



NMVC

National Mass Violence Center

Providing Resources to Victims,
Survivors, & Those Who Serve Them

News Release

nmvrc.org | Office 843-792-7018 | Fax 843-792-3388

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: EMILY MEEKS
843-709-5962 | meekse@musc.edu

National Mass Violence Center launches ‘Virtual Resiliency Center’ to guide recovery for victims and survivors

Online platform “MassViolence.Help” created with USDOJ Office for Victims of Crime funding

CHARLESTON, S.C. (September 25, 2024) - The National Mass Violence Center (NMVC), based at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and funded by the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), is pleased to announce the launch of the Virtual Resiliency Center (VRC) at MassViolence.help. Developed by MUSC experts and researchers, the VRC is a first-of-its kind website that centralizes evidence-based resources to help victims, survivors and communities affected by mass violence. It also offers customizable pages online for communities to disseminate credible information after a mass violence incident (MVI).

“When an MVI occurs, the news media and local officials are almost always the immediate, main sources of information,” said Daniel W. Smith, Ph.D., NMVC Director of Technology & Resources. “But when the incident is over, communities must work through the aftermath and begin the recovery process. Many communities establish in-person resiliency centers to serve as the focal point for providing victim services and critical resources, and for gaining access to personal and mental health support services. These centers take the lead in community response efforts, support, communication, memorials and healing.”

Resiliency Centers are very effective, but they take coordination and funding to establish – and most importantly, they take time. “That’s where the VRC at MassViolence.help fits in to meet critical needs between the occurrence of an MVI and the establishment of a brick-and-mortar resiliency center,” Smith said. The new site is accessible for free and is online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The VRC at MassViolence.help (<https://massviolence.help/>) features four sections:

- Victim & Social Services
- Social Connection & Empowerment
- Health & Wellness
- Managing Grief & Trauma

Each section includes easy-to-understand, credible information; videos of survivors and expert service providers sharing their insights; and links to other reliable sources of information for further exploration. The VRC addresses topics such as victim rights, social support and relationships after mass violence, stress management, grief and trauma reactions, and managing substance use after an MVI.

Additionally, the NMVC team can quickly coordinate with officials after an MVI to create a community-specific resource page associated with the VRC at MassViolence.help website. This function will allow communities to guide affected victims and survivors to existing VRC resources and to share community-specific information relevant to their mass violence crime. This tool offers communities the framework for sharing credible information and consistent messaging.

“The VRC was created with communities in mind,” Smith explained. “We are able to partner with U.S. communities affected by mass violence to help them disseminate accurate and timely information after an MVI. The VRC at MassViolence.help provides customizable pages to local leaders that they can tailor and share with their local communities, until they have the time and capacity to develop and launch their own website.”

Survivors of MVIs often experience a confusing and unexpected feelings while they seek emotional and physical recovery. They may receive an overwhelming amount of information during the short- and long-term recovery process. “While most people are well-intentioned with their advice, it’s important that those already suffering from physical and mental health trauma after an MVI are offered evidence-based strategies for coping and recovering,” said Dean Kilpatrick, Ph.D., NMVC Director and MUSC Distinguished University Professor. “The VRC at MassViolence.help offers survivors anywhere in the world a free, trustworthy resource outlining specific methods proven to help the recovery process.”

The NMVC is funded by the USDOJ/OVC and is based in the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center in the MUSC Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health. NMVC experts prepare communities across the country for mass violence emergencies and assist with response, recovery and resilience efforts in the aftermath of mass violence incidents.

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About NMVC

Mass violence is a major problem in America that has killed and injured thousands and has a devastating impact on countless communities and our nation. The NMVC was established in October 2017 at the Medical University of South Carolina through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime. In 2023, OVC awarded nearly \$9 million to NMVC to continue its nationwide mission of improving community preparedness and the country’s capacity to serve victims and communities recovering from mass violence through research, planning, training, technology, and collaboration.

About the Office for Victims of Crime

OVC is committed to enhancing the Nation’s capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime. OVC awards millions of dollars annually in victim compensation and assistance in every U.S. state and some territories, as well as for training, technical assistance, and other capacity-building programs to enhance service providers’ ability to support victims of crime. More information about OVC can be found at www.ovc.ojp.gov.

About MUSC

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, MUSC is the state’s only comprehensive academic health system, with a unique mission to preserve and optimize human life in South Carolina through education, research and patient care. Each year, MUSC educates more than 3,200 students in six colleges – Dental Medicine, Graduate Studies, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy – and trains more than 900 residents and fellows in its health system. MUSC brought in more than \$300 million in research funds in fiscal year 2023, leading the state overall in research funding. MUSC also leads the state in federal and National Institutes of Health funding. For information on academic programs, visit muscd.edu.

As the health care system of the Medical University of South Carolina, MUSC Health is dedicated to delivering the highest-quality and safest patient care while educating and training generations of outstanding health care providers and leaders to serve the people of South Carolina and beyond. Patient care is provided at 16 hospitals (includes owned or governing interest), with approximately 2,700 beds and four additional hospital locations in development, more than 350 telehealth sites and nearly 750 care locations situated in all regions of South Carolina. In 2023, for the ninth consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report named MUSC Health University Medical Center in Charleston the No. 1 hospital in South Carolina. To learn more about clinical patient services, visit muschealth.org.

MUSC has a total enterprise annual operating budget of \$5.9 billion. The 31,000 MUSC family members include world-class faculty, physicians, specialty providers, scientists, students, contract employees, affiliates and care team members who deliver groundbreaking education, research, and patient care.