

# Med-Talk Review

## Helping Our Community Recover After Mass Violence



### Summary

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For this project, I attended a Medical Talk at the Allegheny Health Network's General Hospital. The premise of the talk discussed the Tree of Life shooting that occurred in Pittsburgh on October 2018 and provided healthcare providers with tools and data on managing PTSD in young patients.

I focused on creating a review that discussed the content of the Med-talk courteously and respectfully. I included important talking points that the speakers conveyed, but concentrated on transcribing the content for a broader audience.  
<sup>1,2,3</sup>

### Intended Audience

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Client: Mario Castagnaro – Carnegie Mellon University  
Healthcare Communication Professor

Recipient: Mario Castagnaro – Carnegie Mellon University  
Healthcare Communication Professor

### Completed Tasks

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- Attended the Medical Talk at Allegheny Health Network
- Recorded Audio and took notes
- Transcribed the audio along with notes
- Outlined the content
- Drafted the material, then reworked
- Turned in project

### Developed Skills

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- Medical Writing
- Writing for a Lay Audience
- Healthcare Communication
- Transcribing and Note Analysis
- Proofreading and Editing
- Interpreting Medical Talks
- Information Architecture

## Helping Our Community Recover After Mass Violence: Mental Health Response to the Tree of Life Shooting Medical Talk Review

### **In the Wake of Tragedy**

On October 27, 2018, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's Squirrel Hill neighborhood, was disturbed when an armed man entered the Tree of Life Synagogue. This act of terror killed 11 people and injured 7, but the shock and trauma felt through the community have no quantitative number.

In the months following the tragic event, child psychologist Anthony Mannarino Ph.D. and child & adolescent psychiatrist Judith Cohen M.D worked diligently to bring awareness to the mental health issues that appear communities, particularly in children, after experiencing trauma. Both Dr. Mannarino and Dr. Cohen serve as the Director and Medical Director of the Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents and have both served on the board of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). Each member has experience in working with children in a variety of traumatic experiences, with Dr. Mannarino proving as a leader in the field for over 25 years.

In their efforts to bring awareness to the mental health responses in the wake of mass violence, Dr. Mannarino and Dr. Cohen presented a seminar at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's Allegheny General Hospital (AGH). AGH is one of the country's premier health-care institutions, known for its world-renowned team of doctors, nurses, technicians, and staff. As a center that prides itself on furthering the education of health-care and medicine, AGH provided the perfect setting for Dr. Mannarino and Dr. Cohen to reach out to a community of doctors and concerned individuals in the wake of the Tree of Life shooting.

### **Further Education for Medical Practitioners**

For this reason, Dr. Mannarino and Dr. Cohen's seminar, "Helping Our Community Recover After Mass Violence: Mental Health Response to the Tree of Life Shooting," provided health-care professionals with information and programs. The talk tailored this information to illustrate how to work with patients that may begin to show Post-Acute signs of traumatic reactions. Just as AGH is a prominent health-care provider, it is essential for doctors severing the community in the aftermath to understand Dr. Mannarino's expertise in the signs of post-traumatic stress.

Dr. Mannarino wanted to ensure that the doctors attending were able to recognize and provide the right attention, when patients, primarily children, began to show symptoms of traumatic reactions. Thus, Dr. Cohen dedicated a significant portion of the talk to addressing a variety of programs the Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents offered. These programs included Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), which Dr. Cohen and Dr. Mannarino are co-developers, and Evidence-Based Trauma Treatments for both adults and children.

### Awareness Campaign for a Community

Though predominately geared toward doctors, the first hour of the seminar did provide useful information that benefited a concerned lay audience. Dr. Mannarino's presentation organized valuable information starting with Predictors of Trauma and followed with explanations of Typical Traumatic Responses for both children and adults. Both Dr. Mannarino and Dr. Cohen kept their primary audience in mind but took the time to develop a point on their slides that were not common knowledge outside of the medical field. They pushed for people to discuss traumatic events in a respectful manner that did not hinder the point of their message. They were also adamant about addressing that most individuals were resilient and would not develop mental health problems, but that it did not lessen these particular individuals' reactions.

Dr. Mannarino supplemented slides with a lengthy discussion, primarily on the factors that would indicate an individual as a candidate for mental health problems. Regarding these factors, Dr. Mannarino discussed the predictors of trauma, based on an individual's magnitude of exposure. He also provided questions that could help someone assess their mental health or that of a loved one. Questions such as: Were you there at the Tree of Life synagogue when this happened? Did you have any immediate risk of loss of life for a potential injury? Did you know people who were hurt or people who died that day?

However, proximity was not the only factor to look out for, Dr. Cohen illustrated the importance of understanding how children associated with these situations. Concerning the Tree of Life shooting, the anti-Semitic agenda of the shooter prompted a child of Dr. Mannarino's colleague to show symptoms, even when they were in a completely different state at the time of the shooting. The association by religion was a factor in this particular case. Dr. Mannarino's discussion on the matter indicated the importance of watching for other factors, especially in children who hear parents discussing or seeing the news portray the traumatic event continuously. Because of an individual's ability to associate with the victims of a tragic event, Dr. Cohen provided links for parents or adults to report any Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms.

In the end, both Dr. Mannarino and Dr. Cohen adamantly believed in community healing and the responsibility of health-care practitioners and adults in helping their children process the event. The seminar was a valuable tool in bringing focus to the mental health issues of traumatic events, but also in the power of support from doctors and communities alike. It is essential that the community understood that it was merely "bruised, but not broken" and will continue to heal in the aftermath.

<sup>1</sup>Allegheny General Hospital | Allegheny Health Network. (2018, October 12). Retrieved March 24, 2019, from <https://www.ahn.org/locations/allegheny-general-hospital>

<sup>2</sup>Mannarino, D. P., & Cohen, D. A. (2019, February 18). Helping Our Community Recover After Mass Violence: Mental Health Response to the Tree of Life Shooting. Lecture presented at Allegheny Health Network Presents in Allegheny General Hospital, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

<sup>3</sup>Management Team of TF-CBT. (n.d.). Retrieved March 24, 2019, from <https://tfcbt.org/management/>