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A Study in How Journalists are Trained in Dealing with Grief and Trauma

*“Could anybody here who’s been raped and speaks
English please stand up?”
-journalism folklore*

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1. Precis and Acknowledgments

This project looks at what kind of trauma training is currently being offered to journalist/reporters around the world. It examines how journalists are being equipped to deal effectively with traumatised people, and they are trained to deal with their own traumas. The project involved interviewing many experts in this field, and it ends with a series of recommendations for media organisations and senior editors.

I met with many organisations, without whom this project would not have been possible. More important were the individuals from these places who went far beyond the necessary in helping me. Apart from the professional help, they often allowed me to interfere with their normal work practices, and extended me a extreme personal generosity. This work is dedicated to them, and to people who work selflessly in the field of journalism trauma. Most of them are listed here, along with the those who lent me great help and hospitality on the research trip.

Roger Simpson, Jeffrey Cantrell, Miqael Scherer & Bill, Bonnie Bucqueroux, Drew Howard, Mark Brayne, Paddy Coulter, Anthony Feinstein, David Handschuh, Jake Lynch, Annabel McGoldrick, Frank Ochberg, Irene Quaile-Kersken, Bruce Shapiro, Mike Shaw, Meg Spratt.

Many more journalists and managers helped in the project. I thank them all.

I did not meet with all the people involved in this field. Here in Australia, for example, the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has a fine program that, among other things, looks at research into trauma in the media. But my research does give an overview of what is happening worldwide in the field.

Of course, the Churchill Fellowship made this research possible, and every officer of the Churchill I met lent me every assistance in the preparation for this trip. I have appreciation beyond words for their generosity, goodwill and permanent good cheer (especially the two Megs). Finally, this Fellowship was named for William Kilpatrick, who was a major force in the Fellowship. I am grateful for his work in strengthening the Fellowship and for his family's continuing support.

2. Executive Summary

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The focus of this study was to see whether journalists are trained in psychological trauma, and if so, how. The need for this kind of training and care became quickly apparent. The deficiencies also became apparent.

I met with representatives of some of the world's leading media outlets. Several were surprised at the concept of trauma training (that is, surprised they hadn't thought of it before.) A New York Daily News journalist was a highlight. He was blown two blocks by the pressure of a collapsing World Trade Centre tower. As a powerful advocate of trauma training, he offered great insights. I interviewed psychiatrists and psychologists and psycho-therapists interested in journalism and trauma.

I visited two US universities (the University of Washington and the Michigan State University). Both teach trauma issues. I gave seminars and lectures. I also spoke with journalists from some of the world's hotspots (the former Yugoslavia; Albania; Nigeria; India, Israel and many more). Their insights have been invaluable.

Conclusion

It is clear that journalists from around the world have been dealing with trauma in an makeshift way. Many have been harmed (as have victims). There would be great workplace, legal, journalistic & personal benefits from undergraduate, mid-career and management training, and trained-peer counselling. To not understand trauma means that journalists have potential for unwittingly making things worse for victims, and themselves. I am including a syllabus of suggested training and workplace reforms.

Dissemination

I propose to use journalists' groups to distribute my findings. I have already done interviews on several ABC networks and in web-based forums. I hope to reach international journalists through international organisations such as Dart and the Association for International Broadcasting. A book, containing the full interviews, is also being considered.

3. Programme

Seattle, Washington State, US **Oct 7 - Oct 21**

- * Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma
- * University of Washington Communications School

Sunnyside, East Washington State, US **Oct 12**

- * Society of Professional Journalists Conference

Toronto, Canada **Oct 22**

- * Professor Anthony Feinstein, Psychiatrist, The University of Toronto
- * The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

East Lansing, Michigan, US **Oct 28 – Nov 4**

- * Victims and the Media Program, Michigan State University
- * Dr Frank Ochberg, Psychiatrist & founder of Dart
- * The Michigan Victims Alliance

New York City, NY, US **Nov 4 - 16**

- * David Handschuh, Journalist, New York Daily News
- * Patricia Drew, Psychotherapist, New York Times
- * New York Museum of Photography (re: September 11, 2001)

Baltimore, Maryland, US **Nov 11**

- * Complex Psychological Trauma Conference
- * Mark Brayne, BBC & Dart Europe
- * Seamus Kelters, BBC, Northern Ireland
- * Steve Proctor, Baltimore Sun

Oxford, UK **Nov 16 – Dec 2**

- * Reuters Foundation
- * Jake Lynch & Annabel McGoldrick, Reporting the World

London, UK **Nov 26**

- * Journalists and Trauma: The Next Steps Conference

Cologne, Germany **Dec 2 - 7**

- * Deutsche Welle

Hilversum, The Netherlands **Dec 11**

- * Radio Netherlands

Cardiff, Wales **Dec 17**

- * School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University

London, UK (second trip)

Jan 3

- * The Association for International Broadcasting, London
- * Professor Joseph Scanlon, (from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)

4. Introduction

“Most work in journalist trauma is carried out in a bar”

-Sky News Journalist

This quote came from an experienced journalist in London, who was referring to the only well-known recovery habit of journalists.

The rooftop of the Rex Hotel in Saigon was a well-known place for Vietnam War reporters to get together, to discuss the horrors of the day, to debrief amongst themselves, and to cope with the help of beer and scotch. This kind of debrief was (and is) usually the end of the matter for many journalists. Is it enough? It's better than nothing, and nothing is often the alternative.

In general journalists are unaware of trauma and of its effect on them. So if journalists are unaware of how to deal with their own possible psychological traumas, how can they know how to talk to traumatised interviewees? Too often these interviews are being carried out ad hoc by inexperienced journalists, who risk damage to already traumatised people.

The first part of this study is an assessment of what kind of training is currently being offered to journalist/reporters around the world to enable them to deal effectively with traumatised and grieving people, and to deal with their own psychological traumas. This assessment has been done in the form of an oral survey of major news organisations around the world, to find out if they carry out any such training, and if they do, to find out the scope of their syllabus. In the process of preparing for the research I found that just about all media outlets do not do this kind of training, Those rare ones who are interested in the subject usually bring in experts from outside; or rely on the subject being taught at university or college level. Hence I have included these institutions (eg: Dart in Seattle, U.S.) in my itinerary. This expanded the locations for the journey quite a lot, but the results have been most gratifying.

The second part of this study is the formulation of a syllabus for trauma training. This is more than training. I also suggest a system of peer counselling, and training for management awareness of the problems. While many newsroom managers and editors are former critical incident

reporters themselves, there are a surprising number of anecdotal examples of managers who expect too much psychologically of their staff.

The fact is that some of their staff will handle war reporting well. But others will need help to cope. Those same ones might be too scared to seek help for fear of appearing 'weak'. This is something good managers should be trained to understand and to spot.

A pioneer in the field of educating journalists about trauma is psychiatrist Dr Frank Ochberg. He says that trauma training is a relatively new phenomenon. Only dozens of journalists worldwide are touching on it.

There's not been an authority that has posed the question on how journalists are trained in this field. Nobody has assayed on a global scale 'are journalists being educated about trauma and victimisation?'; or 'how should we interact with a traumatised person'. Dr Ochberg's sense is that there are pockets of deep concern that things are continuing to go on as they've always been going on. But, he says, there are pockets of excellence in this field.

I went to visit some of these 'pockets'.

5. The Churchill Study of Journalism and Trauma

My study was carried out by observation and discussion. In this section I will give the main issues to come out of each interaction. In the following two sections “6. Conclusions” and “7. Recommendations” these will be assessed, collated and categorised.

5.1 Is there a problem with journalists and trauma?

“I had no training trauma. I had no interviewing training at all. I thought there’d be an induction course, but to my dismay, the editor said ‘when are you giving me your first story’. He said there’s nothing like that (an induction course). I said okay.”

- Adekunle Oladeli (Punch Magazine, Nigeria)

“They didn’t ask if I felt afraid. It was like, ‘who cares, it’s part of your job’. I’m very outspoken, and people think I am very strong, and people have the feeling that I don’t need help.”

- Adelheid Feilcke-Tiemann (Deutsche Welle)

I decided to include this section after one British journalist expressed doubts about whether journalists suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). Another said that as long as journalists showed some sensitivity, then that is all that was needed when speaking with upset people. The following references show that a knowledge of the manifestations of trauma, combined with this sensitivity, make for better and safer interviews.

During this study I questioned 63 journalists from many countries:

None had ever been trained in grief, or in how to deal with grieving or traumatised people. This is despite many coming from countries with histories of recent political, economic and social upheaval.

Elana Newman from the University of Tulsa (US) says this is because there is little preparation training is being offered to journalists. M/s Newman says

75% of media organisations did not offer any kind of trauma debriefing in the US.

She says the need is so great that often journalists will call her in relation to a story, and end up having a counselling session with her.

5.1.1 Dealing with Traumatized People

“Once they’re in tears, you can’t just walk away. For example with rape victims you want to spend time telling them what this is for, and it’s important for them to tell their story. If they don’t want to talk about, they’ll just stop. It’s frustrating for the victims when the journalist doesn’t ask. It gives the feeling that what you went through hasn’t been given full respect.”

- Eric Beauchemin (Radio Netherlands)

“It is absolutely important to have training in dealing with traumatized people, though some senior journalists will think they don’t need it.”

- Karla Sanchez Sanchez (Televisa SA de CV, Mexico)

“Most reporters do their work with little or no knowledge about the effects of trauma on those they interview and write about. The lack of information about post-traumatic stress disorder can further and unnecessarily harm those who are already suffering.”

-Migael Scherer (University of Washington)

Ms Scherer’s warning of damage to interviewees is not the only one. Psychologists and psychiatrists interviewed for this project said that badly-prepared or careless questions from a novice reporter working to a deadline can re-traumatise. But it’s not just a novice who can ask a damaging set of questions, it can be anyone who has no understanding and knowledge of what a traumatized person is going through. There are plenty of examples of journalists making mistakes. Wendy Bilboe from the University of Canberra looked at journalist behaviour at Australia’s 1997 Thredbo Landslide Disaster. She quoted counsellors who described reporters as “vultures” who didn’t understand the nature of grief and shock (1997, 11); and another counsellor who questioned journalists’ “sensitivity and training” (1997, 12).

Some victims I met on this trip felt the same way, angrily so. Dart Foundation founder Dr Frank Ochberg took me to the Michigan Victims Alliance in Michigan, U.S. This is support group for victims. One (a) was a rape victim. Another (b) was attacked in his home and shot, almost fatally. One couple (c) had a son murdered by an acquaintance only some months ago, and another woman (d) is still recovering from the murder of her daughter.

Of all the possible complaints they had about the media, they all said that inaccurate reporting was the thing that hurt them the most. The couple (c) said they were still affected by a newspaper report that said the killer was a flatmate of the victim. He was not a flatmate. A newspaper report of the shooting victim (b) said erroneously that the victim had been lying in wait for his attacker under a bush outside his home. This again was wrong. This wrong reporting led to the man having recurrent visions of the incident, adding to his trauma.

The Alliance members suggested that young journalists be exposed to trauma victims early in their training, so that they develop some understanding and worldliness about what happens to a traumatised person.*(see recommendations)*.

Given these views, this warning from Ted Rynearson (from Separation and Loss Services; Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle) should sound a warning for editors: “A class action against the media for the re-traumatising of family is bound to happen at some stage.

5.1.2 The Journalists’ Own Trauma

“There are those who still feel they have to be a hard journalist. And this damages the whole thing: the story; the situation for other journalists; the family.”

- Lyla Bavadam (Frontline, India)

On this Churchill study there was no shortage of people telling me that PTSD was a big problem among journalists.

Steve Proctor, the deputy managing editor of the Baltimore Sun says that from his experience as a journalist and as a manager, most journalists still deal with their own psychological trauma by internalising (ie: doing nothing and keeping it to themselves) or by drinking.

Elana Newman from the University of Tulsa studied the incidence of PTSD on journalists and photojournalists in the U.S. She found journalists were resilient. She believes more than 5% of journalists have PTSD (apart from war journalists). The established PTSD rates in the general community stands at about 5%, so Newman's research indicates journalists and photojournalists have at least a marginally higher rate of PTSD than the general population.

A recent study by the University of Washington of its recent alumni working in newspaper journalism. It found that 84% had covered a story that they had found difficult in their first five years,. 79% suffered from lingering effects of those stories. (cited in Johnson 1999, 15)

McMahon (2001) carried out a study of secondary psychological trauma among Australian journalists. The study found that "journalists did indeed experience significant levels of intrusive images and thoughts at the time of reporting on a traumatic story." The study also found that 35% of trauma reporting journalists who experienced these thoughts, continued to experienced after the event.. 43% of the group recounted depression symptoms." (McMahon 2001, 52-53)

In 2002 Professor Anthony Feinstein, a psychiatrist attached to the University of Toronto) studied war journalists with an average of 15 years experience of reporting wars, and the incidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He believes this is the first study of its kind.

He found that 28.6% of the war correspondents surveyed had symptoms of PTSD, and 21.4% suffered from major depression. Both rates are much higher than for the general domestic journalistic community.

Professor Feinstein told me that not one of the journalists covered in the study (140 war reporters) had ever been trained in dealing with their own trauma, or in dealing with traumatised people.

Professor Feinstein says management contributes to the problem. Many journalists were pressured to go back to the war zone, and many went, scared of adverse career consequences. “Despite deeply troubling recollections of events witnessed, the war journalists returned constantly to the scenes of old or new traumas, a pattern of behaviour sustained over many years. This could contribute to their high lifetime prevalence of PTSD” (Feinstein 2002, 4)

Professor Feinstein told me that there appeared to be a culture of silence in the journalistic community about trauma and war journalists. The feeling among journalists was that to admit emotional problems was to admit that you weren't up to the rigours of the job.

Professor Simpson (University of Washington) told me that often the decision is made by the journalists themselves. They choose to place themselves in traumatic situations purposefully. Professor Simpson says some journalists have the capability to go to multiple traumatic events and walk away without any effect on them. Many cannot. Professor Simpson says that his research indicates that some journalists chase danger precisely because they have experienced trauma. Ian Stewart, the Associated Press reporter shot in the head in Sierra Leone, had told Professor Simpson that he had suffered trauma extensively long before he was actually wounded. Only in recovery from that wound did he begin to understand the extent of his emotional injury.

Patricia Drew, a psychotherapist with the New York Times agrees. She told me the problem was that journalists think that war reporting is addictive. People don't want to be cleaved from the emotions of it.

April Petersen, a Graduate Student at the University of Washington, conducted a survey of photo-editors to see how photo-editors make their choices. One of the findings was: “Journalists may traumatise each other. There was a photo-editor who was showing another editor a photo of a decapitated person. The second person was traumatised by this photo. The first person had been looking at the picture as a graphic.. as something disconnected. She had no idea of the traumatising effect of the shot.”

The former president of the National Press Photographers Association (US), David Handschuh, agrees. He says his personal research indicated that

photo-editors were prone to be traumatised, even if they were a long distance from the causal incident. His research on NPPA members showed that even editors 4500 miles away were also traumatised by the World Trade Center (WTC) incident, simply by watching it on their monitors. This might suggest that photo-editors; video-editors and journalists who watched the raw footage anywhere in the world were also liable to such trauma, although perhaps national proximity and nationality might be magnifying factors.

Handsuh says that with photojournalists, the digital media has changed the way they work, making their jobs more singular. In the film media, photo journalists and editors would often be together in the film developing process, allowing them to talk with other about their experiences. With digital media, photographers may never need to go back to the office. There may be as “Starbucks Syndrome”, where photographers will do the shoot, go to a coffee shop alone, and through new telecommunication technology (available at some coffee outlets such as Starbucks) they can remotely send their photos back to their media organisation. In this situation the photographer may never see a peer to discuss what they have seen.

Simon Spanswick from the Association for International Broadcasting (UK) agrees. He told me that war journalists tended to be loners. Many find it difficult to discuss their emotions. If they had a close relationship, then they had help right there. “I think there’s evidence that there’s a high rate of marriage break-up. They spend a lot of time focussed on the job, and going back on the job. That strains any relationship.”

5.2 The University Courses

In this study I visited two of the three U.S. universities which have incorporated some trauma training into their syllabus. The third, the journalism school at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma, has been given a \$250,000 grant for last 6 years. I spent time with the University of Washington and the Michigan State University and observed their courses, as well as giving lectures and seminars.

5.2.1 The University of Washington

The University of Washington has a Curriculum for Training Students in Covering Traumatic Incidents (*see 8.2.3 for actual curriculum*)

This curriculum (which is financially supported by the Dart organisation) is the most advanced of any of the training courses I witnessed on this study trip (although the Michigan State University's (MSU) Victims and the Media program is well committed to the issue). There is some cross-over with the MSU program. A MSU-produced video is included in the University of Washington course.

One of the lecturers, Migael Scherer offers a rare insight into the issue of trauma, being both a journalist and a victim of extreme violence. She has used her own traumatic personal experience in the training, providing a unique session on how bad media reporting can cause added trauma for victims and community (as it did in her own case). She has included a section on how to report traumatic incidents without causing harm.

The University of Washington also has an Outreach Education Program Ms Scherer travelled/taught with Professor Simpson and others for such groups/schools as University of Central Oklahoma, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), Hearst, UNITY (journalists of colour in the US), and various press associations from Alaska to Atlanta.

The University of Washington trauma course is divided into at a minimum of three 2-hour sessions, which the faculty says that while not ideal, will bring students to a level of some confidence about interviewing victims of traumatic incidents. They hope to be able to incorporate a third session to tie up the training.

ISSUE: USING ACTORS AS VICTIMS

This course uses both victim actors and actual survivors. Actors from the University of Washington's School of Drama or professional actors portray victims, although sometimes agencies are used, or an institution 'that routinely uses role-plays in crisis-response training' such as the Red Cross, police, fire departments or university departments of psychology and social work.

Students take turns as reporters. The interviews last five minutes, and each interview is discussed for three minutes before going onto the next interview (the victim stays in 'character' and does not participate in these discussions). The class is divided into groups of 4-5 students, with one instructor/coach per group. The interviews are done 'as a round'. One member of each group will interview one of the four victims, taking turns so that everyone interviews once, and everyone interviews a different victim. There is also a hospital spokesman, and one from each group interviews this hospital spokesman. At the end of all the interviews there is general de briefing which also includes the 'victims'.

Up to five traumatic incident scenarios are used in the curriculum: an interview of survivors of homicide (video, Session I); one-on-one interviews of four survivors of homicide or disaster (interactive scenarios, Session II).

(8.3 lists the ten interviewing points used in the course)

The department uses actors and not real victims because it does away with the risk of re-traumatizing victims. I asked whether actors would have a true appreciation of a victim's difficulties. The response, from both M/s Scherer and Professor Simpson, was that the actors were startlingly realistic (providing they had time to prepare for the roles).

In a discussion with journalist students in the course, there was a great deal of interest among students in dealing with grieving people. And even in this institution where grief is dealt with as a course subject, there was little knowledge among the students about the proper way to interview traumatised people. When I asked them if "How do you feel?" was a good question to ask grieving people, many answered "yes". They had little understanding of the issues involved in that very loaded question. This lack

of knowledge highlights the difficulties that people like their lecturer, Professor Roger Simpson, face in training journalists in this issue. There are so many facets of journalism that need to be trained; grief and trauma seems to only be a priority AFTER the old staples of writing, interviewing and ethics. Clearly, trauma could be (and should be) entwined with the last two.

5.2.2 Michigan State University

The ‘Victims and the Media Program’ trains journalists in how to interview victims of trauma. The faculty has made a commitment, voting the trauma program in to be an integral part of the degree. This is one of the top five journalism schools in the US in terms of numbers, with 200 journalism students in each year. All Michigan State University (MSU) media students now have to do at least three blocks of trauma training before graduation. It also trains public relations students. The program also travels, to go in situ, training people in media groups and media outlets. Course lecturer Lori Dickerson went to Oklahoma to help with reporters recovering from the effects of the Oklahoma City bombing at the Daily Oklahoman.

The MSU program goes even further, providing a checklist for television viewers... to help them decide whether TV reporters are treating victims fairly (*provided in 8.5*)

Bonnie Bucqueroux invited me to be part of lectures and discussion groups for the Victims and the Media program (VMP). This gave me an opportunity to see the lecturing first hand.

(1) MSU trauma lecture: Final year journalism students

This was a senior group doing JRN 480 Ethics. This was done in an open in a discussion format. The group had been through the VMP, which will have consisted of two lectures. Many of the students demonstrated a good understanding of some of the issues and the ethical implications.

(2) MSU trauma lecture: Year 1 journalism students

Bonnie Bucqueroux started by explaining the need for such training, and the mistakes that journalists make when they are untrained in this area. She explains the immediate and long-term problems like PTSD.

A video is played. It looks at whether it is appropriate to interview victims or relatives. The tape also looks at the issues of ethics and taste, ratings and sensationalism.

(3) MSU trauma lecture: JRN 386 Broadcast II students

This was “Act 3” of the trilogy: covering the anniversary story. A video is played which is a documentary of the reporters involved in the Sept 11, one year on. It told the story of the S11 journalists. Significantly, it showed how the reporters were victims too, and that they needed help too. M/s Bucqueroux then went through how journalists should look after themselves after such a traumatic event. For the reporters on September 11, 2001, there was no such set-up and mandatory counselling system (although it was likely many news organisations would have offered one-off counselling).

(4) MSU trauma lecture practical: interviewing victims

Like in the University of Washington program, MSU carries out victim interview practice with its students, and uses role play to do it. This is done in the JRN 300 – REPORTING II class. However, unlike the University of Washington, this program uses actual victims, not actors. This idea gives truth to the role play. But program director Bonnie Bucqueroux says there are potential problems that need to be watched, like the risk that the victims are revisiting the trauma; and the volunteer victims are usually older, hence not representative of the range of victims in society.

I suggested to Professor Bill Cote (co-ordinator) that the VMP might place young journalists in a difficult position if their workplaces are not sympathetic to the need for a greater understanding of PTSD. Professor Cote said the MSU was attempting to address this, by going into journalistic workplaces as an adjunct to the VMP. A panel from the university travels to regional centres to give sessions to groups of journalists.

The groups visited includes..

- The Michigan Press Association
- The New England Press Association
- The Society for Professional Journalists
- The Association of Educators in Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC)

He said the NJEA is especially significant, because these sessions effectively become “train-the-trainer” sessions for journalism educators. They take the information away from the sessions and, it is hoped, they will incorporate this information in their own journalism training sessions.

(5) Links with Authorities

The Victims and the Media Program has also been forging ties with local emergency services. The VMP holds regular meetings with the local police and Sheriff’s department to discuss what journalists can do to improve the relationship between themselves and the authorities. The recommendations are used in the VMP. Such things include: journalists not allowing themselves to get into a position where they could break tragic news to family members; and having people from the state police and the local sheriff’s office volunteered during this meeting to take part in future journalism training, alongside victims’ action groups. This should greatly expand awareness for the journalism students.

5.2.3 University of Cardiff, Wales, U.K.

The university does not have an entrenched trauma program like the University of Washington or MSU, but Terry Threadgold, the Deputy Head, School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies says the issue is important in the school, although not explicitly in the curriculum.

They work with about 150 students doing MA’s (Masters of Arts). Professor Threadgold says they tend to think about issues like race, class and trauma. One faculty member is working on the reporting on terrorism related to Sept 11, and the effect on children, and how people get the fear of god put into them by the media.

They also teach asylum seeker (AS) and refugee issues. We work with asylum seekers to train them in how to deal with the media.. helping them with how they handle the media, how they change the way the media works on that issues... things like anxiety, lack of trust, and how they are vulnerable in society and to the media.

In 2001 Cardiff University sponsored a study of how asylum seekers were being reported on and portrayed in the media (Speers 2001).

Speers' conclusions and recommendations also relate directly to the coverage of traumatised people in general. Things such as "Be sensitive to the fears of asylum seekers and refugees about the possible impact on their case of talking openly, and make it easy to tell their stories confidentially." (Speers 2001, 37)

5.2.4 Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

Professor Joe Scanlon is a journalism lecturer who has been studying journalism and disasters for many years. His current position is the university's Director, Emergency Communications Research Unit. This involves researching how the media affects the community in times of disaster. He does some training in dealing with traumatised people.

He teaching emphasises sensitivity: "If doing a pick-up (death knock) , don't be aggressive. You must be careful to do nothing to irritate people."

He creates a model of the types of people likely to be affected by the disaster. That helps the students have a perception of these events.

He says "Journalists come in with a series of false assumptions.. or they write about what they don't see. Victims cope very well. Panic doesn't happen. Looting doesn't happen most of the time. These things are passed on by ignorant police and other authorities. Journalists perpetuate these things by asking the police 'what are you doing to prevent looting?'.

5.2.5. University of Southern California, U.S.

Professor Michael Parks, the Director of the University of Southern California's School of Journalism said there was no trauma training component at UCLA, but he says the school emphasises 'empathy'.

5.3 The Media Outlets

It was impossible in the scope of this study to visit every media institution in the world. I visited several, and met representatives of many more. From the accounts of these representatives, most offer little or no systematic support for traumatised journalists. At worst, affected journalists are considered tainted failures. Most institutions leave the assistance to peers and virtually none carry out any psychological trauma training at all. Those that do usually present it as an ‘empathy’ component of interviewing training.

Some do however offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) whereby counsellors are made available to journalists, often confidentially. But even this system is passive, requiring the journalist to approach the counsellor. But Susan Bloch, the human resources director at the San Francisco Chronicle says her paper’s EAP is seldom used by staff. (Johnson 1999, 16)

5.3.1 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

In discussions with the CBC’s Director of Training, Judy Fantham, I learned that the CBC does not have any training in psychological trauma. However the CBC’s Knowledge Management Leader, Brent Scisizzi, told me that the broadcaster did send its war journalists on war preparation training with a UK-based specialist consultancy and training company.

This war preparation focuses on risk management and reduction, but, to his knowledge, very little emotional trauma preparation.

5.3.2 Deutsche Welle (DW)

Deutsche Welle has a well developed training department that trains in many aspects of journalism. In regards to trauma, it appears that, like in most media institutions, the concept is in its infancy.

However, DW journalists are training overseas. Sabine Hartert-Mojdehi (the Director, International co-Productions) trains journalists in Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management. So far this program has trained journalists in Namibia; South Africa; India; Sri Lanka; East Timor; Georgia; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Germany; Palestine and Rwanda. This training is largely concerned with accuracy, fighting bias, and neutrality. Clearly this training

crosses over with the trauma issue, and Ms Hartert-Mojdehi says that although no formal training is carried out on this issue, some aspects are dealt with, such as sensitivity, thinking before speaking.

She says that she would be interested in the subject, and trauma training could possibly be used at Deutsche Welle in the future. The head of DW's Albanian Section, Adelheid Feilcke-Tiemann, told me that after the bloodshed in Kosovo, the press office of the German government, with DW, ran the first seminar for journalists in Kosovo. DW got a special session with a German psychologist to talk about dealing with journalists who had come out of the war. "It was only a three hour talk. We got a lot, a lot out of it."

5.3.3 Radio Netherlands (RN)

Tony Wilkinson is the RN Training Centre Course Coordinator. The centre trains journalists from developing countries and does some internal training.

"We train in disasters, but not in this trauma issue. We do have courses on conflict. The trauma link might well be one that might well be picked up on.

"We have regular courses.. shorter courses. They have different themes... globalisation.. peace building.. as well as training people abroad on the spot. The funding for these isn't just from RN. It comes from groups like the UN, the Dutch government, some NGOs.

ISSUE: TIME AND MONEY TIGHT

"We're already pressed for time in what we can achieve. But trauma might be considered in the future, but time is cramped.

5.3.4 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

The BBC has an extensive training department and has, in the past, produced training videos on such issues as how much violent visual should the public be shown. But the BBC does not train specifically in psychological trauma.

It sends its foreign correspondents on a Hostile Reporting Course which does contain a small amount of self-care.

More significantly, one of the corporation's senior journalists, Mark Brayne (who is also a psychotherapist) has begun working on the trauma issue within the BBC. In late 2002 the BBC approved a fulltime program to train and support journalists for a possible military campaign in Iraq. (Brayne is also setting up the Dart Centre Europe, with funding from the US. He says that Dart is enthusiastic is wanting to set up a Dart Centre in Moscow.)

Brayne says the UK is 10 years behind the US in recognition of journalism trauma, but years ahead in terms of war reporting.

“Journalists need early training before the bad habits can come in, and before they can be damaged. But journalists are much less likely to seek help. This kind of training (trauma) will make them better journalists.. give them a better understanding of people and of themselves. Training makes good financial practice for media organisations.”

Action at the BBC:

- uses Pilgrims for Hostile Environment Training. It does ONE HOUR in trauma preparation.
- has confidential counsellor.
- considering website; coaches, counsellors
- As a psychotherapist, Mark Brayne had five referrals in 4 weeks.. including a journalists who didn't want to go back to war.
- Roadshow presentations.. a day-long seminars

Maria Frauenrath (the Business Development Manager for the BBC's Training and Development Department) told me that the BBC arranged an in situ training program to assist people suffering from trauma in Somalia.

5.3.5 The New York Times (NYT)

Patricia Drew (Director of Life Skills) is a psychotherapist. She set up an Employee Assistance program (EAP) for NYT staff members. She believes it was first such program for a newspaper. It sees about 500 employees/year.

“They were losing people to trauma. The paper had been caring only for physical well-being. The program was built on debriefing sessions. We discussed the barriers.. things like the macho culture and the stigma. We

trained editors on trauma so that they could help overcome the barriers. Overseas, we set up a network for this kind of training. After 9/11, 500 employees were seen in two months from a staff of 4500.

She says the paper formed a panel that was very respected by other journalists. Foreign correspondents came to the session talked about their own reactions to things they had covered.

The paper produced an Emotional First Aid sheet.. How it affects the journalist and the journalists' family. Managers are also considered. A sheet has been produced for managers to help them understand the problems. Panel discussions are also carried out.

From the experience of covering the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, M/s Drew found that most journalists coped well. It was the ones who had pre-existing problems who had real difficulty.

She says that speed of response is essential. Don't wait days or weeks. It's also important to know that everyone at the paper was affected, not just the reporters. She also says that media outlets need to have Peer Networks.

5.3.6 Baltimore Sun

Steve Proctor (Deputy Managing Editor) says that the newspaper has counselling services available to all journalists at the paper, but he says, there have been few cases of people taking advantage of the scheme.

5.3.7. CNN TV

The head of CNN's International Web and News Networks, Chris Cramer is a person with a close interest in journalism and trauma. In 1980 he, along with twenty-five others, was held hostage in the Iranian Embassy in London.

Cramer now helps educate other journalists about the effects of trauma. Although I was unable to interview Cramer for this study, psychiatrist Frank Ochberg and photojournalist David Handschuh spoke highly of Cramer's work in the field.

5.4 Other Collectives

5.4.1 Dart Foundation

The Dart Foundation is the backer of the University of Washington's trauma training curriculum. Dart is working with the BBC journalist Mark Brayne to get a foothold in London (under the name 'Dart Europe'). It also presents the Dart Award annually in the US (for the best coverage of victims' stories). It was given once in Australia, several years ago.

But the presence of Dart is not just educational. Another Dart representative Elana Newman (The University of Tulsa) set up a six month Dart Centre for Trauma and Journalism-Ground Zero in New York City to help traumatised reporters in the aftermath of the WTC terrorist attacks on September the 11th, 2001.

The Dart founder, psychiatrist Dr Frank Ochberg has taken the training to South Africa, Croatia (The Centre for Journalism Education), the BBC; Cardiff University; in Australia. Dart also sent journalists to Rwanda in 2000 and 2001 using a small fund called Media Innovations which sends mid-career journalists on research studies. Dr Ochberg says he has 1000 colleagues interested in the field. In 1990 there were only two.

5.4.2 National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) (US)

I spoke with a past president of the NPPA, David Handschuh. He is a photographer of extensive experience. David was on site to shoot the events at the World Trade Centre (WTC) in NYC on September the 11th, 2001. He photographed the airliner hitting the second tower, and when one of the towers collapsed, the pressure sent Handschuh through the air, eventually wedging him under a car. He needed nine months off work. In our discussions (which of course took place only 14 months after the WTC incident), Handschuh was openly admitting he was still traumatised by what had happened to him. There was, he believed a big lack of knowledge and understanding of trauma in the NYC society, let alone in the journalism community.

In his role as NPPA president he had arranged several seminars and training sessions on the trauma issue for NPPA members. (Before listing these training sessions, it's interesting to note that Handschuh, who is passionate about this issue, did all the arranging, but himself did not have the time to go to these sessions, a loss he regrets now).

NPPA trauma training sessions:

(1) Poynter Institute sessions in St Petersburg, Florida, US.

These were 3 to 5 day sessions where 4 or 5 victims of trauma talk to journalists. They explained what it was like to have their door knocked on by a journalist chasing a story. He says the victims were not angered by the approach, and reacted well to journalists who took a low-key, genuine and respectful manner. They reacted particularly well when the journalist simply said that they were sorry

(2) Training Workshop, Memphis Tennessee, June 2001

This workshop for photojournalists aimed at equipping them with the skills to become "peer counsellors".. people who help co-workers who have gone through trauma. Handschuh believes that journalists can be the best peer counsellors, because they have many of the necessary skills.. they can interview, they can listen, they know how to be incisive and ask pertinent questions. Handschuh says the importance of "peers" was reinforced by the WTC incident.. where there were many reporters working for many different news organisations. Central agencies and psychologists would have been very busy with other trauma victims (relatives of the dead); WTC survivors; emergency workers etc. Having trained peers in each newsroom would have been a fabulous asset.. no appointments necessary.. no need to approach management for time off.. no shame. (*see recommendations*)

5.4.3 Reporting the World (RTW)

Both Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick are highly experienced journalists, having worked in a number countries in a range of media. They believe the deep background, the historical context of the conflict should be a requisite for any major story.

Lynch and McGoldrick have put together a training course that deals with some of these issues. It is called "The Ethics Of Reporting Conflicts:

Theory And Practice”. The module is taught in eight sessions, each of three hours, giving a total of 24 contact (teaching) hours. It is a mixture of coursework, contributions during sessions and a final assignment task.

The course covers a range of issues to do with responsible war reporting(*see 8.2.1 for course outline*), including a section that touches on victims, and the ethic of responsibility. It asks how does news influence the course of events; it looks at the Feedback Loop of cause and effect and its implications for the ethics of reporting; and it examines how can journalists take responsibility for the consequences of their journalism.

But this section is small in the context of the course. Eventually, Reporting the World expects to be dealing with traumatised journalists, as well as working with traumatised victims.

Lynch and McGoldrick had recently returned from training journalists in Indonesia, where some of the participants told harrowing stories. Lynch: “one Indonesian journalist saw people having their hearts ripped out, and he was forced to eat it.. or at least part of it. The journalists wanted to know how to cope with these kinds of things.”

5.4.4 The Association. for International Broadcasting (AIB)

I interviewed Simon Spanswick, who is the AIB's Chief Executive. AIB is an association of media organisations. He showed great interest in the subject and agreed to publish the study findings in the AIB's world-wide magazine, "The Channel".

5.4.6 Individuals working in the field

Not all the work in journalism and trauma is being carried out on an institutional basis. I have already stated that some individual journalists are helping out on a one-on-one basis in various newsrooms. So too, psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists are working individually in various places around the world.

One such person is California-based psychotherapist Gina Ross. M/s Ross is currently engaged in training 150 Israelis, Palestinian and foreign correspondent journalists in Jerusalem. Her training looks at how to lower trauma activation in themselves; to talk about needs and requests; how to look at the political situation through the trauma concept.

She uses a process of 'Semantic Experience'.. which she says is psychotherapy using nervous system activation. Through this, the journalists learn how to recognise activation and react to it, and deactivate the energy.

5.5 Interviews with Journalists

I conducted interviews with many dozens of experienced journalists from around the world for this research. I have used their comments throughout this paper. I hope to publish the full texts of these discussions at a later date. Here is a list of where they were from:.

2x Slovak Republic TV	(interviewed 8/10/02, Seattle)
2x Czech Republic paper	(i/v 8/10/02, Seattle)
1x Poland newspaper	(i/v 8/10/02, Seattle)
2x Hungary TV/ papers	(i/v 8/10/02, Seattle)
6x Radio Netherlands	(i/v 11/12/02, Hilversum)
2x Germany Deutsche Welle	(i/v 5/12/02, Cologne)
1x Japan Chunichi Shimbun	(i/v 29/10/02, East Lansing)
12x Britain BBC	(i/v 9 & 26/11/02 Baltimore & London)
1x US Baltimore Sun	(i/v 9/11/02 Baltimore)
1x US NY Daily News	(i/v 14/11/02 New York City)
1x US LATimes	(i/v 27/11/02 Oxford)
1x Mexico Televisa SA de CV	(i/v 25/11/02 Oxford)
1x New Zealand RNZ	(i/v 25/11/02 Oxford)
1x India Frontline	(i/v 25/11/02 Oxford)
1x Argentina Mercado Cordoba	(i/v 25/11/02 Oxford)
1x Bulgaria Bulg. news Agency	(i/v 28/11/02 Oxford)
1x Korea Hankook Ilbo	(i/v 28/11/02 Oxford)
1x Israel Kol Ha-ir	(i/v 29/11/02 Oxford)
1x Nigeria Punch Magazine	(i/v 29/11/02 Oxford)
1x Ghana	(i/v 5/12/02 Cologne)
2x Albania Deutsche Welle	(i/v 5/12/02 Cologne)
21x East Washington journal'ts	(i/v 10/12/02 Sunnyside, WA, US)

5.6 Dart /BBC Journalism and Trauma seminar: The Next Steps

On November 26, 2002, The Dart Foundation (Europe) and the BBC conducted a day-long meeting in London of 26 psychologists and journalists, to discuss what to do in the field of training journalists in trauma. Participants included long-term BBC war correspondent Jonathon Charles; and 9 other bureau BBC journalists, as well as senior journalists from other news organisations. Also in this group were psychologists; psychiatrists; psychotherapists, and representatives of the UK Royal Marines who have been putting in place a peer training program for navy personnel.

Two representatives of the British Royal Marines gave a presentation on a peer support training program to help Royal Marines personnel know how to debrief marines after an incident. (*see Appendix 4*).

ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SEMINAR:

* **WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF PSYCH DISORDERS.** It was suggested that journalists need to understand CIS and PTSD.

***PROFESSIONAL HELP.** One war correspondent, a PTSD sufferer, said she did work with a counsellor, but the counsellor was inadequate, and didn't help, having no idea of what journalists went through and what their needs were. Another said the BBC counselling after his experience in Sarajevo was no help at all. He felt the counsellor was out of her depth, and perhaps was being traumatised by the stories of violence.

***MAKING COUNSELLING RELEVANT.** The BBC's EAP representative said she was reformulating the counselling to take into account violent trauma... and to hire counsellors that are more experienced. There were suggestions that counsellors should understand journalism. However, Bruce Shapiro (Dart US) said this wasn't strictly necessary. He said there were a large number of therapists who had specialities in trauma.. without necessarily knowing about the details of journalism.

***BUDDY SYSTEM.** The BBC is trying to do a buddy system... where a team doing serious stories has one young person in the team... who can be looked after by the older team members.

*EARLY TRAINING. It was suggested that experienced correspondents should talk to young reporters, so that they all learn what reporters of violent stories go through, and what their needs are. The BBC also produced a video of one of their war set-ups and this has made an impression.

*SELF-AWARENESS. Jonathon Charles (BBC) suggested a form of self-awareness program. He said that coping in a tough assignment comes down to strength of character, developed through years of assignments. He suggested that if this could be done initially, through self-awareness, then the trainees would be better equipped to deal with the extreme situations placed before them.

*PEER SUPPORT. The BBC correspondents repeatedly said that support of peers was very important in crisis situations. Charles and others said that when he was in a hostile environment where his life was at risk, the support of other journalists was essential in getting through the situation. The BBC journalists also said that back in the office there was little support or understanding of their plight, and even less expectation that a peer supporter would be needed.

*CADET TRAINING. Many agreed that training newcomers in the subject would be valuable. The drawback here is that many organisations no longer have a cadet intake. This is true of the BBC, but it does have a 4-day introductory residency introductory course. It's short, but a trauma component can be incorporated.

*MASTERCLASS TRAINING. Advanced training for established journalists was seen at this conference of a way to training older, mid-level people in this field (although some of the BBC journalists present believed they would never have the time to do it).

*SPOUSES & FAMILIES. Spouses and families should be considered. Courtesy phone calls about the whereabouts of correspondents; extension of EAP to partners (as the ABC & BBC does).

*MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES. Management should be aware of traumatised staff members. Know the signs to look for; know what to do about it. This comes from early and repetitive training.

Three points came out of this seminar. The 3 M's:
MENTORING
MASTERCLASSES
MUTUAL SUPPORT

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

“As a defence person you get training, but now in the coverage of war, the press are excluded. Across the board. It’s not being viewed as a priority. Journalism has been sadly neglected.”

- Mike Shaw (Radio Netherlands)

“I wish someone had given me time to recover from it. Journalism doesn’t give you time to recover. A tough story is seen as an ordinary thing.”

- Veronica Meduna (Radio New Zealand)

Journalists are vulnerable. Victims are vulnerable. Journalists who are poorly informed about psychological trauma are risking damage to themselves and to their interviewees. It must be remembered too that trauma is not just the domain of the war and body-bits journalist. Trauma can be a result of covering a car accident; or doing an anniversary story, or a court case. Media employers risk lawsuits from damaged journalists unless support is given to them.

The community benefits as well. An understanding of psychological trauma will also improve news quality by providing stories that show victims empathetically. Victims will be less likely to be re-traumatised, and their stories will be better portrayed.

At this point it should be acknowledged that several journalists who are involved in training have suggested that training time is at a premium, and that extra training in trauma would present financial burdens. From the many interviews conducted for this research it is clear that trauma training is not a luxury. It is essential for the well-being of journalists, it is essential for the well-being of victims. And lastly (on this order of priorities) it might help protect media organisations from legal action for breaching workplace health and safety and duties of care. This is the view of senior journalists, editors, war correspondents. It is also the opinion of psycho-therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists interviewed for this research project.

One conclusion I have reached from this research is that journalists need both pre- and post-trauma training. They need to be prepared for what is going to hit them. They need it at the cadet/intern stage, and they need it again later in their careers (once they have come across a traumatic

experience). The reasons for the training are many.. personal well-being, workplace health and efficiency. They also need it to have an awareness of what victims might be going through. Editors and management need to be aware of the issue, as do training managers, who are forever juggling their own time and resources, trying to meet the demands of editors who may be more concerned with writing training and defamation courses.

But inadequate training the trauma issue could lead to its own legal problems. It is not imperceptible that one day a traumatised journalist will sue a media organisation for workplace negligence.

Editors and training managers who cry off this sort of training on the basis of finances, are risking legal action (from victims or their own journalists). Time may prove that trauma training will be as much a financial imperative as training in areas like defamation and contempt of court.

TRAUMA TRAINING IS BEING DONE

In the US there are several universities that have incorporated trauma training in their curricula. The Dart institution is attempting to spread this work in Europe and Australia. There is also the possibility of extension to South Africa. Without this kind of system, trauma training would remain one-off work, dependent wholly upon individual senior journalists to offer advice to colleagues. This is hardly sufficient. For one, few journalists benefit from this, and second, there is no guarantee that the activists know what they are talking about. Thirdly, if this person leaves the organisation, then the training/counselling lapses.

But training is only part of the story. Workplace care of journalists will become more of an issue as journalists become more aware of the dangers of untreated trauma.

From all this, the following recommendations come:

(1) PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Trainers in this area need to know what they are talking about. Dr Frank Ochberg expresses concern that trainers may not be qualified enough. People training others in coping with trauma should have a relationship with a

qualified professional. Courses written on the subject should be passed before the eyes of such a professional before being delivered. If possible and financially feasible, it would be ideal for such professionals to be involved in the actual training. It may also be beneficial to use emergency service groups (police; fire brigade, red cross, Oxfam etc) in the training. These groups are by nature close to potentially traumatising situations and can give advice.

Dr Ochberg says the next stage is to get a relationship with victims support training institution.

He says this training should be put in its own class... not simply as part of ethics training. There is a difference between interviewing a source and interviewing a subject.

(2) EARLY TRAINING

“Pre-trauma training is necessary. You need to know what to expect. You might read about a bad situation but you won’t know what to expect in the place itself. I would like to pass through training like this. I learned journalism on the job in 10 years. I had trained as a lawyer.”

- Polia Alexandrova (Bulgarian News Agency)

With ‘Early Training’ we are talking about a combined session, or series of sessions (*see 8.6: Suggested Syllabus*)

Ideally, this kind of training can be of great benefit to student journalists. There are great benefits in learning such things as the stages of trauma; the likely reactions of traumatised people; knowing what to look for in a traumatised person; self-care; recognising problems in yourself; basic psychology, and understanding the benefits of the available treatments.

The benefits are many:

- It gives an appreciation of the victims that they’ll be speaking with
- It will help prevent damage to victims by journalists
- It will improve journalists’ interviewing skills
- It will help journalists protect themselves
- It will help them to know when a fellow journalist is in

- trouble
- It will add, eventually, to healthier workplaces

The subject is so wide, and the benefits so many that it is worthy of its own string of training on the subject, not just a half hour component in another course. Included in this training might be some exposure to victims. Such exposure might be especially beneficial to young journalists, so that they develop some understanding and worldliness about what happens to a traumatised person. To do this though, can be dangerous. All precautions must be taken to protect the victim from re-traumatisation (by the repeated re-visiting of the incident); and also the victim must be protected if a student erupts in the classroom (ie: if the re-telling of the incident brings out buried traumas in the students).

(3) INCORPORATED TRAINING

As an adjunct to the above, trauma training can be incorporated into other training. For example: Components can be included in interviewing and disaster reporting courses. Too often, lip-service is paid to interviewing elements like ‘empathy’ and ‘understanding’, where this is done as no more than artificial body language techniques designed to make the subject feel relaxed.

(4) MID-CAREER TRAINING

Further, this training needs to be refreshed often. Media outlets will often demand that their practitioners be retrained and refreshed in writing skills, editing skills, production skills, but there may be a belief that trauma training is fine as a once-off. It isn't. The advice from these courses fades with time. If a journalist has been an arts reporter for example, removed from face-to-face reporting of traumatic incidents, then the essentials not to be refreshed. Also, the psychotherapy field is developing all the time. New information is always coming through.

(5) MANAGEMENT TRAINING

“When you get home your adrenaline is running. As soon as I got back, they would assign me to do regular Dutch press conferences and whatever. This was a bad thing because I immediately had to work again without a chance to recover.”

- Hans Jaap Melissen (Radio Netherlands)

“During the war in Albania, the BBC offered the treatment to two reporters who had suffered a lot. They were asked to enjoy their life in London; to go to cinemas and go for walks in parks. They were treated as humans. It was enough.”

- Franko Egro (Deutsche Welle)

Sadly, Frank Egro’s experience is a rare one. In many of my interviews, journalists told stories of management indifference to their trauma. There was often anger about this indifference, and it’s not inconceivable that legal action may arise some years in the future if the journalist decides that a lack of care in the workplace is worthy of a compensation claim.

The problem may be that many senior journalists and editors have themselves never received treatment for their traumatic experiences in the field, and they might believe that such treatment indicates a reporter weakness. This needs to be redressed.

I recommend that managing editors also take the training. The benefits for interviewing alone would make it worthwhile. If this is not possible, then management courses might be able to incorporate a new section which would look at recognising the traumatised journalist and managing them.

(6) OUTSIDE TRAINING

Many media organisations do not have any kind of training department at all. Many others only have small training units. This helps explain why pre-event trauma training is not carried out at many of these institutions. While an in-house trainer and course regimen is the most desirable system, it is simply not possible for all media outlets.

Hence I recommend that media organisations make use of outside groups with expertise to give journalists both pre- and post-trauma training. These

groups should be aware of the particular problems faced by journalists: their deadlines, the demands of the editor, the need for interaction with the victim; the from-story-to-story nature of the job, the hours.

When attempting to hire a psychologist to speak to a group of Australian Broadcasting Corporation journalists for an hour, the cost was prohibitive (and this was from an organisation affiliated with the ABC). Given the number of journalists in news outlets, these costs will need to be made reasonable, or the training will simply not take place. Training managers and editors will need to forge contacts with people interested in the subject

(7) PEER COUNSELLORS

“I can’t talk to most of the people here. They’re not interested. Their eyes glaze over. It becomes too disturbing for them. Sometimes I write about some of the experiences and send it to some good friends. In Goma in 1994 and Angola. I felt I was helpless. I went into a depression for 18 months.”

- Eric Beauchemin (Radio Netherlands)

Having trained peers in each newsroom is a cheap and highly beneficial asset. The cost would be a peer counselling training session. The benefit is that the “shame factor” is removed from the equation. With many young journalists being sent onto assignments involved death and trauma (police rounds; courts etc), peer counsellors, who are themselves experienced journalists have a great capacity for influence on these younger staffers. It would help set up good habits for new reporters.. talking about the what they’ve seen; understanding their own trauma; the “help each other” ethic is entrenched. There are no drawbacks. Also, as has been expressed elsewhere in this report, journalists have traditionally been loath to see psychologists, fearing it might be interpreted as a sign of weakness to other workers, and also, sadly, to themselves.

This is being done in emergency services groups around the world. Journalists also go to traumatic events, They should also have safety nets.

(8) COMPETENT COUNSELLING

“If you don’t have inner peace you can’t help anyone else.”

- **Daniel Batidam (Deutsche Welle)**

It is a sad thing that in the course of this project I came across several journalists who had not been served well by counsellors. It appeared that the counsellors were not trained in this kind of psychological trauma, nor had they an understanding of the special needs of a journalist.. of the fact that journalists are observers and suffer guilt because of it; the fact that journalists will need to revisit scenes; that journalists will often have little time for breath-taking between traumatic jobs. Counsellors trained in these specialties are essential. Also these counsellors will recognise the need to guarantee the confidentiality of their client. A team of psychologists with specialties in different areas of trauma, CIS and PTSD would be the most beneficial.

Simon Spanswick suggests that the counselling service needs to be able to deal with a raft of things.. from personal problems to trauma. “There should be experts in EAPs, because nobody can know how to deal with all those difficult situations. From a management point of view it’s a difficult situation, when you’ve got a workforce of 20,000 people, you need a team who can cover all these sorts of issues, not just counsellors who do day-to-day emotional problems.”

(9) COMPULSORY COUNSELLING

Professor Roger Simpson says that his studies found that after the Oklahoma bombing, voluntary counselling had little effect. At another event a year later, COMPULSORY counselling had a big impact. Dr Ochberg agrees that in some cases compulsory counselling is much more effective than voluntary counselling.

This is something which might be considered by management in some workplaces in some situations (but in by no means all). In some cases compulsory counselling is much more effective than voluntary counselling. Compulsory counselling will help to overcome journalists’ self-image and fear that by going to a counsellor they will be placing their career at risk. It also overcomes the fact that many journalists don’t feel that they need any help. The drawback is that the journalist may resent the counselling.. and this will work against its effectiveness.

(10) BUDDY SYSTEMS

“I went out with a senior journalist when he went to interview bereaved people. He had a lot more experience than I did. It wasn’t a deliberate policy of training, but a good by-product.”

- Hal Crawford (Radio Netherlands)

“It would be really helpful to have a journalist who’s been through these things. First hand testimony can help you with what you will find in the field. A test can’t do it. I don’t think a teacher can do it. A journalist can tell you about what happens when you get back.”

- Eric Beauchemin (Radio Netherlands)

“It was the first work for two of us, and we had no experienced person with us. We were expected to make investigative; risky, in-depth; controversial articles. Very hard for your first work.”

- Florencia Ripoli (Comercio y Justicia, Argentina)

As part of training, pairing inexperienced journalists with those who have worked in traumatising situations. The benefits are that the inexperienced journalists can observe interviews with people in crisis situations; and the experienced journalist can watch out for sign of trauma in their inexperienced colleague. It is not unreasonable to assume that journalists who work alone are more likely to be affected by the stories they cover. So there might be benefit to the experienced journalist too.

(11) CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

“In Korean culture they are not willing to talk about their trauma. It wouldn’t be right to talk about it. Most reporters will cope by having a drink. There is a strict hierarchy in my newsroom. Senior reporters will have a drink to console the junior reporter, but the junior will not tell the senior reporter about their trauma.”

-Shin Cho (Hankook Ilbo newspaper, South Korea)

“In India you are always discussing it; with family; friends; colleagues. Sometimes there’s over-analysing; but that too is a release. There’s that feeling of togetherness. Trauma happens because you’re lonely. Much of this openness is cultural. It’s natural to do in India. It’s natural and acceptable.. there’s no isolation in the country.

- Lyla Bavadam (Frontline, India)

As the above two quotes show, there is no ‘one size fits all’ in the handling of psychological trauma. While one culture might naturally talk about it, another might not. And within a culture, social groupings, sexes, professions, religious grouping will too work in different ways.

Hence the recommendations must always be considered in light of this cultural setting. Some recommendations will be inappropriate in some cultures. It should be up to the editor or/and training manager to decide how they should be applied.

A FINAL POINT: Personal Responsibility

In the other recommendations I have talked of many suggested support mechanisms for journalists (training; peer support; counselling etc). But it is essential that journalists too bear responsibilities for their own development. In many countries I heard journalists (even surprisingly senior ones) claim de facto powerlessness to effect change in the workplace, or to decide their professional fate, or to be educated in a certain field. It is the nature of journalists to assert their power in everyday reporting (by daring to ask the difficult-to-ask; by approaching person who, instinct might suggest, is better left alone; by demanding free information; by asserting the public’s right to know). When it comes to self-development, professional choices and mid-career training, these journalists should be just as assertive. It is an on-going responsibility. An ineffective or untrained journalist is not just an employer’s fault.

8. Appendices

8.1. Glossary

CIS

Critical Incident Stress. This is the effect of being placed in a position of some tension. It is entirely normal, and in normal circumstances, it should dissipate naturally. It should not be confused with PTSD, which is an abnormal effect of extraordinary stresses with a defined set of symptoms, and can be diagnosed through four psychological categories. It becomes a disorder when it becomes entrenched.

CCR

The Centre for Conflict Reporting. (*see Reporting the World*)

Dart

A foundation set up by Dr Frank Ochberg to help train journalists in dealing with traumatised people. It is based in East Lansing, Michigan, and has extended to several US states and the UK. It offers, in several countries, the Dart Award for excellence in reporting on victims.

EAP

Employee Assistance Program. This is an employer-sponsored program where employees may, confidentially, obtain access to a psychologist for counselling and/or debriefing. In many cases, it is confidential. In some cases (for example, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation), the EAP is extended to spouses and personal partners.

IBT

The International Broadcasting Trust is a London-based independent TV production company that specialises in international affairs.. human rights and development etc. It has made programs for public and private broadcasters in Britain, and major European networks, the US and Australia among others.

ISTSS

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. It is a world-wide body dedicated to trauma treatment, education, research and prevention. Members of the ISTSS include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counsellors, researchers, administrators, advocates, journalists and clergy.

MFWA

Media Foundation in West Africa.

MSU

Michigan State University. Its campus is in East Lansing.

NPPA

National Press Photographers Association. This is a US body of photographers. It is involved in professional development projects of all kinds, including trauma support training for New York City journalists.

PTSD

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. A recently diagnosed set of symptoms found to be common to people who have suffered a trauma. It is a disorder which manifests after the event, especially if the effects of the trauma are not dealt with quickly. PTSD can last for many years.

OSCE

Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe

Reporting the World

RTW is a service that dedicates itself to maintaining balance, fairness and responsibility in the coverage of world events. It boasts more than 200 working journalists.

Reuters Foundation

It was established in the early 1980s as a fellowship for journalists from around the world to come to Green College in Oxford, U.K.

SPJ

Society of Professional Journalists. An Indianapolis-based US body dedicated to the perpetuation of a free press, and ethical and professional standards of journalism.

VMP

The Victims and the Media Program. A program of trauma training for journalists at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, US. It was started in 1990 by Dr Frank Ochberg and professor Bill Cote. It is now administered and delivered by Bonnie Bucqueroux over the three years of the media course.

8.2 Existing Training Models

The following three models are examples of the types of training in trauma that are being carried out. They come from different areas. One is by a private group, Reporting the World; the second is from the British Royal Marines; and the third is from the University of Washington's undergraduate journalism program..

8.2.1 'The Ethics Of Reporting Conflicts' Course Outline

(Reporting the World. Jake Lynch/Annabel McGoldrick)

Session 1 – Introduction. 'War journalism' - the dominant narratives of conflict reporting and how to recognise them. Using conflict analysis in reporting – getting beyond the 'sport and court' paradigm of winner-takes-all.

Session 2 – Critical self-awareness & an ethic of responsibility. A critical self-awareness. An ethic of responsibility. How does news influence the course of events? Cause and effect. Taking responsibility for the consequences of stories.

Session 3 – The Big 'O' 'Objectivity' and its influence on reporting conflicts 'Shared assumptions' as the basis for 'objective reporting'

Session 4 - Reporting the 'other' Construction of identity and alternatives in news reporting. 'Intervention' as an idea in news reporting.

Session 5 – Alternative Sources Finding new sources of information. Who and what might be worth including and why? What is useful on the web and what is not?

Session 6 – Media activism and public service Connections/tensions between the stated aims of journalists and news organisations, and the actual coverage they offer.

Session 7 – Conflict Analysis for journalists Partisan perceptions. Unravelling a hardened conflict discourse. What does each side see as important? How does each see the 'important facts' of the other? What does it tell us about their real aspirations and fears? How could these be addressed other than by a winner taking all?

Session 8 - Commercial and Political Pressures on the News Commercial & political pressures

8.2.2 Royal Marines Model For Peer Training

(as presented by SO2 reps Neil Greenberg & Captain Cameron March)

Pre-training.. briefing & training

AT INCIDENT STRATEGY:

- (1) Defusing (ventilate feelings)
- (2) Planning meeting to decide
 - * Decide whether to take any action
 - * Briefing Meeting
 - * Risk assessment based on checklist (after 3 days; then a week; then later (as decided by the peer). Action is taken after each assessment)
- (3) Action (based on the individual)
 - * Limit Exposure; More Support etc

Important things about the actions:

- *Brief (must be manageable)
- *Immediacy (do it soon after event)
- *Customised (for each one)
- *Proximity (keep them near you..don't send them home)
- *Simplicity (easy to manage & do)
- *Confidentiality (but tell them that management will be informed if other personnel are at risk because of this person's condition).

DIFFICULTIES:

- *Navy people were resistant to professional help.
- *Injuries to the mind carries a stigma.
- *It needs to be done at the intervals. NOT JUST ONE INTERACTION.

GOOD ABOUT ABOVE MODEL:

- *Gives people a wholistic view of what's going on (where most are used to just doing a small part of the event)
- *People put into the system early, fare well. So they should be identified early.
- *The above model is easy to train. It teaches listening skills etc.
- *Every group is taught to recognise stress.

8.2.3 Covering Traumatic Incidents: A Curriculum for Training Student Reporters

(Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, University of Washington)

Session I: Knowledge and Understanding.

- * An introduction to trauma;

- * Secondary trauma and self-care for journalists (the circumstances that may cause PTSD);
- * Three disabling responses of traumatic stress;
- * Identify traumatic responses and reporting techniques that help or harm victims.

Session II: Application and Analysis

- * Interviewing victims of trauma through interactive scenarios;
- * Practical: Interview a victim immediately after the incident;
- * Practical: Interview a victim a day to a week after an incident;
- * Being aware of thoughts and feelings elicited by interviews (for victim, reporter and observers);
- * Drawing preliminary conclusions about covering traumatic incidents.

8.3: The Interview: Ten Points

(provided by the University of Washington's Journalists and Trauma program)

In this training ten points are given to the students for good interviewing of victims:

- i. Gender, culture and class
- ii. Respect victim's efforts to regain balance
- iii. Watch what you say:
 - Always okay:
 - "I'm sorry this happened"
 - "I'm glad you weren't killed"
 - "It's not your fault"
 - Never okay:
 - "How do you feel"
 - Generalised insights
 - Sharing own experiences
- iv. Set the stage; the first question is important
- v. Explain the ground rules; informed consent
- vi. Share control with the interviewee
- vii. Be prepared for emotion
- viii. Listen
- ix. Review with the victim what they said
- x. Think through what you saw and heard

8.4. Tips on Interviewing Crime Victims

(from the Michigan State University's Victims and the Media Program)

Attitude, tone and expression of concern

When approaching crime victims, remember to switch gears out of investigative reporter mode. At a recent conference, a young college reporter seemed proud of calling a rape victim to ask whether she had lied about the attack. What he failed to realise was that this not only hurt the victim, but it cost him any hope of an interview..

Don't be afraid to open the conversation with "I'm sorry for your loss" or "I'm sorry for what happened to you." Even if those remarks sound canned to you, chances are that victims will appreciate hearing them. . Moreover, it is better to stick with a rehearsed comment than to risk blurting out something that may be unintentionally hurtful.

Breaking News

Some would argue that no-one should intrude on the mother who has just learned that her child has been murdered, or the dazed survivor who narrowly escaped before his home burned down. Yet it is the duty of the reporter to offer the person the chance to say *yes* or *no*. Many people will not want to be interviewed – some may well scream or even become abusive when approached by a reporter. But your goal should be to provide those who want to talk the opportunity to do so, and that means explaining to them the mission or rationale for speaking.

- * **Celebrate the life** – it is appropriate to inform families that an interview will allow your article or broadcast to go beyond facts already on the record or those provided by the police or hospital officials. You can also explain that others in similar circumstances have found news coverage is helpful in communicating information, including specifics about arrangements, to co-workers and acquaintances.

- * **Warn the community of the danger** – Victims, family and friends may be willing to be interviewed when they understand that this provides an opportunity to help others avoid victimisation.

- * **Tell their side** – There are times when the victim may want to put his or her version on the record – the warning light wasn't flashing, the attacker threatened to kill her if she called the police. Many victims complain that initial articles contained glaring errors of fact that they were never given the opportunity to correct at the time.

- * **Illustrate an important issue** – the stories of victims help us understand the dynamics that allow such problems to persist.

* **Share human feeling and experience** – Bad things do indeed happen to good people, and victims can rightfully remind us of the fragility and vagaries of life.

A few don't's:

* **Avoid any hint of blackmail or coercion** – Victims often report being acutely aware of undue pressure. Never say, “Tell me about your daughter or I will be forced to get my information elsewhere.”

* **Watch what you say at the scene** – Reporters, like other first responders such as police, sometimes indulge in black humour to cope with their own trauma. The danger of course, is that family and friends could overhear those insensitive remarks and that could easily cost you an interview (and the witnesses' respect for you and your news organisation).

Follow-up Stories

Do not be lulled into thinking that the effects of trauma simply disappear with the passage of time.

* **Trial coverage** – Victims often feel suspects and perpetrators receive undue amounts of media attention, while the victims are ignored. In their view, piecemeal coverage risks putting the victim on trial.

* **Anniversary and update stories** – It is a mistake to assume that victims do not suffer pain 10, 20 or even 50 years after the incident. The anniversary itself often stirs up troubling feelings, so be prepared when asking for and conducting the interview.

* **Unsolved crimes** – Try to make it your policy never to run a story about an unsolved crime without notifying the victim or the family first. They may feel blindsided if not warned.

* **A special word on terminology** – Victims often have strong feelings about “loaded” words such as victim, survivor. And closure. Ask if they mind being called a victim. Many victims bristle at being asked if they have achieved closure – the implication is that they have failed if they say no. A better question might be, “How do you feel about the question of closure?”

Approaching Victims

* **Know what you are going to say** – outline points to make and words and issues to avoid

* **Make sure the family has been notified** – even when you have official assurances that notifications or death or serious injury has taken place, remember

that, in today's world of fractured families, you might inadvertently be the bearer of this news to someone who has not yet been told.

* **First impressions** – leave your equipment behind.. camera and lights, notebook, tape recorder. If appropriate, wear casual clothes. Announce who you are and the news organisation you represent, and then express your regrets before you attempt to explain your mission. Offer a business card with the assurance that the person can reach you to correct any mistakes, or to talk later.

* **Discuss ground rules** – Provide your best estimate of the time required for the interview. Tell the person to let you know if they need a break, if they want the lights turned off, or if they want their remarks kept out of the coverage, Make sure that they know that you are there as a reporter, not as a friend, but that your goal is to help them tell their stories – and tell them the way that they want to.

* **Suggest alternatives and other sources** – If they are unwilling to talk, ask them if there are other family members, clergy, friends, neighbours or co-workers who could talk knowledgeably

***Thanks them for their effort** – Reliving trauma takes a toll. Tell victims how much you appreciate their willingness to share their stories.

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8.5. Tips for TV Viewers

(leaflet provided for TV viewers by the Michigan State University's Victims and the Media Program)

The following is a checklist that the consumers of TV news can use to assess whether the broadcasters in their communities are treating victims fairly:

- * **The Ambush Interview** – The surprise of ambush interview may make sense for investigative reporting or when challenging con artists, but it has no place in victim coverage. If your local TV station routinely airs footage of victims slamming the door in the reporter's face too often, something is wrong.
- * **Too Close for Comfort** – Telephoto lenses for video and still cameras can be used to violate a victim's expected zone of privacy without them knowing how intrusive the shot will be. Let your local broadcasters know if they go too far.
- * **If It Were Your Child** – Children who are victimised deserve to be heard, without being patronised or exploited. The best filter to assess coverage is to judge the story as if it were your child being interviewed.
- * **The Blur of Shock and Trauma** – We should wince – and protest- when it is clear that the victim being interviewed is too stunned to be an accurate reporter of events. Many victims in that condition do not even remember being interviewed.
- * **The Hurtful Cliché** – The gurney being lifted into the back of the ambulance. The casket being lowered into the ground. Journalists must be challenged to create fresh images to tell the story.
- * **Victims as Teasers** – Many victims report feeling blindsided when TV stations repeated use lurid footage as promos for hours prior to the newscast.
- * **The 5-Second Soundbite** – Victims feel that they are the best experts on their own victimisation. Many resent being reduced to a five-second sound bite, then the story moves to a focus on the perpetrator, or interviews with “experts”.
- * **Notifying Victims** – It can be difficult to tell from the resulting broadcast, but news organisations should notify victims when follow-up or anniversary stories are done.

8.6. A Suggested Syllabus

NOTES:

*In formulating a syllabus, it must be remembered that no one course program will fit all situations. Cultural differences, the size of the workplace, the types of stories covered, the level of experience, and the ability to release people for training will all have an impact on what training should be carried out.

*The following syllabus is a general one, which is a list of subjects with a suggested order. Subjects may be shortened if time is a problem, but it is highly recommended that all these issues be covered at least a little. There isn't a section which can be removed completely. Perhaps the training can be broken into several days.

*I have specified no durations. They will depend on the organisation's needs and facilities.

* The participants should include a broad range of journalists.. novices, mid-careerists, editors, and editorial managers if possible.

*It is suggested that the trainers include a professional (a psychiatrist, psycho-therapist or psychologist) with a special expertise in trauma. There should also be a highly experienced journalist involved, either as a trainer or as a speaker. Ideally this journalist should have wide experience in traumatic situations (war, conflict, disaster, social impact stories)

Suggested Syllabus:

1. Introductions

* Introduce yourselves, outline your experience (including trauma).

* Ask participants to introduce themselves, letting them feel free to bring up any time they might have been traumatised in their life. Never put pressure on them to reveal things that they might regret later. Either way, you will need to get agreement from ALL participants that anything said will be confidential.

2. Need for trauma training

* Give examples of journalists causing problems through ignorance. Also, examples of journalists who developed problems because they failed to recognise their own symptoms. Give out statistics of the incidence of psychological trauma and PTSD (Simpson; Feinstein)

3. What is trauma?

-Definition of psychological trauma. A short, basic set of definitions, including some example scenarios that could lead to psychological trauma. Anonymous case examples can be used.

-How the mind works under stress. Things to consider.

-Definition of PTSD. List the symptoms; describe the range of onset times and the manifestations. Emphasise that not all journalists who work in traumatic areas get traumatised, let alone suffer PTSD.

-How it impacts on people generally (symptoms)

-The stages of psychological trauma. How the trauma shows up. How the person's behaviour changes. The stages in manifestation. Denial; anger, depression etc. All stages defined. A ready reference handout.

4. The Kinds of Traumatized People you might deal with.

- **Victims.** The person closest to the incident has special issues. They may be in shock; they may be vulnerable. They will almost certainly be going through one of the stages of trauma.

- **Relatives & friends of the victim.** These people may be protective of the victim; or looking for a perpetrator.

- **The traumatized community.** Two types.

(a) When a whole community is *affected* (eg: flood, fire)

(b) When a community *observes* and *feels* something happen to some of their own. (eg: school massacre, building collapse)

- **Other journalists in your workplace.** Journalists suffering trauma after/during covering stories. The need to support them.

5. Dealing with traumatized people

- **When to do a door-knock; how to do a door-knock. Ethics.**

- **Dangers to you.** Things to be wary of.

- **Specific problems you might cause**

- **Cultural issues**

(a) Social issues. Is it appropriate to talk to this person at this time?

Should a man be talking to a woman victim of a sexual attack?

(b) Ethnic differences. Understanding the hierarchies.

- **Exposure to real victims.** (with extra care not to harm the victim)

6. Dealing with your own trauma

- **Recognising it in yourself**

- **What to do when you recognise it**

- **Prevention**

- **Looking after yourself after the story is done.**

- **Photojournalists and their special considerations.**

- **Workplace issues** (legal etc)

7. Doing the Interviews

- **General.** How to interview emotional subject. How to contend with that. And what their attitudes are... grief, vengeful, gratitude (for life, community, religion).

- **Things not to say**

- **Things that can be said**

- **Practice sessions.** This might include actors or real victims being interviewed (note that this should never be arranged without the close involvement of a professional)

8. Writing about victims. How not to exacerbate their problems.

9. Feedback sessions

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