

AHSRA 2019 2Serve CERT AHSRA Abstract

Are They Ready? Participants' Perceptions Following a CERT Training and Disaster Simulation

Mini-abstract

The frequency of disasters is increasing and it is important that students and community members are trained to safely respond. Academy and University students along with community members experienced CERT training and disaster simulation. Learn how participants' perceptions changed following a CERT training and disaster simulation.

Background: Blinci (2014) suggests that all Adventist schools need to have an emergency plan in place just in case an emergency occurs. Colorado schools have a safety plan in-place and they actively train the students. Faculty need to be prepared to lead and guide the students in the event of a disaster in the classroom (Duran, 2014). One study found that high school students benefited from life skill training program (Khademi Ashkzari & Khademi Ashkzari, 2013). There are numerous resources available to train and educate faculty, staff, and students (FEMA, 2015).

2Serve and Heritage Academy students have led the way in the movement to provide emergency preparedness to our academies. They have been doing community emergency response team (CERT) training and disaster simulations for several years. Many of the Heritage Academy students are CERT trainers and they provide the CERT training to the other Academy students. Peer-to-peer training is a valuable experience for both the trainers and the learners. It is important that we train students and community members to safely respond should a disaster arise. The purpose of this study was to explore the participants' perceptions of how beneficial the CERT training was and their preparedness level to respond to victims of a mass casualty simulation.

Methods: This ongoing study utilized mixed methods. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were asked. The CERT training sessions have been delivered at various academies, universities, and camp-meetings. At the conclusion of the CERT disaster training and simulation, the participants were invited to participate in this study. A QR code was used for convenience of data collection and participants can use their smartphone to open the survey using a QR code reader or picture app on iPhones. Frequencies were run on the quantitative data and the qualitative data was collected during the recorded "Hot Wash" debrief session and then transcribed into electronic format to conduct thematic analysis.

Results: Of the 69 participants, the majority (93%) felt the CERT training was fairly to very beneficial. When asked about applying the training, 84% strongly agreed or agreed that this CERT training and simulation prepared them to deal with a real-life disaster. Of those who have experienced a real-life disaster, 41% (n = 28) strongly agreed or agreed that this CERT training has helped them better respond to a disaster. The findings from this study will add to the body of knowledge currently available on disaster response.

Conclusion: Incorporating emergency preparedness into education programs is vital for the nation's health security goals, as well as the future preparedness of our society. Implications for

educators are to invest in preparing students for responding to the threat of mass casualty incidents. Educators need to embrace and provide students with the skill-set to triage and remove victims from an unsafe area and foster collaboration with other professionals in the event of a disaster. The CERT training and simulation supports change to improve and influence the safety our communities should a disaster occur.

References

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