

Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Victims of Terrorism

Sponsored by: Congressman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security



Moderator

Kurt Braddock, Ph.D., *Assistant Teaching Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences and Homeland Security, Penn State University & Researcher, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)*

Kurt Braddock researches the effects of specific types of communication in the processes surrounding the use of terrorism. Specifically, Dr. Braddock's work focuses on (a) how terrorist groups use different persuasive techniques to draw individuals to join their groups, and (b) how counter-terrorists can use similar techniques to get individuals to leave terrorist groups. His work has been published in a number of communication, psychology, and terrorism journals, including *Communication Monographs*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*.

Panelists

John Feal, *Founder, FealGood Foundation*

On September 12th, 2001, Long Island resident John Feal answered the call to go to New York City and assist with retrieving the remains of the dead and clearing the debris at Ground Zero. The construction worker and veteran found himself working 12-hour shifts to help in whatever way he could. On September 17th, 2001, a 4-ton steel beam came crashing down on his left foot. What happened next would forever change the course of Feal's life. He soon learned that part of his foot would have to be amputated. As if that wasn't enough to overcome, the incident wouldn't be covered by the victim relief fund provided by Congress because it happened more than 96 hours after September 11, the cut off for eligibility.

Feal did not allow this turn of events to discourage him, instead he turned this incident into a powerful movement. Feal founded the Feal Good Foundation to help fellow first responders. The foundation provides for basic needs as well as medical ones. Feal was one of the individuals who lobbied Congress to get health care for first responders. It took years of "guerilla lobbying" to get action. The James Zagroda Health and Safety Act was passed in 2010 but it took another round of action in 2015 to get it renewed. John Feal lives the life of service. Feal makes personal gestures like buying people coffee if he's in line with them, for good measure, he donated a kidney.

Mary Fetchet, *Founding Director, Voices of September 11th*

Ms. Fetchet is the driving force behind VOICES, an organization she co-founded in 2001 following the death of her 24-year-old son Brad at the World Trade Center. Her unique background as a mother of a victim, along with 20 years of expertise as a clinical social worker, influenced VOICES innovative approach to creating a new paradigm in providing long-term support services. Using social work practices, she guided the development of programs that provide continuity of care and promote resiliency in the lives of victims' families and survivors. Today, Ms. Fetchet is dedicated to establishing VOICES Center of Excellence for Community Resilience to help communities heal after other acts of mass violence or natural disasters.

In the aftermath of 9/11, Ms. Fetchet recognized the importance of providing information and a wide range of programs for all those impacted by 9/11. As a family member, she was committed to helping families through the emotional, but therapeutic process of commemorating the lives and stories of 9/11. Under her leadership VOICES worked with over 1,600 families to create the Living Memorial Project. This online collection of over

80,000 photographs and personal keepsakes, documents the nearly 3,000 lives lost and stories of survivors and is a core component of the In Memoriam exhibit at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum in New York City.

More recently, Ms. Fetchet is assisting communities impacted by other tragedies by sharing lessons learned through VOICES' sixteen years of experience. In 2013 she implemented a project, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, to define best practices in preparing for and responding to acts of mass violence. Interviews were conducted with those who responded to the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon and New York City, the Oklahoma City bombing and the shootings at Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University and Tucson, Arizona. The project culminated in the creation of a Resource Kit that is available to communities nationally. Ms. Fetchet also initiated a research project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to quantify the needs of victims' families and survivors. In 2014, she launched the Center of Excellence for Community Resilience, an initiative that shares best practices to assist families and communities impacted by other tragedies.

Courtney Grey, *Director of Disaster Behavioral Health, Boston Public Health Commission*

Courtney Grey is the Director of Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) in the Office of Public Health Preparedness, and is responsible for designing trainings, workshops, seminars, tabletops and live exercises that instill the field-tested skills necessary to address the biological, psychological, and social impacts of large-scale, potentially traumatic events. This includes workforce protection and self-care measures for deployed resources.

Mr. Grey has coordinated countless local and national DBH deployments for singleton incidents of homicide, suicide, fires, etc., as well as natural and man-made disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. His training content includes best practices and lessons learned from deployments in school, community, and institutional settings. He has been with BPHC for over 10 years. Mr. Grey is a Trainer of Trainers for Psychological First Aid (PFA), developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).

Dave Fortier, *President, One World Strong Foundation*

Dave is a survivor of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. Dave was running his very first marathon to help support a dear friend dealing with cancer when he was injured by the first bomb. He suffered shrapnel wounds and hearing loss. He has since gone on to run 10 additional marathons in Boston, Paris, New York, Florida and Washington, DC. Dave's passion for helping other survivors of terror and trauma eventually led him to found the One World Strong Foundation, where he now serves as President.