

Critical Event Debriefing in the Emergency Department

Dillon M. Farrell BSN, RN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, dillon_m.farrell@lvhn.org

Maria E. Gagliardi BSN, RN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, maria_e.gagliardi@lvhn.org

Kimberly A. Gaspero BSN, RN
kimberly_a.gaspero@lvhn.org

Kelly N. McLennan BSN, RN, PHRN, CEN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, kelly_n.mclennan@lvhn.org

Kristen Vogenitz BSN, BN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, kirsten_e.vogenitz@lvhn.org

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Critical Event Debriefing in Emergency Medicine

Dillon Farrell, BSN,RN; Maria Gagliardi, BSN, RN; Kimberly Gaspero, BSN, RN; Kelly McLennan, BSN, RN, PHRN, CEN; Kirsten Vogenitz, BSN, RN

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

- **Project Purpose:** To assess the comfort level of nurses dealing with critical events and to trial a critical event debriefing (CED) template to use throughout the emergency departments (ED) in order to guide ED staff in a short, structured group reflection of the situation in an effort to improve patient care in future similar events.
- The first implementation of critical event debriefings have been used by the military in training and combat scenarios. These reviews are referred to as after-action reviews (AAR) and focus on improving performance and efficiency (Hamilton, 1993). Debriefings also have been used in healthcare by educators in simulations under the guise formative feedback (Cant & Cooper, 2011). Unfortunately, little research exists on their implementation by floor staff, particularly in the ED, a fast-paced environment requiring strong teamwork and critical thinking skills.

PICO

In the emergency department will the use of critical event debriefing increase the nurses comfort levels while dealing with difficult clinical experiences?

METHODS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Perform a review of the available research to gather data on the use of AARs in healthcare
- Educate staff on CEDs including their purpose and possible use in the ED
- Create a survey to determine ED staff feelings towards the use of CEDs
 - Need, usefulness, timing, etc.
- Create an efficient and concise CED
- Perform at least one CED following a critical event and perform a qualitative post-survey

References:

- Cant, R., & Cooper, S. (2011). The benefits of debriefing as formative feedback in nurse education. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 29(1), 37-47.
- Hamilton, M. H. (1993). A Leader's Guide to After-Action Reviews. *Training Circular*, 25(20), I-I.

OUTCOMES AND BARRIERS

Outcomes

Identified strengths and weaknesses in certain critical events
Improved teamwork and skills
Decreased stress in critical events

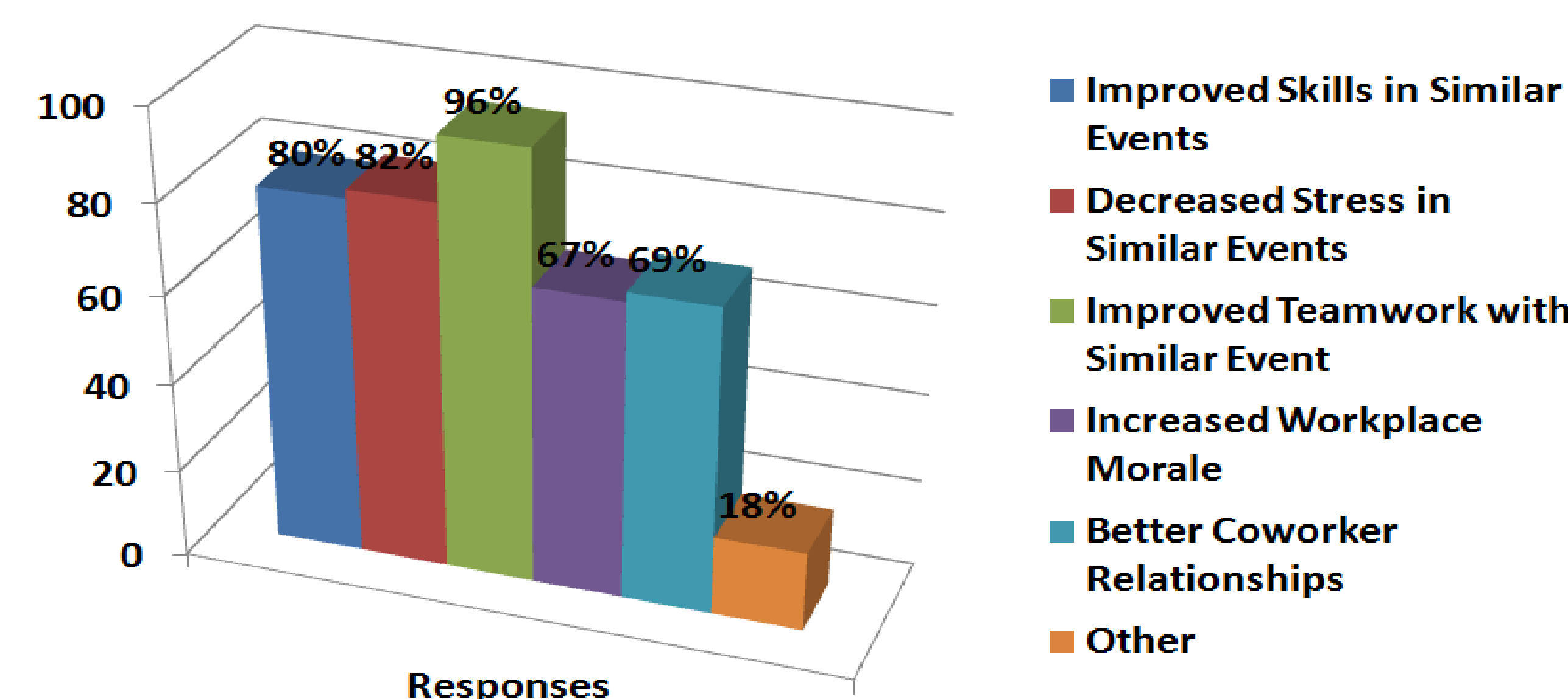
Barriers

Time period to perform CEDs
Personal coping skills

RESULTS

How do you feel a structured group reflection following a critical event would benefit your practice?

36% response rate (45/124)



Other Responses:

- Improved patient outcomes
- Better communication
- Improved critical thinking
- Better understanding of roles in critical events
- Decreased burnout

Critical Event Debriefing Tool

What was your role in this event?
What was the goal of the event?
What went well during the event?
What could have gone better?
What recommendations do you have to improve similar events in the future?
If any significant emotions were experienced, would you like to and be willing to speak further about it?

CONCLUSION

Utilizing CEDs in the ED is a useful way to strengthen skills and teamwork. Emergency department staff, particularly nurses and technical partners, verbalized a feeling of confidence after having CEDs. However, the key to a successful CED is a concise format and limiting the time to less than five minutes.

Unfortunately, several barriers prevented CEDs to be used to their fullest potential. The lack of staff participation in the online survey demonstrated only a small sampling of the possible views.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Larger sample size when implementing CED and collecting qualitative data to provide more credible data.
- Collection of quantitative data (e.g., ED timings, patient outcomes, reduced costs) to determine increased efficiency during critical events.
- Creation of a suggested protocol to effectively and efficiently implement CEDs in the EDs based on provided survey feedback.

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