those seeking it. This should be arranged through the EOC.

1.3.8 Public Safety Officer – Boston University Police Department will arrange a police/public safety officer detail for the FAC center. This detail will be responsible for enforcing access controls for the FAC and maintaining a safe environment inside the facility.

1.3.9 Medical Personnel – An EMS detail will be on site and responsible for any medical treatment needed in the FAC. This should be arranged through BU-EMS.

1.4 Operational Elements

1.4.1 Registration

All families seeking assistance at the FAC will be required to register on their first visit to the facility. Registration workers will use the FAC Registration Form to capture essential information for the family. Once the form is complete the registration form will be handed off to the family liaison to keep in their records. The registration desk will also maintain a sign in/sign out sheet for the shift.

1.4.2 Outside Agencies

Service agencies not affiliated with the University may be brought into the FAC to provide assistance to families. Access to the FAC by outside agencies will be arranged before hand by the University EOC who will in turn notify the FAC Unit Leader before their arrival. Operation of the FAC remains with the University and the FAC Unit Leader. Representatives from outside agencies are required to wear agency identification while operating in the FAC and defers to the authority of the FAC Unit Leader.

1.4.3 Briefings
Briefings are arranged by the FAC Unit Manager and should be held at regular times with a minimum of two briefings per day (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). The times of these briefings should be pre-arranged and communicated to those in the FAC. A senior member of the Dean of Students office or other high-ranking University official should give the briefings. These briefing should consist of operational updates, information regarding available assistance, and general announcements followed by a Q&A.

1.4.5 Resource Requests

The FAC Unit Leader should make requests for additional personnel through the University Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Material Resources are procured by the FAC Logistics Group.

2. Community Assistance Center

The Community Assistance Center (CAC) is a central location where members of the University community can come to grieve together, receive information and seek support services. This facility is separate from the FAC and is less formal in its operation.

2.1 Location

The CAC should be located in a larger congregate area that is easy accessible by students on campus. Student Centers are an ideal location for the CAC as they are a natural gathering point for students and require minimal setup. Minimal location requirements for a CAC include:

- Large congregate area
- Controllable entry/exit points
- Space for a briefing area
- Private rooms for counseling services
- Refreshments Area
- Bathroom facilities

2.2 Setup

As a more informal facility the CAC should require less setup then the FAC. All CACs should share these areas when set up:

- Clear signage for the location
- Briefing area or room
- Private rooms for interviews/counseling
- Refreshments Area or Table
2.2.1 Signage - The CAC should be clearly sign posted “Boston University Community Assistance Center”. An announcements board should also be set up inside the CAC where information regarding activities, meetings, counseling services, and briefing times can be posted.

2.2.2 Briefing Area – The briefing area is a room or location where officials will provide information updates to BU community members in the CAC. The briefing area should have seating arranged theater style facing the speakers. The use of audio/visual equipment or a podium should also be considered.

2.2.3 Private Rooms – Private Rooms must be available mental health counseling. These rooms should be away from the main area, have a door, and not have easily observable interior or exterior windows.

2.2.4 Refreshments Area – Simple refreshments such as water, juice and coffee should be made available for those in the CAC. Full meals are not needed.

2.3 Staffing

Like the FAC, staffing for the CAC should be arranged in shifts and drawn from University departments as outlined in the Active Shooter ERP. Each shift should be 4 to 8 hours long depending on staffing requirements and CAC hours of operation. Each shift begins with a staff meeting led by the incoming and outgoing (if applicable) CAC Unit Leaders that addresses important information and updates from the University EOC as well as priorities for the day. Incoming and outgoing shifts should overlap by 30 minutes to allow for these meetings.

Every Community Assistance Center should contain the following staff:

- CAC Unit Leader
- Group Supervisor
- CAC Worker
- Mental Health Counselor
- Spiritual Care
- Public Safety Officer

2.3.1 CAC Unit Leader – The CAC Unit Leader oversees the site’s operations and staff. The CAC manager also arranges the daily briefings, scheduled events, and additional resources as needed. This person reports directly to the human services branch in the operations section at the University EOC. Only one CAC Unit Leader is required per shift.

2.3.2 Group Supervisor – Group Supervisors should be designated to help manage the groups within the CAC. There should be a minimum of two Group Supervisors. The Community Services Supervisor is in charge of groups providing direct assistance (i.e. Mental Health and Spiritual Care groups). The Support Services
Supervisor manages those running the CAC (i.e. CAC Workers and Public Safety Personnel).

2.3.2 CAC Worker – CAC Workers assist the CAC Unit Leader in the daily operations of the CAC. Typical tasks may include setup and running of events, briefings, or various projects. The number of CAC Workers required will vary by need and is at the discretion of the CAC Unit Leader. The initial assignment for the CAC’s opening should be a minimum of 2 CAC Workers.

2.3.3 Mental Health Counselor – Mental Health Counselors will be in the CAC to provide psychological first aid and crisis counseling to BU community members. There should be a minimum of 2 counselors in the CAC.

2.3.4 Spiritual Care – Religious representatives from the university may be included in the CAC to provide spiritual care to those seeking it. This should be arranged through the EOC.

2.3.5 Public Safety Officer – Boston University Police Department will arrange a police/public safety officer detail for the CAC center. This detail will be responsible for enforcing access controls (if deemed necessary) for the CAC and maintaining a safe environment inside the facility.

2.4 Operational Elements

2.4.1 Briefings

Briefings are arranged by the CAC Unit Leader and should be held at regular times with a minimum of two briefings per day (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). The times of these briefings should be pre-arranged and communicated to those in the FAC. A member of the Dean of Students office or other University official should give the briefings. These briefing should consist of operational updates, information regarding available assistance, university events, engagement opportunities, and general announcements followed by a Q&A.

2.4.2 Resource Requests

The CAC Unit Leader should make requests for additional personnel or material resources through the University EOC.

2.4.3 Activities
In addition to counseling and spiritual care services the CAC should be made available to University organizations, departments (both academic and administrative), and student groups to schedule events. These could include (but are not limited to) meetings, discussion groups, memorials, vigils, prayer groups, community engagement efforts, volunteer opportunities, and aid drives. These events and activities must be scheduled ahead of time through the University EOC or CAC Unit Leader. The CAC Unit Leader and their staff are responsible for facilitating all events in the space.

2.4.4 Communications

The CAC should utilize various University Tools to communicate activities and services available in the CAC. These include: BU Today, University websites, email updates, Official BU Twitter feeds, and other social media outlets. These communications should be coordinated through the EOC so that they align with the wider University communications plan.

3. Key References and Resources

3.1 University Guidance

- Boston University Police Department Active Shooter Response General Order TOP-6.11
- Boston University Emergency Response Plan
- Boston University Active Shooter Emergency Response Plan

3.2 American Red Cross Guidance

- Shelter Operations Management Toolkit
- Shelter Operations Participant’s Manual

3.3 Government Guidance

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Mass Fatality Management Plan
  *Supplement to the Massachusetts CEMP*
- NTSB Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters

4. SOP Revision History
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Section / Paragraph Changed</th>
<th>Changes Made</th>
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