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EDUCATING COLLEGIATE JOURNALISTS TO COVER AND COPE WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Stephanie Elder Anderson

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EDUCATING COLLEGIATE JOURNALISTS ON HOW TO COVER AND COPE
WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the College of Education and Human Services
Murray State University
Murray, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Education

by Stephanie Lynn Elder Anderson
August 2017

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Abstract

STEPHANIE LYNN ELDER ANDERSON. How to Educate Collegiate Journalists to Cover and Cope with Traumatic Events (under the direction of DR. TERESA CLARK.)

This research study applied the qualitative method of open coding of data from professional journalists and journalism faculty members to determine whether trauma journalism should be incorporated into existing journalism curriculum. Trauma journalism emerged in the early 1990s but has not been integrated in most journalism programs. Prior research indicated the reasons trauma journalism is not included in most curriculum is because it is not an ACEJMC accreditation standard, there's limited qualified faculty members to teach such courses, and the material is already incorporated into other journalism courses. This study found similar results along with support from faculty members and professional journalists for integrating such material. The author sought to provide suggestions for a trauma journalism course or integration into an existing course to provide journalism educators a foundation for creating such a course. Through interviews with professional journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events, recommendations were made in the form of outlines that can be a basis for any journalism program looking to incorporate trauma journalism into its curriculum.

Keywords: trauma, trauma journalism, traumatic events

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Chapter I: Introduction

Context

The term *trauma journalism* was coined in the mid-2000s by reporters. It was a “shorthand way of encompassing otherwise disparate work sharing some common approaches and themes” (B. Shapiro, personal communication, August 23, 2016). It was also a useful approach to gather creative reporting practices on survivors of violence and tragedy (B. Shapiro, personal communication, August 23, 2016). Bruce Shapiro, current director of the Dart Center, defines trauma journalism as reporting on violence, conflict or tragedy with a focus on the aftermath and long-term impact of events on individuals, families and communities (B. Shapiro, personal communication, August 23, 2016). This definition by Shapiro was adopted by the author of this study and was implied throughout this research. Subsequently, Shapiro (2016) offers an alternative term in *trauma-informed journalism*. He explains *trauma-informed journalism* as reporting shaped by an understanding of psychological injury and the long-term aftermath of violence.

Journalists cover myriad traumatic events – everything from car crashes and murders to genocide and terrorism, not to mention wars and natural disasters – and they’ve been doing so for centuries (Massé, 2011, p. 1-2). Journalists are considered first responders because they are oftentimes the first people to arrive on the scene, even before law enforcement and emergency management services. Yet, journalists, by and large, have not received the training needed to easily cope with the emotional and psychological

effects that come with exposure to traumatic events. Repeated exposure to such events puts journalists at risk of developing mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (Greenberg, Gould, Langston, & Brayne, 2009). Recent studies have supported these findings (Dworznic, 2011; Osofsky, Holloway, & Pickett, 2005; Filer, 2010; McMahon, 2010).

Another issue that has recently arisen regarding trauma journalism is how ethically to cover these events, but to stay within the parameters that students are taught in journalism education. Is it ethically correct for a news organization to repeatedly report the killers' names and faces after mass shootings? Is there a journalistic value to airing this type of information? Do news organizations need to camp outside a high school for nearly a month after two students kill thirteen people and injure twenty-four others? Is it journalism or is it sensationalism, or on a darker note, entertainment? Many critics believe that journalists are simply exploiting the victims of these disasters (Simpson & Coté, 2006). In some cases, the public views journalists as treating victims as "props for stories" and being insensitive with their excessive coverage of personal traumatic events (Simpson & Coté, 2006, p. 2). Not surprising, those most likely to criticize media coverage of traumatic events are the victims themselves (Simpson & Coté, 2006).

With increasing criticism from viewers on the media's intense coverage of traumatic events, the need for training on how to properly cover these events is becoming more apparent. The Columbine High School massacre, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the shootings on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) are examples of traumatic events that caused the public to scrutinize the

media's national reporting. The prolonged coverage and greater attention given to a single story allowed for more criticism to surface.

Ethics is something a person *does*, not who a person *is* (Tuggle, Carr, & Huffman, 2014, p. 250.). According to Tuggle, et al. (2014), people must be trained in ethical behavior and continue to work at it. In the field of journalism, specifically trauma journalism, ethical behavior refers to the question of whether to show dead bodies, report on suicides, name the killers, show live footage during a hostage situation when the suspects could have access to a television, or decide to risk an invasion of a survivor's privacy immediately following a traumatic event by asking for an interview. Journalism education traditionally does not teach students how to cover traumatic events. However, what journalism education has done for decades and continues to do today is teach students what it means to be ethical in their general reporting, though not necessarily specific to trauma journalism. As budding journalists progress from journalism education to the journalism industry, they must carry the burden of continued education and professional development in the area of ethical behavior regarding trauma in order to best serve news organizations. There are such few journalism programs that incorporate trauma into their existing curriculum that any expectation of incorporating ethical behaviors relating to the coverage of traumatic events is not likely.

Victims began to express discontent for the round-the-clock media attention during these tragic events. They struggled to grieve and felt as if the media were imposing on their privacy. Hundreds of journalists camped out for weeks on the campuses of Columbine and Virginia Tech, attempting to snap the photo that would make the front page of the newspaper or the interview that would lead the nightly newscast.

Advocacy groups emerged, created mainly by the families of victims, to appeal to the media to stop giving airtime to those responsible for the traumatic events (“Our Challenge,” n.d.).

These advocacy groups are examples of the plea from the public for the media to shine the spotlight on the victims and not the predators, to reduce the amount of overall coverage, and above all, to be accurate and ethical in their reporting. While many of the traumatic events in the last few decades have been learning experiences for journalists, there is still cause for concern due to the lack of intentional trauma training for both collegiate and professional journalists, especially given the number of horrific events that have occurred in recent years.

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) does not include trauma journalism as part of the standards for accreditation. There are 9 standards that the Council assesses when reviewing journalism and mass communication department’s programs. The standards are:

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration

The first standard looks at the policies and practices of the department to ensure that an effectively and administered working and learning environment is provided for all students.

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction

This standard ensures that the department provides a curriculum and instruction that allows students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the Council outlines for preparing students to work in a diverse global and domestic society. This standard applies to instruction online as well as in the classroom.

Standard 3: Diversity and Inclusiveness

The third standard mandates that the program is inclusive and values domestic and global diversity and serves and reflects society.

Standard 4: Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

This standard evaluates the faculty within the department to ensure they have both the academic and professional credentials appropriate to the mission of the program.

Standard 5: Scholarship: Research, Creative and Professional Activity

The fifth standard ensures faculty members are contributing to the advancement of scholarly and professional knowledge and actively engaged in research, creative and professional activities that contribute to their development.

Standard 6: Student Services

This standard is designed to assess whether students are receiving support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study.

Standard 7: Resources, Facilities and Equipment

The seventh standard makes certain that the department plans for, seeks and receives adequate resources to fulfill and sustain its mission.

Standard 8: Professional and Public Service

This standard ensures that the program and faculty are advancing journalism and mass communication professions while fulfilling the obligations to its community, alumni and the greater public.

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The final standard addresses the assessment of student learning within the department and ensures that the findings are used to improve curriculum and instruction.

(ACEJMC, 2012)

Most institutions accredited by the Council do not include trauma in the curriculum. For decades, collegiate journalism programs have educated students on how to write news stories, interview sources, shoot and edit video, and apply mass communication law principles. Related literature suggests that a case can be made that these programs need to incorporate trauma training into their curriculum as a standard practice (Maxson, 2000).

The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma has been the leader in the education and training of trauma for journalists and educators. The Dart Center began in 1999 at the University of Washington Department of Communications to serve as a resource for journalists, educators, and mental health professionals involved with traumatic events. It was also designed to provide awards, fellowships, training programs and research studies in trauma journalism (“Dart Center, n.d.). The Dart Center has researched extensively the connection between journalists and traumatic events. This research includes how to cover them with sensitivity to victims as well as the psychological effects associated with covering traumatic events for journalists. The Dart Center is committed to educating journalism instructors with the necessary training regarding trauma. It also provides

professional development opportunities in which journalists can get the recommended trauma training that might be lacking in the industry. The Dart Center is located at Columbia University in New York with two other centers in Asia and Europe.

Purpose of the Study

This exploratory qualitative study seeks to examine the need for educating collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events. Journalists cover traumatic events because it is “simply part of their job” (Simpson & Coté, 2006). The first traumatic event a journalist covers provides great insight into the challenges he or she will face when assigned to report on such tragedies. Whether it’s dealing with the victims and survivors or discovering the emotional effects the situation has on the journalist, these personal experiences are serving as an educational lesson on covering and coping with traumatic events. Learning from experience is supplementing for the lack of related course curriculum at the postsecondary level.

Research in 1994 (Freinkel, Koopman, & Spiedel) found the link between post-traumatic stress disorder and journalists. This historic study brought to light the psychological dangers that covering traumatic events present for journalists. Since the release of the study, a few news organizations, for example, the BBC in London, have developed training programs for journalists affected by trauma in the field. Yet, a stigma still exists among professional journalists that prevent many of them from using employee assistance programs that organizations offer. Freinkel et al. (1994) specifically targeted professional journalists who had covered traumatic events for a news organization. The researcher of this study wanted to gain insight as to why the stigma was

still present in today's news outlets and discover how, if any, of these individuals had received trauma training as either a collegiate or professional journalist.

This study seeks to identify how colleges and universities are incorporating trauma training into the existing journalism curriculum, specifically, how students are learning to cover traumatic events ethically and with sensitivity toward survivors and victim's families. The study also seeks to discover how journalism faculty members are educating students about how to deal with the psychological effects that are possible with repeated exposure to traumatic events.

Research Questions

The research questions that are the basis for this study are the following:

1. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cover traumatic events?
2. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cope with traumatic events?
3. How have journalism programs incorporated trauma education into their programs?
4. How have professional journalists been prepared to cover traumatic events through education or professional development?

Scope and Bounds

The goal of this study is to expand upon prior research in trauma journalism education to identify how institutions of higher education are educating collegiate journalists to cover traumatic events as well as how to cope with the psychological effects that are associated with repeated exposure to such events. Interviews with professional journalists provided insight into what type of training collegiate journalists should receive

before entering the professional industry. This study will provide a starting point for educators on how to incorporate trauma into their existing journalism programs.

A limitation of this study was the population size among the professional journalists interviewed. The researcher was limited in the number of professional journalists who met the criteria of having covered a traumatic event, had the availability in their schedule for an interview with the researcher, and were willing to participate in this research study. Professional journalists were selected based upon the previously mentioned criteria as well as the researcher's access to such professionals. Journalists who were Dart Center Ochberg fellows along with journalists from Reporters Without Borders, the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, A Culture of Safety Alliance, and personal references were contacted to participate in the study. The professionals sought had covered at least one traumatic event as journalists.

Another limitation to this study was the second population used of faculty members. Members of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC) and Broadcast Education Association members were contacted. This excluded faculty members who are not members of these organizations but could be affiliated with journalism programs that have incorporated trauma courses. It was not assumed that the AEJMC members who participated in this study were faculty members of institutions that had existing trauma journalism programs or courses. Most of the interviews were conducted via telephone due to limited funds for travel.

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the limited research base concerning educating journalists on traumatic events, particularly collegiate journalists. Since Freinkel, Koopman, and Spiedel's research study in 1994 connected post-traumatic stress disorder to the field of journalism, the psychological effects journalists are subjected to in covering traumatic events continues to be in the spotlight. Very little scholarship has been published regarding the education of journalists at the collegiate level in context to covering and coping with traumatic events. Tragedies in the last two decades, such as the Virginia Tech massacre and the Columbine High School shooting, have brought greater criticism of media coverage of traumatic events. This study will further existing research on how professional journalists are trained to cover and cope with traumatic events. It would also provide new research on how collegiate journalists are taught to cover and cope with traumatic events.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to ensure consistency and understanding of these terms throughout the study. The definitions not accompanied by a citation were developed by the researcher.

Disaster. event or series of events concentrated in time and space, in which a society or a relatively self-sufficient division of a society, undergoes severe danger, and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented (Fritz, 1961, p. 655).

Lede. Commonly used in journalism to distinguish between lead type and an introductory sentence to a news article.

Trauma Journalism. Reporting on violence, conflict or tragedy with a focus on the aftermath and long-term impact of events on individuals, families and communities (B. Shapiro, personal communication, August 23, 2016).

Trauma-informed Journalism. Reporting shaped by an understanding of psychological injury and the long-term aftermath of violence (B. Shapiro, personal communication, August 23, 2016).

Collegiate Journalists. A student of higher education studying in the field of journalism or mass communication.

Traumatic Event. This definition is further defined in the review of literature.

First Responders. Any individual who runs toward an event rather than away from it (“Who is a first responder,” 2014).

User Generated Content. Video material and photographs that the public submits to news organizations.

Abbreviations

The following explanations are provided to ensure clarity of the abbreviations used throughout the study.

ABC. American Broadcasting Company.

BBC. British Broadcasting Company.

NBC. National Broadcasting Company.

CNN. Cable News Network.

CBS. CBS Broadcasting Inc. (formerly Columbia Broadcasting System).

AEJMC. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

ACEJMC. Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

ALERT. Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training Center.

WDBJ. WDBJ-TV, CBS affiliate in Roanoke, Virginia.

MSNBC. Microsoft/National Broadcasting Company.

PTSD. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

KUSA. KUSA-TV, NBC Affiliate in Denver, Colorado.

CISM. Critical Incident Stress Management.

STS. Secondary Traumatic Stress.

AP. Associated Press.

EMDR. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.

SSRI. Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor.

CBT. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

APA. American Psychiatric Association.

GSR. Gross Stress Reaction.

CDC. Centers for Disease Control.

EMT. Emergency Management Technician.

UGC. User Generated Content.

Summary

Chapter 2 will present the review of related literature on what is a traumatic event, response to traumatic events, history and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, journalists and post-traumatic stress disorder, journalists as first responders, lessons to be learned about covering and coping with past traumatic events, in particular, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Columbine High School shooting, the September 11 terrorist attack, Virginia Tech massacre, as well as various wars, trauma training in journalism education, and learning from New Zealand's journalism education. The methodology of this exploratory study and the qualitative procedures used to gather the data are defined in chapter 3. Chapter 4 contains the findings and analysis of the research study. Finally, chapter 5 provides a summary and conclusions drawn from research, relationship of conclusions to other research, discussion, limitations of study, and recommendations for further studies on trauma journalism education.

Chapter II: Review of the Related Literature

What is a traumatic event?

Many people experience a stressful event at some point in their lives; however, not all of them may be regarded as clinically traumatic. A traumatic event is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as an event that causes a “sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death” (“Coping with a traumatic event,” n.d.). This could be from either experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event. Traumatic events can affect survivors, rescue workers, friends and relatives of victims, as well as those who see the event happen first-hand or on television. This makes a compelling case that journalists are frequently exposed to traumatic events while covering them. From deadly car crashes to murder scenes to plane crashes to combat to natural disasters to mass shootings and terrorist attacks, journalists are often some of the first people on the scene of an incident. Newsrooms around the world monitor police and fire scanners 24-hours a day to stay on top of events happening in their city. When dispatchers send out the calls to police officers, fire departments, and EMTs, journalists are typically en route as well. Therefore, journalists are exposed to the same visuals as first responders, which could trigger post-traumatic responses.

Responses to Traumatic Events

People respond to traumatic events in various ways that include feelings of fear, grief, and depression (“Coping with a traumatic event,” n.d.). Oftentimes, there are even

physical or behavioral responses that are caused by traumatic events including nausea, dizziness, and sleep and appetite changes. People will sometimes withdraw from their typical daily routines. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), these emotional and behavioral responses can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months. Symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress disorder that last between 2 days and 4 weeks are associated with Acute Stress Disorder (Idsoe, Dyregrov, & Idsoe, 2012, p. 901). If the problems persist longer than three months or become worse prior to that time, “the person could be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (Bolton, 2016)” (“Coping with a traumatic event,” n.d.).

There are several factors that determine whether a person will get PTSD:

- Length of exposure to trauma and intensity level;
- Personal injury or injury to someone close to you;
- Proximity to event;
- Strength of reaction to event;
- Level of control you felt during event; and
- Amount of support and help you received post-event.

(Bolton, 2016)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a direct result of an event that causes an intense emotional and physical response (“Coping with a traumatic event,” n.d.). The thought of something that reminds the individual of the event can easily trigger symptoms of PTSD. According to the National Center for PTSD, there are four major types of symptoms:

1. Re-experiencing: recalling of the bad memories or continuously re-living the event (flashbacks). Triggers include “news reports, seeing an accident or hearing a car backfire;”
2. Avoidance: avoiding situations that could potentially draw upon memories of the event, or avoiding talking or thinking about the event all together;
3. Arousal: trouble sleeping or concentrating on one task at a time and growing anxiety, especially when it comes to situations that could be dangerous; and
4. Negative changes (in beliefs and feelings): feelings of guilt, shame, and fear are possible along with lower self-esteem that could lead to less interest in activities once a part of your life.

(Bolton, 2016)

Other symptoms that fall into these categories include panic attacks, depression, suicidal thoughts or attempts, chronic pain, employment and relationship problems, drug and alcohol abuse, the feeling of isolation, and not being able to complete one’s daily tasks.

History and Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Although it was not officially recognized as PTSD until 1980, signs of traumatic psychological issues date back as early as the Civil War in 1865. At the end of World War I, soldiers were said to have “shell shock,” or what is currently known as PTSD. Medical professionals believed shell shock was damage to the brain caused by the impact of explosions. However, after soldiers who were not near such blasts developed similar signs and symptoms, thinking began to change. In World War II, shell shock became combat stress reaction (CSR), more commonly known to soldiers as

“battle fatigue.” The American Psychiatric Association (APA) published the first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1952 and included gross stress reaction (GSR) (Bolton, 2016). The issue with GSR was that it was assumed that the “reaction” would go away, and rather quickly for the most part. This did not occur as expected from professionals, and therefore, the APA took out GSR in the second edition of the manual in 1968 (Bolton, 2016). It was replaced with “adjustment reaction to adult life” (Bolton, 2016). This condition was extremely limited in its diagnosis. It pertained to only three areas of trauma: suicidal thoughts associated with an unwanted pregnancy, fear that was linked to combat in the battle field, and Ganser syndrome in prisoners facing the death penalty (Bolton, 2016). Finally, in 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) added post-traumatic stress disorder to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, third edition, based on research conducted on rape victims, war veterans, and other victims of traumatic events. It was a controversial diagnosis in the beginning, but has since played an important role in the practice and theory of psychiatry (Bolton, 2016).

Research continues to evolve around post-traumatic stress disorder and requires the APA to update the manual continuously. Since 1980, the manual has been updated four times, most recently in 2013. One of the most notable changes is the categorization of PTSD. No longer is PTSD an anxiety disorder because research has shown it relates more closely with other mood disorders. PTSD is now under a new category, Trauma-and Stressor-Related Disorders (Bolton, 2016). PTSD has become more common in recent years and studies have shown that between seven and eight percent of the United States population will be diagnosed with the disorder in their lifetime (Bolton, 2016). More

specifically, 4 percent of men and 10 percent of women will be diagnosed with the disorder. The need for continuous studies and treatments prove to be needed as doctors continue to diagnose this condition.

Two main types of treatment are typically prescribed for those suffering from PTSD, psychotherapy and medication. Psychotherapy is sometimes referred to as counseling. These two treatments can be done in combination or individually. There are various types of psychotherapy treatment. The first treatment is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which has proven to be the most effective treatment for PTSD (Bolton, 2016). Cognitive and exposure therapy are the two types of CBT. Cognitive processing therapy allows those affected to “learn skills to understand how trauma changed” their thoughts and feelings (Bolton, 2016). Talking about the memories of the traumatic event until it is no longer emotionally disturbing is called prolonged exposure therapy. The second type of CBT is called eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) (Bolton, 2016). EMDR requires the individual to talk about their traumatic event while focusing on hand movements or sounds. Medication is the other option for those seeking treatment for PTSD and can be just as effective. A popular medication, also used to treat depression, known as a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) is effective (Bolton, 2016). Some doctors prescribe Prazosin to help decrease nightmares related to trauma (Bolton, 2016).

Journalists and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

In 1994, 18 journalists witnessed the first execution in California in almost 20 years. The individual was executed in the gas chamber at San Quentin prison (Freinkel,

Koopmen, & Spiedel). A study by Freinkel et al. (1994) revealed that the journalists exhibited signs associated with post-traumatic stress disorder including seeing, hearing or feeling something that was not there and feeling detached from loved ones and co-workers. This was the first study that linked journalists and PTSD together. Journalists are subjected to PTSD and other traumatic-related disorders by sheer nature of the stories they are called upon to cover daily (Freinkel et al., 1994; McMahon, 2001; Newman et al., 2003; Pyevich et al., 2003; Simpson & Boggs, 1999). The number of traumatic events journalist cover can affect whether they develop symptoms of PTSD (Dworznic, 2011). Trauma can occur from covering events such as car crashes, homicides, mass shootings, natural disasters, or warfare. Many believe that journalists should not succumb to the impact of these traumatic events. Journalists admit that “assignment-coherent mental health services” would be helpful for not only them but for their families as well, but very few take advantage of these types of services for fear of appearing “soft” to their colleagues and supervisors (Osofsky, Holloway, & Pickett, 2005). Some journalists have even said they felt guilty seeking medical help or drawing attention to their mental health needs (Haggart, 2001).

Weidmann, Fehm, and Fydrich (2008) found that journalists whose supervisor and colleagues showed a “low degree of acknowledgement” exhibited more post-traumatic and depressive symptoms than others in the study. Bolton (2016) says that some people view the exposure to the traumatic events that journalists report on as a standard hazard within the profession and simply part of their job description. For journalists, speaking out on the feelings that come with covering these events has always been a sign of weakness. Bruce Shapiro, director of the Dart Center for Journalism and

Trauma at Columbia University in New York, told Reuters Health in 2010, “The thinking was, we have to be tough to do this assignment, and if you can’t do that, get out of the kitchen,” (Joelving, 2010). Many journalists, by the nature of their work, are competitive to tell stories first and to report the information in the best way possible. The literature review examined in this study did not explain whether strong personality traits, such as competitiveness, could be linked to trauma journalism. In addition, the studies used in this analysis did not indicate whether symptoms related to PTSD or depression are generational between veteran journalists and millennial reporters, for instance.

Several coping mechanisms exist for people who are at risk for PTSD. Feinstein (2006) found that identifying with a situation or persons involved on a more personal level could increase the risk of traumatic reactions. Novak and Davidson (2013) studied denial as a coping mechanism for journalists when they conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with journalists who reported on “hazardous events overseas.” They suggest that journalists use denial as a means of putting aside the trauma experienced upon returning home (Novak & Davidson, 2013). Another defense mechanism suggested was that journalists make the “assumptions that tragedies which occur in conflict zones will not happen to them” (Feinstein, Owen, & Blair, 2002). Novak and Davidson (2013) discovered that journalists used social networks and relationships with colleagues as “resources for training, support, and opportunities to make sense of distressing events.”

PTSD is not just an issue for American journalists, but others worldwide. Hatanaka et al. (2010) surveyed 360 Japanese journalists who worked for major broadcasting companies. They found that journalists who worked in the field had a greater risk for symptoms of post-traumatic stress than their counterparts in non-field

jobs. The Hatanaka et al. (2010) study revealed that journalists who suffered more stress symptoms on-site were more likely to continue to exhibit those symptoms 2-3 months post-assignment. The authors suggested that journalists should assess their stress symptoms immediately after covering a traumatic event to identify those who are at high risk for PTSD. This would allow interventions to be facilitated to prevent severe symptoms from progressing.

Weidman et al. (2007) studied 61 staff members, correspondents and freelance journalists who covered the December 2004 tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia. The journalists, photojournalists, and producers worked for major broadcast news stations, newspapers, magazines and news organizations in Germany, Austria, and German-speaking parts of Switzerland. This study revealed that 6.6 percent of the participants fulfilled the diagnostic symptoms of PTSD eight months after the natural disaster (Weidman et al., 2007). Their findings indicated that at least some journalists who report on natural disasters can be susceptible to post-traumatic stress symptoms.

New evidence suggests that it is not just those journalists who work in the field at risk of post-traumatic stress symptoms. Feinstein, Audet, and Waknine (2013) studied 116 journalists who work with User Generated Content (UGC) material. This study revealed that journalists who are exposed to UGC had a greater risk of psychopathology such as anxiety, depression, PTSD or alcohol consumption. Repeated and frequent exposure to violent or traumatic UGC images “can come with adverse psychological consequences” (Feinstein et al., 2013). In contrast to other studies, participants in this study did not interrupt UGC material to be a personal threat. Whereas with other studies,

personal threat contributed to post-traumatic stress symptoms in journalists who were in the field or on the scene of a traumatic event.

Pyeovich, Newman, and Daleiden (2003) studied two groups of journalists, one who had covered traumatic events in the last three years such as car accidents, fires, war, and murders, the other group had not covered such events in the same time frame. Pyevich et al. (2003) examined the cognitive effects of traumatic exposure on the two groups of journalists. Their research found that the more journalists are exposed to traumatic events, the more likely they are to exhibit severe signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (Pyeovich et al., 2003). These researchers suggest that cognitive therapy interventions could be an effective treatment for journalists with work-related PTSD.

The BBC in London was one of the first news organizations to establish a program for its journalists affected by traumatic events in the field. The decision came after several journalists got back to the newsroom from the Afghanistan and Bosnian wars and exhibited signs of mental health trauma. Other European news organizations that make “hostile-environment” training mandatory include the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters (Melki, Fromm, & Mihailidis, 2013). Many European news organizations have created an adaptation of the U.K. Royal Navy’s Trauma Risk Management program to use as its trauma training program (Young, 2011).

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation continued to roll-out its trauma program in 2016. This program is headed by a trauma manager, a part-time paid position. The manager is “responsible for ensuring staff and managers are equipped to identify and manage trauma, through ongoing training and awareness initiatives” (“Trauma Manager,” 2016). It also consists of a Trauma and Resilience Committee that establishes objectives

for the program. The peer support program includes a list of peer supporters, who have received appropriate training. All staff members are given a list of these peer supporters. Not long after, both CNN and Reuters designed similar programs for their organizations. The need for these programs does not seem to be diminishing either. Elana Newman, psychologist and professor at the University of Tulsa and the research director of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, told Reuters, “I believe that as journalists are increasingly the targets of deliberate acts of violence in warzones, the mental health consequences will become direr for more journalists” (Joelving, 2010).

Post-traumatic stress disorder is not the only psychological issue facing journalists; compassion fatigue is prevalent as well (Dworznic, 2011). Compassion fatigue is the direct result of talking with victims of a tragedy as well as experiencing the aftermath of such events (Dworznic, 2011). Compassion fatigue is divided into two categories: secondary traumatic stress and burnout. Secondary traumatic stress (STS) encompasses depression, nightmares, sleep issues, cognitive shifts such as suspension of others, bitterness and victim blame, and distancing or over-identification (Dworznic, 2011). These symptoms often lead to frequent job changes and a loss of job security. Those who deal with trauma victims in their daily work, such as police officers, EMTs, and journalists, are highly susceptible to STS (Huggard, 2003; Morrisette, 2004).

Burnout has a physical component to it that STS does not. Those suffering from burnout often feel fatigue and nervous, have trouble sleeping, struggle with ulcers, experience weight change, and the triggering of prior medical conditions (Dworznic, 2011). Studies show those affected by burnout also have symptoms of anger or

irritability, apathy toward life (especially at work), and feelings of being inadequate for not fulfilling responsibilities in the workplace (Cherniss, 1980; Valent, 2002; Freudenberger, 1974). The workload, or in the case of journalists, the amount of traumatic stories assigned to cover, directly contribute to the symptoms developed of burnout.

Journalists as First Responders

Police officers, firefighters, and EMTs are traditionally thought of as first responders. Some literature even includes transit workers, American Red Cross disaster services employees (Bills, et al., 2008) as first responders (regarding the September 11, 2001 attack) and 9-1-1 dispatchers (Arcega-Dunn, 2016). The National First Responders Organization defines a first responder as someone who “runs toward an event rather than away” (“Who is a first responder,” 2014). Therefore, one could conclude that journalists are first responders, often running toward traumatic events to cover them. Journalists are first responders and often even arrive on the scene before police officers and other emergency workers (Massé, 2011., Weidmann et al., 2007). In the event of a crisis, journalists must be able to decipher between capturing the image on camera and the “fear of the unknown dangers” (Simpson & Coté, 2006). On September 11, 2001, while thousands of people were running from the World Trade Center after the first plane crashed into the tower, journalists were finding ways to get as close as possible to the scene. Simpson and Coté (2006) acknowledge that in the September 11, the role of the first-response journalists was unclear. The first responders were rushing to save as many victims as possible, but what about the journalists?

The key difference between traditional first responders and journalists is that most first responders are trained to deal with traumatic events. Although, no one is ever fully prepared to tackle events such as September 11. There were hundreds of first responders who died that day attempting to save the lives of others. There were also journalists who died that day trying to capture the horror for Americans to see. Bill Biggart was an agency photographer who shot nearly 150 photographs of people from nearby Greenwich Village, reacting to the plane hitting the first tower (Simpson & Coté, 2006). Moments later, Biggart died as the second tower collapsed. On September 11, journalists threw the traditional mode of coping with trauma (remaining emotionless) out the window. For this one event, journalists allowed themselves to be human, to break down on camera, and grieve with their audiences.

First responders are trained not only to perform their duties in highly stressful situations but are also trained on how to cope with the lasting post-traumatic effects of witnessing such events. First responders reported in a 2012 Delphi study that opening up about their traumatic experiences with colleagues helped in the recovery process as does knowing they make a difference and receiving thanks from the public (Drury et al., 2013). One of the goals outlined in the 2010 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland is to “ensure effective emergency response” (“Quadrennial homeland security,” 2010). One of the objectives to achieving this goal is to provide timely and accurate information to the news media who can then disseminate information about the emergency to the public. This requires journalists to be on the scene during the emergency, making journalists first responders and exposing them to traumatic events.

The Department of Homeland Security in conjunction with the National Fire Administration (NFA) and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) provides first responders throughout the United States with numerous training resources including online courses, online community forums, and a Ready Responder Toolkit (“Ready Responder Toolkit, 2017). The toolkit is designed to assist emergency response agencies and their families with resources to effectively plan for traumatic events. The kit includes an organizational quiz to assess how prepared an organization is in the event of a disaster, encourages and provides examples of how first responders can create an emergency supply kit with their individual families, and information regarding the potential physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral risks of working in traumatic situations. Several organizations across the country have developed peer-based systems to cope with these issues that result from spending time at the scene of traumatic events.

One of the more widely used systems is Critical Incident Stress Management (Cardinal, n.d.). CISM was originally created for military veterans who suffered from post-traumatic stress-related issues following time in combat. Later the system was used by first responders such as police officers, firefighters, and emergency management technicians. Today, CISM is used in numerous organizations throughout the world to treat those who suffer after a traumatic event. There are six intervention techniques used in CISM:

1. Debriefing: a structured, small group process that seeks to reduce distress and facilitate recovery;
2. Defusing: similar to debriefing but less formal and time-consuming, provides an opportunity for participants to speak confidentially about the traumatic event with the goal of stabilizing individuals;

3. Grief and Loss Session: allows individuals or groups to grieve and react to the traumatic event while promoting a healthy environment for the future;
4. Crisis Management Briefing: a large meeting that occurs prior to and during post-traumatic events, present facts, question and answer session, and other skills and coping mechanisms for dealing with stress;
5. Critical Incident Adjustment Support: “humanitarian assistance” for groups or individuals on learning how to overcome the challenges of traumatic events; and
6. Pre-Crisis Education: Handbooks, workshops, and training seminars that include educational material on building awareness, strategies for crisis response, as well as coping skills for stressful (traumatic) situations.

(Cardinal, n.d.)

While the case has been made that journalists should receive the same training for how to cope with traumatic events on a psychological level, it should be stated that studies show some first responders suffer from post-traumatic issues such as PTSD, sleeplessness, and anxiety. As of 2004, only 34 percent of fire departments represented by the Executive Fire Officers Program at the National Fire Academy said they had taken steps necessary in preparing their departments and families for a disaster that could last multiple days (“Ready Responder Toolkit,” 2017). The percentage of newsrooms that have taken the steps to prepare their journalists for disasters (and covering them) is estimated to be even lower. Al Tompkins, senior faculty member for broadcast and online at the Poynter Institute, says that journalists suffer from the same types of traumatic stress that police officers and firefighters who respond to these events do, “yet

journalists typically receive little support after they file their stories” (Tompkins, 2003). Tompkins (2003) goes on to say that journalists are sent out on another story while emergency workers are offered counseling and debriefing services.

Lessons to Be Learned about Covering and Coping with Past Traumatic Events

Journalists are taught to keep their personal feelings and emotions out of the stories they cover, but is that realistic when covering events such as the Oklahoma City bombings, Virginia Tech Massacre, Columbine High School shooting, the September 11 terrorist attacks, or a war? Covering events in the 21st century involves an element to coverage that journalists did not have to contend with decades ago, the Internet. Social media and the audience’s demand for immediacy of news coverage requires a new type of coverage for journalists. Reporters and photographers not only have to be on the scene immediately but for longer periods of time. Today’s news cycle is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Journalists are required to cover every angle of the story on every media platform. This leads to repeated exposure to the traumatic images and content of the story that journalists must view daily as part of their job descriptions.

Columbine High School Shooting

On April 20, 1999, the world turned its eyes to Littleton, Colorado, where two students opened fire inside Columbine High School. Local journalists immediately rushed to the scene after hearing reports of a possible shooting at the high school, some even arriving before the first responders (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). Within an hour of the first shots, the entire country was glued to the television, watching the scene unfold

live. Parents scrambled at the school to see if they could get information about their children. News helicopters circled the high school as teens ran outside of the school with their hands up and crawled out of windows with cuts and scrapes on their arms and legs. One local television news reporter broke down live on the air. She was overcome with emotion, a parent herself, covering parents looking through bodies for their children. Another journalist made the comment after covering the Columbine shooting, “I’d rather cover a war than a school shooting any day” (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). Journalists are not immune to the emotional effects of the stories they cover and Columbine was no exception. A photographer for the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* recalled during the event noticing two veteran colleagues at a local television “crying” during a moment that the tragic event really hit him (*Covering Columbine*, 2001).

The local media quickly became overshadowed by the national networks that descended upon Littleton hours after the shooting. The day after, more than 500 journalists camped outside Columbine High School (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). It did not take long for the community to resent the media presence. Families, students, and staff needed time to grieve in the days following the massacre, but the media were not going away anytime soon. “I put myself, being a parent, in that role, I live in that community so it was very personal to me. I thought those parents need information and they need it fast, as much as we could give them,” said then KUSA News Director Patty Dennis (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). The media felt not only a responsibility to report on the tragedy, but to compete with other news agencies on the scene as well.

The Columbine massacre raised several issues with the media and its coverage of traumatic events. One of those issues called into question was the fact-checking that

takes place, or does not take place, during a breaking-news situation. The on-demand world that viewers desire in the 21st century does not allow for the check-first, air-second rule that guided newsrooms for decades. Columbine was a prime example of the mistakes that can be made. KUSA-TV was flooded with phone calls after going on the air live just before the midday newscast to alert the public of a shooting at the high school. One of those phone calls was from a student who called himself, “James.” This student claimed to be locked inside a classroom and reported hearing shots fired as they were happening. What the reporters on the scene were seeing seemed to be in line with this student was saying on the phone interview. KUSA was also a CNN affiliate at the time of the event and the network took the live feed of the interview as well. It didn’t take long to figure out that the two news organizations were caught in a hoax. Producers at KUSA researched the student’s name in the school directory along with the other high schools in the area, but the student did not exist. There are rules in place in news organizations to prevent such situations from occurring. For example, CNN VP at the time, David Bernkopf, said his organization’s standard is to call the interviewee back to confirm and verify who the person says he is and that he is in the location he says he is. In this breaking news situation, this was not done but is something that Bernkopf encourages every news organization to incorporate into its breaking news standards.

Research dating back to the 1940s shows that first impressions are what people remember most (Asch, 1946), and in the case of Columbine, what people were told by the media they still believed to be true, even 10 years later. Seventy percent of Americans reported following the event in 1999 (Chen, 2009). It was the top news story of the year. For example, it was reported that the two gunmen were a part of the group known

as the “Trench Coat Mafia.” This was one of the facts that was incorrectly reported and on the 10th anniversary when surveyed, people still believed the students were in the group (Chen, 2009). It was one of the first impressions that Americans received of the two teenagers, and therefore, that is what stuck with them for nearly a decade.

It was not only the media giving false information; the authorities were giving out wrong body counts. The sheriff’s department publicly released that there were 25 people killed, when in fact the number was only 15. The news organizations were not the only ones who felt an enormous sense of pressure to release information as quick as possible. This information did not need to be additionally verified as it was coming from the authorities themselves. Most of the news organizations ran with the number of the deceased and had to retract it later. Mistakes will be made because in a breaking news situation, as KUSA then general manager, Roger Ogden said, “your deadlines are every moment. You don’t have the luxury of reflection” (*Covering Columbine*, 2001).

As one reporter said, the media acted like a bunch of swarming insects feasting on the tragedy that was Columbine (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). It was not only a difficult story for journalists to cover but it also brought out the media mob. With more than 500 journalists in town for weeks, and even some for months, the competition to get the story became fierce. The community became hostile toward the media because they would not go away and intruded on their lives while they were trying to grieve. One journalist said the media reminded the community of Columbine constantly, which made it impossible to move on (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). Reporters feared for their lives as passersby would threaten them if they would not leave (*Covering Columbine*, 2001).

Massé (2011) discussed a local Denver reporter, Caren Boddie, who covered the shootings as a part-time journalist. She recalled how it became her entire world and eventually led her to leave her job in journalism. The public's distrust of the media was justified. Not only were the stories she wrote taking a toll on her emotionally, but being a member of the media meant people began to look at her differently. It was too much for this resident of Littleton. She commented that the journalists who fly in from cities such as New York cover the story and return home. Whether people in the community are upset with them has little effect on them. However, when one lives in the community it is entirely different.

The editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, John Temple, was faced with a difficult decision after the initial shooting. He had to decide whether to run a photo that showed a deceased teenage male lying on the sidewalk. He admitted that if it were his child, that he would recognize him (*Covering Columbine*, 2001). He was unaware as to whether the boy's parents had been notified. He decided to run the photo, as it also showed a police officer protecting students behind a police car. The newspaper was criticized over running the photo and Temple later found out that the parents had indeed not been notified by authorities that their son had been killed when they saw the newspaper (Simpson & Coté, 2006). Surprisingly, four years later, Temple received a private letter from the mother of that student who was lying dead on the sidewalk in the photo. "I'm asking you to please continue to have the courage to print the difficult pictures and the fortitude to take the criticism of your readers for doing so" (Simpson & Coté, 2006).

September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks

The media may have been criticized for the coverage of the Columbine massacre, in *American Psyche Reeling from Terror Attacks* (2002) shows that 89 percent of Americans gave a positive rating to the media immediately after the September 11 terrorist attacks. A journalism “think tank” called the Project for Excellence in Journalism, which is affiliated with the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism (and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts), conducted a 2003 study that looked at the media coverage during mid-September, November, and December 2001 and found that factual information and solid sources contributed to the high approval ratings by Americans around the September 11 attacks (“Journalism & Media Staff, 2002). This was a sharp contrast to the negative perception the media received because of the coverage in Littleton, Colorado. The study revealed that the coverage between September 13 and September 15, 2001, was only 25 percent “analysis, opinion and speculation-including even the talk shows and the opinion pages” (“Journalism & Media Staff, 2002). Yet, speculation was difficult to resist when journalists were covering the events unfolding live on the air with continuous coverage. There were no officials to give press conferences in the beginning or witnesses on the scene to describe what they were seeing. The journalists watched along with the world as the cameras captured the second plane crash into the second World Trade Center tower. Speculation was almost unavoidable.

Below is an excerpt from the CNN transcripts from the network's live coverage immediately following the first attack:

“These pictures are frightening indeed. These are just minutes between each other. So naturally, you will guess, and you will speculate, and perhaps ask the question: If some type of navigating equipment is awry, the two commuter planes would run into the World Trade Centers at the same time” (“CNN transcripts,” 2001).

The traditional roles of journalists are fundamentally different during breaking news situations, especially in a national crisis such as the September 11 terrorist attacks (Reynolds & Barnett, 2003). The Reynolds and Barnett (2003) study examined the roles reporters played while breaking news was unfolding during terrorist attacks and looked at how a possible change in traditional reporting routines might affect the type of information that is given. Researchers examined ABC’s, CBS’s, NBC’s, and CNN’s news coverage during the September 11 attacks. Ten percent of the time, journalists (as a whole) served as experts and social commentators (Reynolds & Barnett, 2003). However, nearly one-third of the time on the air acting in the traditional journalist role, personal references were used (Reynolds & Barnett, 2003). All four networks reported rumors 84 times in just the first five hours of live coverage (Reynolds & Barnett, 2003). Many of the networks admitted during the same time span that due to the nature of the breaking news situation, general standards were not being met and there was a greater margin of error. Reynolds and Barnett (2003) provide the following example in their study from the CBS transcript from September 11, 2001:

“CBS News Anchor Dan Rather: However, we keep emphasizing no one knows who’s responsible for what happened today. And you may want to note that on previous occasions, first reports about who is responsible for what turned out to

be erroneous. It will be many hours, perhaps days and weeks, before it can be sorted out who, in fact, was responsible for these actions today.”

Reynolds and Barnett (2003) offered an explanation for journalists acting as social commentators during the coverage of the September 11th attacks: it was due to the fact that it occurred during the morning news shows. Morning news programs tend to be more feature-content focused than those in the evenings. Yet, Reynolds and Barnett (2003) found in their study that the morning show anchors were not responsible for more social commentary than their evening anchor counterparts. Assessing the quantitative data by networks, Reynolds and Barnett (2003) found CBS journalists were the most traditional journalists, while NBC journalists spent most of the time as social commentators.

Previous media coverage on terrorism provided a foundation for journalists on September 11 (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006). It did not take long after the attacks for the media to draw the conclusion that it was the work of a “well-known terrorist” (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006). Terrorism has been a significant topic for the news media for decades. September 11 was an event unlike any that journalists have covered before; however, it was not the first act of terrorism on American soil. Covering events such as the 1993 World Trade Center attack and the Oklahoma City bombing prepared news organizations, as much as one could prepare, for the September 11 attacks. The public need for information on that day, re-emphasized the need for the news media. “It is likely that the terrorist assaults on New York and Washington and their aftermath were the most watched made-for-television production ever” (Nacos, 2003, p.28).

September 11, 2001, took an emotional toll on the journalists who covered the attacks. Feinstein (2003) found that journalists after the September 11 attacks, regardless of their beat, had higher symptoms of PTSD than journalists before the attacks. He even compared the post-September 11 journalist PTSD profiles to that of war correspondents (who are considerably higher than domestic journalist-see *war correspondents*).

Virginia Tech Massacre

The massacre that took place on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) on April 16, 2007, seemed to have played out similarly to that of Columbine. In *Twice Victimized: Lessons from the Media Mob at Virginia Tech*, Walsh-Childers, Lewis, and Neely, (2008) studied the interactions between the journalists who covered the shootings and the sources they interviewed. Once again, the major network news organizations, along with hundreds of other journalists from around the country, were on the scene by the time the nightly news shows began. The university had the media set up in the same location, the Inn at Virginia Tech, where the families were directed to go upon arriving. This made getting access to sources much easier for journalists, given the proximity, but only increased the tensions for those grieving. Within two days there were signs on campus telling the media to go away (Walsh-Childers et al., 2008).

The Walsh-Childers et al. (2008) study found several questionable actions by the journalists who covered the story. First, Derek O'Dell, a student shot in the arm, was asked by MSNBC for an interview just two hours after being shot (Walsh-Childers et al, 2008). A British journalist lied to officials about having a camera in her bag while trying

to sneak into the hospital to get an interview with an injured student (Walsh-Childers et al., 2008). Officials searched her bag after she told them it was a breast pump. Families of the victims who were killed felt as if the journalists, especially the younger ones, had no compassion for them and were simply there to get a story. Journalists would knock on the door all hours of the night. Moments of grief, meant to be private, quickly became anything but private.

Everyday journalists, primarily editors and news directors, are faced with deciding which visual elements, whether video or photos, to air or print. However, in crisis situations such as the Virginia Tech shootings, these decisions are more important as they call the integrity and ethics of the news organization into question. Literature indicates that the editors decide what coverage is best for the community along with what information is available (Fahmy, 2005). As noted previously, editors and news managers have aired or published content that some viewers find to be disturbing, which asks the question: are journalists making decisions truly based upon the interests of the audience? Most studies have focused on the perception of the general population when it comes to the questionable content. To gain a more accurate look at how the visual coverage impacts those directly affected by traumatic events, Fahmy and Roedl (2010) conducted a qualitative study interviewing the families of the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings. Researchers found the victims' families needed less coverage of the violence overall, but more investigative reporting that covered every angle of the story (Fahmy & Roedl, 2010). Families also wanted to see journalists cover what possible solutions to prevent such events from happening in the future (Fahmy & Roedl, 2010).

There was something different about the Virginia Tech tragedy for the media that had not been seen before. The shooter sent NBC News a videotape, manifesto, and pictures in between killing the first two people in the residential hall and the remaining 30 in an engineering building (Johnson, 2007). NBC News decided to air the material as well as share it with other media outlets (Walsh-Childers et al., 2008). The photos did not include the killings that took place and the manifesto was difficult to read according to NBC management. However, it did refer to the gunmen in the Columbine High School shooting, calling them “martyrs,” (Johnson, 2007). One of the questions people ask when a tragedy such as this occurs is why did or how could someone commit such a violent act? That was the thinking behind NBC’s decision to release some of the material that the shooter had sent the news organization. Then NBC News President Steve Capus went on the *Today Show* to justify the network’s decision after harsh criticism on social media. “Ever since we heard the first reports about what happened on that campus, we all wanted to know — and I’m not sure we’ll ever fully understand — why this happened, but I do think this is as close as we’ll come to having a glimpse inside the mind of a killer” (Johnson, 2007).

The story became even more about the shooter than the victims themselves, which again, only created more outrage and animosity toward the media covering it. The national media focused a great deal of attention on the materials sent to NBC that little was done on what the campus was doing to come together to begin the healing process. O’Dell, the student shot in the arm, said he did about 15 interviews the first night and journalists were “desperate” to talk with him. One journalist even pulled his arm, the one he had been shot in, trying to get him to talk (Walsh-Childers et al.,

2008). Most journalists acted in a professional manner, but there were the few who did not and tarnished the reputation of all media personnel. A senior member of the University Relations office attributed the unprofessional misconduct to the 24-hours news cycle and the pressure associated with it (Walsh-Childers et al., 2008).

The untrained collegiate journalists at the *Collegiate Times* (CT), the student newspaper on campus, were thrown into trauma reporting and may have outshined the “outside” media (Massé, 2011, p.120). Massé (2011) says these student journalists were praised for their efforts and ethical decision-making while covering the stories. The adviser of the newspaper provided a 30-minute workshop on how to contact, respectfully, the families of the students who had been killed or injured (Massé, 2011). The reporting from the students focused on celebrating the lives of the 32 students and faculty members killed, instead of the shooter.

While the coverage may have been impressive for student journalists, the emotional effects also had a major impact. Editor-in-chief at the time of the shootings, Amie Steele, described to the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma in April 2009, that it wasn't until she interviewed a student of the French professor who was killed, the day after her funeral, hearing the stories and the emotional student talk about her, that she herself truly broke down and the enormity of the situation sunk in (Steele, 2009). “At the end of the day, I think it is important for journalists to come to terms with the grave things they may see while covering a story—not only for their sanity, but for their reporting (Steele, 2009). While it is important for you to tell that person's story, your health is important too” (Steele, 2009). Another student journalist, Bobby Bowman, wrote in the same Dart Center article online about the lessons he learned from covering the traumatic event:

1. Don't forget to take time to breathe– you have a job to do but your health is just as important;
2. Stay organized– the newsroom will get chaotic but do your best to stay on task and keep it organized;
3. Unity– have one unified voice as a news staff;
4. Emergency plans– create and practice an emergency plan for your newsroom so that you can get to all newspaper staffers and get the story out as soon as possible;
5. Staying is optional– everyone is going to react differently to the traumatic event, so staying should be optional. Remember, these are student journalists who need to grieve, too; and
6. Take your time and do it with pride– Your story will be looked at by your community now and for years to come. Take your time when writing your stories and have a sense of pride that your community expects and deserves.

(Steele, 2009)

Not Naming the Killers

One of the issues that has been raised with media coverage of mass casualty situations is identifying the killer(s) and repeatedly focusing on the individual(s). As with the NBC decision to air the videos sent to the news organization's headquarters in New York, journalists are faced with ethical and journalistic dilemmas on what to cover. The killers in these mass attacks have various reasons for committing the acts, but oftentimes, it is to gain fame or notoriety. In the case of the Virginia Tech shooter, he mailed photos of himself to NBC News so that they could be used on-air. He referenced

in his manifesto the killers of the Columbine massacre. With mass shootings on the rise in recent years, there has been a plea to the media to “black out the names and faces of killers” (Kennicott, 2015). Many of those behind this movement are the families of the victims in the recent mass shootings. Tom and Caren Teves lost their son Alex on July 20, 2012, in the Aurora, Colorado, theater shooting. The grieving parents started the No Notoriety Campaign, urging the media to not use the names or faces of the shooters. The campaign’s website links the desire for recognition or research to previous killings with the following:

- Virginia Tech – referenced the Columbine killers and mailed video, photos, and manifesto to NBC News.
- Northern Illinois University – studied Virginia Tech and Columbine shootings.
- Tucson Safeway – “researched ‘famous’ political assassins.”
- Aurora, Colorado Theater – told psychiatrist: “felt he couldn’t make mark on the world with science but could become famous by blowing up people.”
- Sandy Hook Elementary – researched the Northern Illinois University shooting, had obsession with Columbine shooting, and had a list of mass murderers with number of kills.
- Isla Vista – uploaded video online and sent manifesto to news.
- German Wings Crash– (pilot) told girlfriend, “one day I will do something that will change the system and then everyone will know my name and remember it.”
- Lafayette theater – thanked the shooter in Charleston for the “wake up call.”
- Roanoke WDBJ – referenced Charleston shooter, posted video of execution online, faxed letter to ABC News, and

- Umpqua Community College – wrote on his blog “I have noticed that so many people like him are all alone & unknown, yet when they spill a little blood, the whole world knows who they are. A man who was known by no one, is now known by everyone.” “His face splashed across every screen, his name across the lips of every person on the planet, all in the course of one day. Seems like the more people you kill, the more you’re in the limelight.”

(“Our Challenge to the Media,” n.d.)

Recent literature shows that mass shootings may be contagious (Towers, Gomez-Lievano, & Mubayi, 2015). Researchers found that when less than four people are killed (with at least three people being shot), that the media tends to only locally cover it. These crimes did not have the same “contagious” effect that those covered by the national media did (Towers et al., 2015). Data showed that once there was a mass shooting covered by the national media, it was 30 percent more likely that a similar crime would be committed within 13 days (Towers et al., 2015). Researchers say the killers are seeking infamy and notoriety.

Based upon this recent study, the FBI, Texas State University, and the I Love U Guys Foundation joined the efforts of the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training Center (ALERRT) housed at TSU to create the Don’t Name Them campaign (“Do Not Name Them,” n.d.). Like the No Notoriety campaign, the mission is to get the media to shift the focus during coverage from the shooters to the victims. The ALERRT Center has trained more than 80,000 law enforcement officers around the country since 2002 in active shooter situations (“Do Not Name Them,” n.d.). Now, it is working to spread this new message to the media while recognizing that the First Amendment of the

Constitution still applies, which means it would have to be a voluntary act or judgment call on each news organization.

Covering Wars

Covering a major war abroad as a journalist adds additional risks and pressures to the job. Journalists who cover wars are often referred to as war correspondents. Research shows that these reporters and photographers who work for the major news organizations around the world must undergo safety training (McMahon, 2010). This physical training includes learning first aid, how to wear flak jackets, learning about the hazards of the environment they are going into and how to stay safe physically (McMahon, 2010). However, what most of the training for these correspondents does not include is trauma training. A war correspondent, who covered the Iraq War with no prior training, says the best thing journalists can do to prepare for covering traumatic events is to care for themselves emotionally before the tragedy strikes so that they can think clearly and do the best work (Schmickle, 2007).

The Iraq War brought a new type of phenomenon to journalism, “embedded journalism” (Feinstein & Nicolson, 2005). Journalists were embedded with military units as they fought the war in Iraq. This was the first time that journalists were on the front lines with the men and women of the military. While there was a sense of security having the military alongside the journalists, Feinstein and Nicolson (2013) studied whether this new phenomenon may have had negative impact on the psychological well-being of the journalists. In this study, 85 journalists who covered the first phase of the Iraq War participated. Nearly 15 percent of the journalists self-reported that they had symptoms of

PTSD (Feinstein & Nicolson, 2013). Seven percent were “deemed to be moderately depressed” while a third of the participants exhibited signs of being overall psychologically distressed (Feinstein & Nicolson, 2013).

These findings are consistent with the 2002 study by Feinstein, Owen, and Blair. War journalists had higher rates of psychopathology, specifically, alcohol consumption and depression rates, than those who did not cover a war. These journalists revealed they had all been shot at multiple times, three wounded, three has close colleagues who were killed while on assignments together, two were involved in mock executions, two had bounties on their heads, one survived a plane crash where others died, and two had close colleagues commit suicide upon returning home (Feinstein et al., 2002). The journalists who showed post-traumatic symptoms revealed social difficulties including struggling to adjust to a civilian life by engaging in relationships with friends and family. Other effects included alcohol use and social avoidance. As with any journalists who covers traumatic events, war journalists were not likely to seek professional help for the effects of the war. Feinstein et al. (2002) refer to the lack of treatment for PTSD, depression, and alcohol abuse sought by war journalists as a “culture of silence.”

With the physical and psychological dangers that pose a threat to war correspondents, some may wonder what drives them to continue to embed themselves with American troops on the front lines. CBS correspondent, Edward Murrow has been quoted several times saying that to be able to write about the dangers, the journalists must experience it for themselves (Massé, 2011). Journalists are exposed to the same dangers that soldiers are, injury and death, when reporting during war. Thirty-nine percent of the journalists who have died since 1992 were covering war-related stories when they were

killed (“1228 Journalists Killed Since 1992,” n.d.). The majority, 174, of them were killed in Iraq (“1228 Journalists Killed Since 1992,” n.d.). Per the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2015, there were 199 journalists who were imprisoned.

Massé (2011) says there is a disconnect if the final product that the audience sees is different from what the war correspondent witnesses. He recounts several war correspondents’ memories and reactions to their time spent on the frontlines. Journalists describe watching troops get injured and killed, insurgents blown up, cities destroyed, victims lay untended to in hospital beds because of a lack of antibiotics and painkillers, and having the fear of being kidnapped or killed themselves (Massé, 2001). Despite the danger, these war correspondents continue to brave the frontlines to bring Americans the information they desire about the wars. Regardless of whether the public views the media as a “mob” or a viable source of information, studies show that in times of crisis, people will turn to the media, television in particular, to get confirmation and further details (Riffe & Stovall, 1989).

Oklahoma City Bombing

On April 19, 1995, 168 people lost their lives and another 853 were injured when a man detonated a bomb in a truck outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City (Simpson & Coté, 2006). It was the deadliest terrorist attack the United States had ever seen (Bolton, 2016). The blast happened only a few blocks away from *The Daily Oklahoman* newspaper. One reporter was at the post office when the blast occurred and was subsequently injured (Simpson & Coté, 2006). Reporters and photographers could not only feel the newspaper building shake, but could see the smoke

billowing into the air seconds after the bomb exploded (Simpson & Coté, 2006). The proximity of the newspaper facility to the federal building provided quick access to the scene. However, that quick access also brought journalists closer to the horrific images that awaited them below the rubble.

Charles Porter IV, an aspiring photographer in Oklahoma City at the time of the attack, recalled that April day on a podcast for the Newseum. He heard the blast and ran to his car to grab his camera. He recalls stepping on glass, saying it was “everywhere” (Fox Jr., 2015). He described photographing the front of a building, looking as if it had been “shaved off,” a man whose clothes were saturated in blood, and a policeman running down the street handing off an infant to a fireman (Fox Jr., 2015). Porter said the infant the firefighter was holding did not survive (Fox Jr., 2015). The mother of the child found Porter and thanked him because she did not have to wonder if her child, who had been in the daycare center at the Federal Building, was dead or alive like the hundreds of other parents (Fox Jr., 2015).

Porter took his photos immediately to the director of photography at the University of Central Oklahoma. He was a recent graduate and was unsure what to do with the photos once he took them. The director told him not to waste time with him, that he needed to take his photos to the Associated Press. The director provided that much needed guidance for Porter at the time. This was not instruction that Porter received as part of a trauma training program as a collegiate journalist. Porter won the Pulitzer Prize for Photography for his photos taken in the immediate aftermath.

Penny Owen, a reporter at the time of the attack for *The Daily Oklahoman*, warns other journalists that a story of this magnitude can define a career, but the key is to not let

that story “define your life” (Steffens et al, 2012). Owen, a Society for Professional Journalists and Associated Press award winner for her coverage of the bombing, is not alone in battling the challenges of covering traumatic events while attempting to avoid any psychological impact. A longtime photographer at the Kansas City NBC affiliate, Tim Twyman, cautions other journalists who are repeatedly exposed to traumatic events to not “bottle those negative emotions up” (Massé, 2011). Twyman says there is a limit to just how much one person can take and suggests that journalists find a creative way to balance their lives between the tragedies they cover at work and their personal lives (Massé, 2011).

The National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder conducted a study of children in grades 6 through 12 in Oklahoma City immediately after the bombing. The study revealed that two-thirds of the children reported having symptoms of PTSD in the seven weeks after the attack. These children also reported having watched repeated television coverage of the bombings. The researchers concluded that watching television coverage related to the attacks could have contributed to increased symptoms of PTSD (Bolton, 2016).

Some of the rescue workers who treated the injured on the scene and assisted in the removal of the deceased were studied by North et al. (2002), and were found to have minimal effects from the disaster. One hundred and eighty-one firefighters were studied after the bombing to determine if the mental well-being was affected. While a small number reported having symptoms of PTSD, the majority did not (North et al., 2002). The firefighters in the study suffered less post-traumatic stress than the bombing survivors. North et al. (2002) provided several reasons for this finding. The first could

be attributed to the fact that firefighters suffered less injuries in the blast. Another reason could have been due to their work involving traumatic exposure as well as mental health education and debriefing prior to as well as after the bombing (North et al., 2002). This type of mental health education and debrief sessions were not typically offered to another set of first responders, journalists.

While PTSD was not a significant concern of the results in North et al.'s study, the consumption of alcohol was prevalent. The National Center for PTSD says that people who suffer from PTSD are more likely to have drinking problems and the two are usually linked together (Bolton, 2016). Almost half of the firefighters in North et al.'s (2002) study qualified for a "lifetime diagnosis of alcohol abuse/dependence," (North et al., 2002). The researchers cite the limitations of the study including the possibility that the firefighters were fearful of seeking professional treatment for post-traumatic symptoms for fear that they would not remain anonymous, the participants were self-reporting during the study, and tendencies for the firefighters to present themselves as "macho" could have increased their denial in how well they were coping with the psychological effects of the trauma (North et al., 2002). While journalists were not participants in this study, one could conclude based upon the notion that journalists are first responders, that journalists could have had similar reactions based upon having had similar experiences of covering the Oklahoma City bombing.

It was not just those who were at the scene who were affected by the bombing, but those who watched it unfold on television as well. The media coverage could have played a role in the development of psychological effects on those who watched it. Unlike other traumatic events, the media were used as a resource for generating vital

information to the public. Much like the other traumatic events discussed, the national media quickly arrived upon Oklahoma City after the bombing. The Oklahoma City Police Department quickly set up a media command center, later to be known as “Satellite City” (“Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum,” n.d.). Public information officers from all the local agencies collaborated to work with the media including the local police, fire, and highway patrol. The idea was not only to get information out to the public quickly but to limit the rumors that were surfacing as well. The media were helpful in assisting rescue workers and officials in distributing critical information such as where families could get information regarding their loved ones involved in the bombing as well as the materials that the public could donate for those affected (“Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum,” n.d.). CNN was the only national network that provided 24-hour news coverage, setting a trend for future traumatic events.

Local journalists, particularly *The Daily Oklahoman*, were praised in recent literature for their coverage of the traumatic event and the sensitivity they showed to the victims and their families. Editor Ed Kelley said there was never discussion among the staff on how to treat the victims, but rather, a sense that “these are our people and this is our community” (Simpson & Coté, 2006). A sense of community and pride among local journalists inspired greater patience than that of the national media to get interviews and stories of the victims and their families. The newspaper placed a greater emphasis on the victims instead of the bomber in their reporting. For example, instead of running traditional obituaries, the newspaper published “profiles of life” for all of those killed (Simpson & Coté, 2006).

Trauma Training in Journalism Education

Journalists have covered traumatic events for decades, but journalism education in the United States has only begun to incorporate trauma into the curriculum since 1991. Currently, there are only a handful of colleges and universities that are teaching trauma in existing courses, creating new trauma journalism courses, or developing trauma programs. The International Center for Media and the Public Agenda, part of the University of Maryland, conducted a study of 106 accredited journalism institutions around the U.S. and found that nearly three-fourths of them do not have stand-alone courses teaching collegiate journalists how to cover violence and trauma (“Teaching journalism students how to cover violence, victims and trauma,” 2006). Acts such as the Columbine massacre, the September 11 terrorist attacks, and the Virginia Tech shooting raised several concerns about how journalists should be covering these traumatic events as well as how to cope with repeated exposure to tragic events.

Research shows that most journalists will encounter some sort of violence or death early on in their career (Johnson, 1999), and those most at risk of stress while covering traumatic events are recent graduates (Simpson & Bogg; 1999; Johnson, 1999; Maxson, 2000; Young, 2011; Rees, 2007). The young journalists are often the ones who are sent to interview the families of victims (Maxson, 2000). Statistics such as these have pushed some institutions in the last three decades to start preparing journalists while still in college to face these types of situations.

Collegiate journalists have the potential to face traumatic events even before making it into the professional industry. For example, in 2006, a father shot and killed his two boys at Shepherd University before turning the gun on himself. Which media outlet was the closest to the scene? The student newspaper at Shepherd University was tasked with covering this horrific crime that took place on its campus. Nerissa Young, former member of the Society for Professional Journalists' Education Committee and former faculty adviser to *The Picket*, called the staff throughout that entire Labor Day weekend, not to check on their stories, but to check on the collegiate journalists. Young wanted to ensure that the students knew that it was "OK to be upset and grieve with the rest of the campus" (Young, 2011).

Students have covered traumatic events for decades from Columbine to Shepherd University to Virginia Tech and many others. Young says journalism schools spend time teaching the basics of journalism— how to write a lead, interviewing skills, and audio and video editing, but it is becoming even more "imperative" that educators dedicate time to the emotional effects that come with being a journalist (Young, 2011).

"Acknowledgement can't be the only step. Otherwise, journalism instructors and media managers are letting their reporters become the frogs that slowly boil to death" (Young, 2011).

In 1991, professor William Coté and psychiatrist Frank Ochberg, M.D., created the first of its kind, Victims and the Media Program at Michigan State University, to teach students how to report on victims of violence (Johnson, 1999). Victims were brought into the classroom to share their experiences with students, be interviewed, and to critique media coverage (Johnson, 1999). Soon after, the University of Washington

developed its own trauma journalism program under the guidance of professor Roger Simpson. Since then, similar programs have been created at the University of Missouri, Indiana University, and Columbia University, where the Dart Center for Trauma and Journalism is housed.

The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma was created in 1999 at the University of Washington Department of Communications by Roger Simpson and the Dart Foundation. The new center was designed to provide awards, fellowships, training programs, research studies, and serve as a resource for journalists, journalism educators and mental health professionals (“Dart Center, n.d.). Since its inception, the Dart Center has studied the link between traumatic events and journalists, from how to properly cover them to the emotional effects they have on the journalists. The Dart Center works with educators to provide the training necessary to include trauma in their respective journalism departments. The Center also works to train professional journalists all around the world. There are also two Dart Centers abroad, one in Asia and the other in Europe.

The University of Washington conducted a study in 1998 to assess the effectiveness of the trauma training journalism students had received since the program began four years earlier (Maxson, 2000). Researchers contacted alumni of the program who were working in the field of journalism and who had been through the trauma training at the university. The former students reported experiencing trauma while covering stories such as dead bodies in a car wreck, a school shooting, and concerns for their own safety while covering a story about drugs in a dangerous area (Maxson, 2000). A major issue for the journalists in the study was a conflict of values when it

comes to victims. They felt as if producers and editors did not have a sensitivity to the reporters and photographers who had to knock on the doors of people who had just lost a loved one. An education reporter told a story of how she chased down high school students after a stabbing and remembered being disgusted with herself but still wanting to get the story. The graduates commented to researchers that what they learned at the University of Washington in trauma training, such as asking if the person *wants* to talk, waiting until they are comfortable to talk, and not asking the tough questions at the beginning of the interview, was helpful when confronted with traumatic events on the job (Maxson, 2000). Although the graduates said they felt that nothing could truly prepare someone for a traumatic event, having trauma training would be valuable (Maxson, 2000).

A 2013 study of 623 faculty members from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) showed that 75 percent (per the faculty) of the institutions had no programs dedicated to teaching trauma journalism (Melki et al., 2013). Just over half of the respondents said the topic was not even given any attention in their current journalism or communications departments. However, 75 percent of the faculty thought that trauma should be taught in several courses instead of just one course. The more years a faculty member had spent as a professional journalist, the more likely he or she is to have an interest in teaching trauma. Participants felt there was a lack of supplementary material available to them to assist in teaching trauma journalism in the classroom (Maxson, 2013). Maxson (2013) furthered Johnson's (1999) research on why there is hesitation on the part of administration to incorporate trauma into the current curriculum. Results showed that in addition to the lack of money, time, and information

(Johnson, 1999), the insufficient knowledge and skill base of instructors as well as accreditation policies are preventing institutions from adding such course-work to their programs (Maxson, 2013).

One of the barriers that many journalism programs face, is that trauma journalism is not incorporated into the ACEJMC standards and subsequently takes a back seat to the existing standards. There are currently 118 journalism programs throughout the United States that are accredited by the Council (ACEJMC website). These programs have been evaluated by ACEJMC and have met the nine accreditation standards. Research shows (Maxson, 2013) that the ACEJMC standards dictates the curriculum, at least for the accredited programs. This limits a journalism program's ability to incorporate trauma journalism courses into a curriculum that follows the standards.

Australia and New Zealand's Fight for Trauma Training in Journalism

Are news organizations or institutions of higher education responsible for providing trauma training for journalists? That is just one question that Lyn Barnes (2014) sought to answer in her study of young journalists in New Zealand. Although research shows that colleges and universities in the United States need additional trauma training for journalists (Maxson, 2000; Young, 2011), students in the United States may not be as far behind as other countries.

“Perhaps it is time New Zealand caught up with many American and Australian journalism schools and introduced changes to the journalism curricula to ensure graduates are equipped with skills to recognize signs of stress in themselves as well as victims” (Barnes, 2014).

In New Zealand, there are 10 journalism schools and all are registered with The New Zealand Journalism Training Organization (NZJTO) (Barnes, 2014). As of 2011, only two of those institutions covered trauma training for more than one hour. The journalism schools in New Zealand use a set of unit standards that have been approved by the NZJTO (Barnes, 2014). Lacking from these standards is any content surrounding trauma, much like the ACEJMC standards adopted by a portion of journalism schools in the U.S. (Barnes, 2014; Seamon, 2010).

One possible explanation for why journalism schools in Australia and New Zealand do not provide the adequate training regarding trauma is that the media ownership has changed, as well as a reduction in the workforce with eliminating positions (Barnes, 2014). The factors contribute to the idea that trauma training in the professional setting is not possible because it is not “economically feasible” (Barnes, 2014). Barnes (2014) also provided the idea that teachers do not know when or even how to teach trauma. While the 2014 study by Barnes revealed that journalism schools in the U.S. were leading the pack in trauma training, an updated study by Barnes (2014) shows that most educators in New Zealand and Australia have, to some degree, integrated trauma training into their existing coursework, a lesson that American journalism schools could apply (Barnes, 2014). All journalism schools in New Zealand are members of NZJTO, making implementation of a universal trauma training easier to standardized as part of the core curriculum (Barnes, 2014). It would be difficult for the ACEJMC to implement such a standard as not all journalism schools are members of the organization.

Need for the Study

Despite the criticism of the media coverage during disasters, research (Steffens, 2012) shows that the American public will turn to the media during and immediately following traumatic events. There is a lack of trauma training for both collegiate and professional journalists. While training is an ongoing practice and should be continued in the newsroom, the discussion should begin in the classroom. Journalism and mass communications departments at colleges and universities all over the United States are teaching journalists how to research, write, and report. Institutions can produce the best and brightest journalists, who are assigned to cover an elementary school shooting on his/her first day at a television station. Will that journalist know how to ask for the interview the mother of a first-grader who was murdered without being intrusive? Will that journalist be part of the media mob that flooded Virginia Tech? Will a journalist be able to cope with the visual images he or she will see when arriving on the scene?

This study will analyze whether postsecondary institutions in the United States are incorporating trauma journalism into existing curriculum. It will also provide recommendations of what professors and media advisers should be teaching collegiate journalists about how to cover and cope with traumatic events based upon the experiences of journalists who have covered traumatic events.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

The literature review presented earlier in this dissertation on educating collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events was extremely limited. While research exists on professional journalists covering such events, there has been a lack of scholarship regarding students of higher education in the field of trauma journalism. Qualitative proved to be the research method most suited for this research study. This study did not rely solely on one source of data. Instead, the qualitative methods used were a questionnaire and a combination of an interview guide and standardized open-ended interviews. It was the desire of the researcher to collect organized responses or themes that cut across both data sources.

Patton (2002) said qualitative research studies vary by type, purpose, and quality. It is the data collection that allows the qualitative study to take shape. Questionnaires provide research participants the opportunity to contribute to the study but to do so anonymously. Questionnaires also allow participants the extended time to think about the answers they would like to provide and can be completed at their convenience (Kara, 2012). Researchers use questionnaires to get in-depth data from participants in a quick manner.

This study used questionnaires from faculty members to learn how colleges and universities are using trauma journalism in their existing curriculum. The questionnaires

consisted primarily of open-ended questions to allow the researcher to “understand the world as seen by the respondents,” (Patton, 2002, p. 21). This is a powerful tool for qualitative studies. The longer, more detailed answers in this qualitative questionnaire allowed for greater analysis with a variety of content.

The interviews provided greater detail and allowed for participants to discuss specific traumatic events they covered as journalists. These generated various perspectives of the participants. Weiss (1994) says through interviews, researchers are able to gain access to the observations of others, learning about places “we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived,” (p.1). According to Maxwell (2013), interviews provide information that could be missed in simply conducting observations and allows for greater depth than questionnaires alone. These interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way. The researcher presented predetermined open-ended questions during the interview with the opportunity to further explore responses.

Open coding of responses was used for both the questionnaire and the interviews. Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined open coding as the analytical process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data. Open coding was chosen for this qualitative study because it allowed the researcher to take data and break it down into various parts and closely examine and compare for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

Chapter 1 described the purpose of this qualitative study. However, to reiterate, this exploratory qualitative study sought to examine if a need existed for trauma courses or programs in existing journalism programs at colleges and universities. Covering traumatic events is one of the responsibilities of journalists (Simpson & Coté, 2006). The number of trauma programs at colleges and universities that have existing journalism programs is very limited. Incorporating how to properly cover traumatic events with sensitivity to survivors and victims' families along with the potential psychological effects that accompany covering such events, has not been integrated into most journalism programs in the U.S. for several reasons. This study will seek to discover the reasons for limited integration as well as provide recommendations for what should be taught in such trauma journalism programs and courses, based upon interviews with professional journalists who have covered traumatic events.

Freinkel, Koopman, and Spiedel (1994) discovered a link between post-traumatic stress disorder and journalists, shedding light on the psychological dangers that journalists are exposed to when covering traumatic events. After the release of this historic study, news organizations around the world developed training programs for journalists within their respective organizations who may suffer from post-traumatic stress related issues after covering a traumatic event. Despite the creation of these training programs, a stigma lingers among professional journalists when it comes to seeking help for psychological issues.

The Freinkel et al. (1994) study sought professional journalists who had covered traumatic events for a news organization. For the purpose of this study, the researcher

wanted to explore why this stigma still exists in today's news organizations, along with how, if any, of the professional journalists interviewed had received trauma training at either the collegiate or professional level.

This study strived to ascertain how many colleges and universities are integrating trauma into their journalism programs. The study also sought to find how these colleges and universities are incorporating trauma training into their existing journalism curriculum in an attempt to provide other journalism schools with a foundation for potentially implementing such courses. It also explored how students are learning to cover trauma, specifically regarding interviewing survivors and victim's families. In addition, the study sought insight into how journalism faculty members are educating students on how to cope with the psychological effects that comes with repeated exposure to traumatic events.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cover traumatic events?
2. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cope with traumatic events?
3. How have journalism programs incorporated trauma education into their programs?
4. How have professional journalists been prepared to cover traumatic events through education or professional development?

Description of Population and Sampling Procedures

The purposeful sampling strategy is often used in qualitative inquiry and focuses on small samples of purposefully selected groups (Patton, 2002). As part of this qualitative research study, the purposeful sampling strategy was used as a means of acquiring interview participants. Snowball sampling is a technique where participants assist the researcher in finding other participants (Kara, 2012). Snowball sampling was used to connect the researcher with additional participants. These participants were professional journalists who had covered at least one traumatic event. These individuals were chosen from the following groups: alumni of the DART Center Oschberg fellows, Reporters Without Borders, the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, A Culture of Safety Alliance, the Kentucky Press Association, College Media Association, personal references, and referrals.

The second group of participants used for this study was faculty members who teach collegiate journalists. The individuals were faculty members at various colleges and universities throughout the United States who teach in the area of journalism and mass communications. This group of participants took an anonymous questionnaire and were given the option to disclose their college or university if desired. No participants chose to disclose that information.

A link to the questionnaire along with a description detailing the research study and a request for participation was sent to the public relations director for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), headed in Columbia, South Carolina. The public relations director posted the link, description, and request to the AEJMC Facebook and Twitter pages. The AEJMC Facebook page had 3,169 people

who followed the page at the time. The AEJMC Twitter page had 8,611 followers. While it could not be determined, who follows these social media outlets of the AEJMC, it was predicted that most the followers are AEJMC members. AEJMC has seven categories of membership. The categories include regular members (faculty members), associate members (professionals), adjunct members, student members, retired members (retired faculty), international members (international faculty), and spouse members (members who qualify as a regular member but are married to a regular member).

The only member categories that the questionnaire did not specifically target were the associate members and the student members. The description and request for participants clearly stated that the study calls for faculty members to participate. Also, the questionnaire had a question for participants to provide their job title, which allowed the researcher to eliminate those who may have taken the questionnaire but were not in the desired population of the study.

This organization was chosen for three reasons for this study. The first reason was because the researcher was a member of this organization and had access to the resources in which it offers. Second reason the AEJMC is a well-established and prestigious organization among the journalism education community. Third, it allowed access to faculty members from accredited and non-accredited journalism programs throughout the United States. Using AEJMC members allowed the researcher to target faculty members and not journalism programs, which allowed data analysis of accredited and nonaccredited programs based upon the results of the questionnaire.

Convenience sampling was used in selecting the Broadcast Education Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C. BEA is an organization that was used as a resource for the questionnaire was the Broadcast Education Association (BEA). The researcher was a member of this organization as well, and had access to multiple Facebook groups in which BEA members were a part of. BEA has several categories of members as does AEJMC. The categories include individuals, institutional, corporate, and student. The individual members include faculty members, industry professionals, and emeritus members (retired professors over 65 years of age). The individual faculty members who were BEA members were targeted for this research study. The link to the questionnaire, the description of the study, and a request for faculty participants were posted on the main BEA Facebook page, which had 1,132 members on the public group. It was also posted in the BEA- Interactive Media & Emerging Technologies Division (IMET) public group's Facebook page, which has 91 members. The questionnaire, description of study, and request for participants were also posted in the BEA District 3's Facebook page for the 31 members of that closed group to view. Posting to these BEA social media pages provided greater opportunity for exposure to the research study for potential participants.

The final organization used to seek participants for this study was the College Media Association/Associated Collegiate Press's summer advisor workshop participants. This group came together in the summer of 2016 for a week-long workshop for collegiate newspaper advisors. The group established a Facebook page as a means to share information among the faculty members who participated in the workshop. This

researcher posted the description of study and a link to the questionnaire on the CMA/ACP summer workshop Facebook group page.

Description of Risk, Voluntary Participation, Confidentiality, and Anonymity

This study received the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Murray State University on November 2, 2016. This study did not present a risk to faculty members participating in the study by completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire did not ask for identifying information and, therefore, cannot be traced by to any one participant. However, participants were offered the opportunity to provide syllabus or course descriptions that could have been an identifier. The interviews did pose a potential discomfort by asking participants to recall situations in which they were involved in covering traumatic events. All participants were given an informed consent (see Appendix A) that displayed the purpose of the study, procedures and duration, risks and discomforts, benefits, confidentiality, and the withdrawal process. Participants of both instruments were required to sign the informed consent prior to participating in the study.

The names of the participants in this study were not used in reporting and analysis of this study unless permission was granted. Any publication resulting from this study would not include names of the participants unless specifically allowed by the research participant. Research records will be stored securely for three years following the study on the researcher's computer on campus. Only the researcher and faculty mentor will have access to the records.

Description of Research Instruments

Professional journalists were interviewed for this research study, while faculty members were administered a questionnaire. The interviews were conducted via telephone due to a lack of funds for traveling to the various locations of the professionals. The journalists were spread throughout the United States and a few could have potentially been overseas on assignment at the time interviews were conducted. The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the journalists between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. central standard time from October 15, 2016 to January 26, 2016. The interviews will be scheduled in 30 minute increments in order to best utilize the time of the participants of the study.

There were 11 standardized questions that were used to guide the conversation. However, follow-up questions were needed, depending upon what the professional journalists had to say in the interview. The researcher asked the journalist to disclose their name, job title, employer (example: NBC or NBC affiliate), and location for the researcher's organizational purposes only. This information was not used in the final analysis of the research study unless the journalists provides consent at the time of the interview. A sample list of the questions is provided below while the exhaustive list of the sample questions that guided the interviews can be found in Appendix B:

1. What traumatic event(s) have you covered as a professional journalist?
2. Did you receive trauma training prior to covering the traumatic event?
3. Did the training prepare you to cover the traumatic event?

4. What training do you think collegiate journalists should receive as part of their studies?

The questionnaire was developed to answer research questions 1, 2, and 4. This will allow the researcher to assess whether collegiate journalists were being educated through current journalism curriculum, how to cover traumatic events, especially with sensitivity and respect for survivors and victim's families. If students were being educated in this area, then to what extent were they receiving this specialized training? The questionnaire also helped to identify whether collegiate journalists were being trained in the classroom to cope with the psychological effects of covering traumatic events, particularly, post-traumatic stress related illnesses, and if so, to what extent. Faculty members had the option to participate anonymously in the study, unless they chose to disclose identifying information when sharing syllabi and course descriptions with the researcher. However, no participants chose to share this information.

The questionnaire was designed for faculty members who were teaching in the field of journalism and mass communications at colleges and universities across the United States. It was intended to reach faculty members at both schools whose journalism programs are accredited and not accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). This allowed the researcher to assess whether schools that are following the ACEJMC accreditation standards as a guide for curriculum were more or less likely to have incorporated trauma journalism into its existing curriculum.

While the questionnaire had some closed-ended questions that sought to identify whether the faculty member participants were already teaching trauma courses or were affiliated with colleges or universities that had trauma journalism programs, this was not a quantitative research study, but rather a qualitative one. The focus of the study was on gathering information from the interviews with professional journalists to assess what training is or is not being provided and what journalists who have covered traumatic events believe students should be learning at the collegiate level. The questionnaire from faculty participants sought to discover what was currently being taught in relation to trauma journalism at the collegiate level. The researcher wanted to explore what the students were learning about the psychological effects that repeated exposure to traumatic events, like those covered in the journalism profession, can have on physical and mental health.

A sample of the questions in the questionnaire are provided below. The entire list can be found in Appendix C:

1. Do you teach a trauma-related course in your department?
2. Does your department offer a trauma-related course? If so, please provide the course name and description.
3. Does your college or university have a trauma journalism (or related) program?
4. If your college or university does not have a trauma journalism program, why?

Procedures for Data Collection

For this study, the researcher used a combination of an interview guide and the standardized open-ended interview (Patton, 2002) process with professional journalists. The interview guide approach requires the researcher to prepare in advance of the interview an outline that “increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent,” (Patton, 2002, p. 349). The researcher in the interview guide approach had topics and issues outlined ahead of time but leaves room for question order and flexibility to allow the interview to be a conversation.

The standardized open-ended interview approach asks the researcher to have specific questions prepared in advance (Patton, 2002, p. 349). This approach necessitates respondents to answer the same questions and allows for the researcher to compare responses among participants. The standard open-ended interview reduces the amount of bias and influence the researcher has on the subject (Patton, 2002, p. 349). By combining these two types of qualitative interviewing techniques, it allowed the researcher to maintain consistency with the questions for comparability during coding, as well as allowed for follow-up questions to specific answers participants gave. Each professional journalist’s experience with a traumatic event is different; therefore, employing a flexible approach during the interviewing process was necessary to obtain the fullest explanation of their personal encounters.

The researcher used an audio recorder during the conducted interviews with professional journalists. The original timeframe given for the interviews to take place was October 31, 2016, to December 5, 2016. However, due to scheduling conflicts that

deadline was extended until February 28, 2017. The date change was noted by IRB and permission for extension of the deadline was approved as the study is available until November 2017.

Once the interviews were conducted, the researcher had them transcribed using the online service, GoTranscript, a professional transcription service based in Edinburgh, United Kingdom. This service was paid for by the researcher and used in order to cut down on the amount of time it takes to transcribe the interviews. The researcher went back over the transcript once received from GoTranscript to ensure accuracy. SurveyMonkey, a leading provider of web-based survey solutions used by millions of companies, organizations, and individuals, was used to disseminate the questionnaires to faculty members. A test pilot was conducted on the questionnaire to ensure clarity and validity. Lola Burnham from Eastern Illinois University agreed to serve as a test pilot for the questionnaire. The invitation to participate in the test pilot was posted in the closed Facebook group of the CMA/ACP summer workshop. Burnham was the only one who agreed to participate.

The questionnaire link was posted on the BEA, CMA/ACP, AEJMC Facebook pages. After an initial low response rate of survey participants, the researcher selected journalism programs at various colleges and universities in the United States to invite participation. Emails were sent to University of Nevada at Las Vegas, University of Southern Indiana at Evansville, Ithica University, New Mexico State University, Seton Hall University, Keene State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Montana, Missouri State University, University of Minnesota, Loyola University, University of Maine, California State University, Sacramento, University of Evansville,

Indiana University Southeast, University of Texas at Austin, University of Utah, New York University, Indiana University, University of Oregon, Valdosta State University, Western Kentucky University, Rutgers University, and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (see Appendix D).

Procedures for Data Analysis

This study utilized data from the questionnaire to analyze the similarities and differences among trauma journalism education in the United States. Upon completion of the interview transcriptions, the researcher used the qualitative software program, NVivo to code the data. NVivo helped the researcher systematically organize and analyze unstructured qualitative data. The interview transcriptions were loaded directly into NVivo.

Open coding is an analytical process “through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). Open coding was used to search for discrete parts of each of the instruments used in order to closely examine and compare for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After the concepts emerged during open coding, the researcher categorized them into more explanatory terms known as categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Axial coding is the procedure in which the researcher reassembles the data that were broken down during open coding and begins to relate the categories to subcategories “along the lines of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). During axial coding the researcher was able to explore at what point, if

any, did the categories intersect. This resulted in greater understanding of the phenomenon of trauma journalism, how it is being taught, and what professional journalists see as the material that should be covered in postsecondary education regarding the topic.

Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis

This chapter will provide the findings and analysis of this research study. The purpose of this study was to examine the need for educating collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events. The research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cover traumatic events?
2. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cope with traumatic events?
3. How have journalism programs incorporated trauma education into their programs?
4. How have professional journalists been prepared to cover traumatic events through education or professional development?

Findings: Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to gather information from faculty members who teach collegiate journalists at various colleges and universities throughout the United States. The questionnaire was sent via SurveyMonkey from November 2016 to January 2017. An invitation to participate was sent to the public relations director for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), headquartered in Columbia, South Carolina. The public relations director posted the link,

description, and request to the AEJMC Facebook and Twitter pages. The invitation was also posted on the following Broadcast Education Association Facebook pages: BEA Facebook, BEA-Interactive Media & Emerging Technologies Division, and BEA-District

3. The researcher also sought out members of the Collegiate Media Association and the Associated Collegiate Press Association through the CMA/ACP summer workshop Facebook page.

There were 17 participants who took the questionnaire. However, one was disqualified after not identifying in question one as to whether or not he or she was affiliated with Murray State University. The 16 total participants answered questions regarding their school's incorporation of trauma journalism as well as their own experience with trauma journalism. The results of this questionnaire are below.

Responses to Faculty Member Questionnaire. *Question 1: Are you a student, faculty, or staff member at Murray State University?*

Sixteen participants answered no to this question allowing them to continue with the questionnaire.

Question 2: What department do you work in at your university or college?

Two of the respondents stated they were part of a Humanities/Journalism department. Five respondents indicated they were faculty members in a Department of Communications. Seven stated they were a part of the Mass Communications and/or Journalism department. Finally, one participant stated he or she was a faculty member of an American Studies department and another answered Journalism and Media Studies.

Question 3: Select the statement below that best describes your involvement with teaching trauma journalism.

The answer choices that participants could choose for the question were:

1. I teach a trauma journalism course
2. I incorporate trauma journalism into my existing courses
3. My department offers a trauma journalism course but I am not the instructor
4. My school does not offer trauma journalism courses in its existing curriculum

Eight respondents indicated that they incorporate trauma journalism into their existing courses. Ten respondents, including two whom answered with the previous response, stated their school does not offer trauma journalism courses in its existing curriculum. No respondents indicated that they teach a trauma journalism course or that their department offers a trauma journalism course as figure 1 displays.

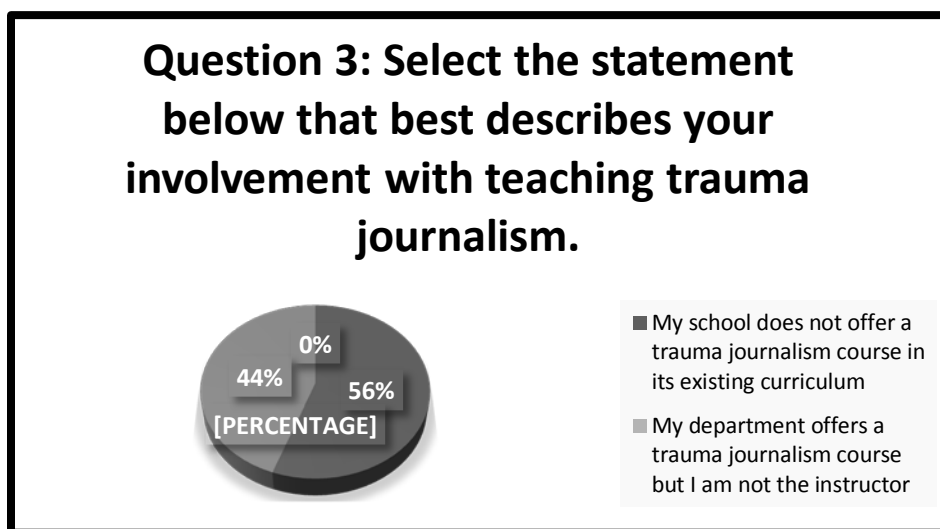


Figure 1: Question 3: Select the statement below that best describes your involvement with teaching trauma journalism.

Question 4: What courses (if any) does your college or university offer undergraduates related to trauma journalism?

Seven participants answered this question. Four of the respondents indicated that their college or university does not offer undergraduate courses related to trauma journalism. Of those four, three stated that they teach trauma journalism in one of their existing courses. The other three named the three courses that they incorporate trauma journalism: Video Production, Writing for Media, and Video for Journalists and Advanced Reporting.

Question 5: If your college or university does not offer a trauma journalism course, please indicate why.

Thirteen participants responded to this question with a variety of answers. As figure 2 shows, two respondents indicated they do not know why their college or university does not offer trauma journalism courses. Two participants stated there was not enough interest for a trauma journalism. Another said as stated in previous questions, that the material was incorporated into other journalism courses. Four participants indicated that their college or university do not offer a substantial amount of journalism courses. Either journalism is a minor and not a journalism major was not offered or they do not specialize that closely in courses. There were four responses that pointed to trauma journalism courses not being part of the accreditation standards as the reason their college or university does not offer a course. Two indicated that they were not sure why their college or university does not offer a trauma journalism course.

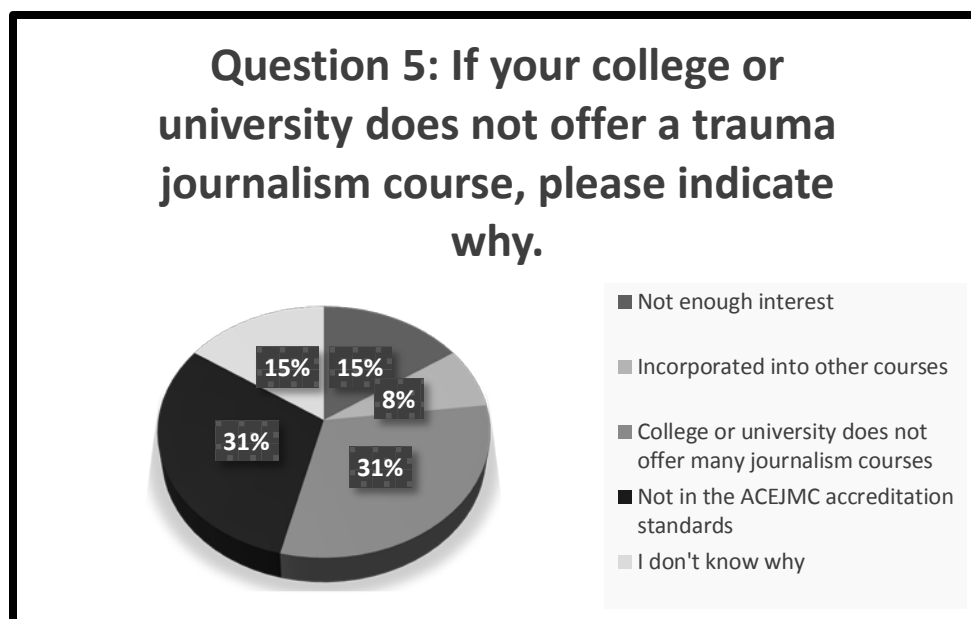


Figure 2: Question 5: If your college or university does not offer a trauma journalism course, please indicate why.

Question 6: Do you feel prepared to teach trauma journalism? Why or Why not?

Of the fourteen participants who answered this question, seven of them indicated that they did feel prepared to teach a trauma journalism course. One respondent said he or she had been a media adviser during a school shooting on campus and therefore felt prepared to teach such a course. Meanwhile, another participant indicated he or she was also the media adviser at a college or university during a school shooting but only felt somewhat prepared to teach a trauma journalism course. There were three other respondents who indicated that they felt somewhat prepared to teach a course in trauma journalism had varying reasons from limited experiences with covering traumatic events to being able to teach it as part of a class but not as a stand-alone course. Finally, there were four participants who stated they did not feel prepared to teach a trauma journalism course because they did not have experience with covering traumatic events or did not feel they had the psychology background to do so.

Table 1

Question 6: Do you feel prepared to teach a trauma journalism course? Why or Why not?

Yes	No	Somewhat/ Maybe
Yes -- because I was the media adviser during our school shooting	No, I have not had any training in trauma journalism.	Somewhat, because I experienced this first hand as a media adviser to a school with a school shooting
I think I could, but it would not be in my wheelhouse. I worked in TV newsrooms for nearly 10 years (including during Sept. 11).	No, I am not trained enough to teach the psychology of it.	To some extent. I covered some local and national traumatic stories when working in news production
Yes. 20+ years' experience in emergency medicine and as many years as a journalist. Extensive experience training medics and journalists.	No. I don't think I have the qualifications or experience covering trauma to teach this particular course.	Not as a stand-alone class. I was a journalist who experienced trauma, so I can speak to it from that point of view.
Yes. I was working at a newspaper in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina so I have some direct experience.	No real experience with it	
Yes. I was a police beat reporter for 10 years. I have an intimate knowledge of what it takes to cover trauma and the effects it can have on you.		
Yes. It helps that I'm married to a Neuropsychologist.		
Yes. It is part of the normal expected life of a traditional journalist and so is vital to be included in curriculum.		

Question 7: What are your thoughts on incorporating trauma journalism courses into journalism curriculum?

When asked this question, the majority, 86 percent of respondents felt that incorporating trauma journalism courses into existing curriculum would be useful. “The unthinkable happens, so being prepared as an adviser is important to helping you and your students get through trauma. Knowing how to prepare students will help some of them avoid dropping out of a career they would enjoy. Prepared students will experience less secondary trauma,” one participant wrote. Other responses were similar citing a rise in traumatic events on college campuses as a reason it would be useful. There was one participant who said it was a good idea in theory. However, at that particular college or university it would be difficult to get the course approved because of safety, liability and privacy concerns. This individual also said he or she could not envision an effective way to teach the course without a steady influx of trauma for students to cover. The remaining respondent said it is a good idea but he or she was uncertain if it should be a stand-alone course.

Question 8: If it is your opinion that trauma journalism should not be offered at the postsecondary level, please skip to question 10. If you do think trauma journalism should be offered at the postsecondary level, what suggestions do you have for doing so?

Fourteen participants responded to this question and a variety of answers were given. Those answers consisted of the suggestions

1. Ask a veteran trauma journalist to teach the course
2. Bring in seasoned journalists to share their experiences

3. Find a textbook to support the course.
4. The unthinkable happens, so being prepared as an adviser is important to helping you and your students get through a trauma. Knowing how to prepare students will help some of them avoid dropping out of a career they would enjoy. Prepared students will experience less secondary trauma.
5. Students need to know what they're getting into and be prepared. Otherwise, they will fail in ethical choice situations or drop out of the field.
6. I think understanding covering traumatic events as well as coping with the emotions of such are valuable skills for budding journalists
7. It should be incorporated in to any course that teaches news reporting/writing, regardless of type of media.
8. I think it would be worthwhile. We're seeing increased shootings, heroin overdoses and those sorts of things, so it seems as if there could be a need.
9. I think it's valuable to be part of courses taught. I don't know if it needs to be a stand-alone course.
10. I think it should be incorporated into all curriculum. Without it, we are sending novice journalists out unprepared for something that could drastically impact them and their careers.
11. Students must understand trauma in able to report it.

Other reactions included noting it was “very important or could be useful,” while one participant said he or she was unsure what trauma journalism was. Finally, one participant said, “I think it's a great idea in theory, but I can't envision an effective way to

teach a full course without a steady influx of trauma for students to cover. Safety, liability and privacy concerns would sink such a course proposal where I teach. Trauma drills over one or two class sessions seem practical (if ambitious).”

Question 9: If it is your opinion that trauma journalism should be offered at the postsecondary level, please explain why.

Fifteen of the participants answered this question, again with varying responses. Answers ranged from adequately preparing collegiate journalists to facing traumatic events in the professional setting to improving the distrust of the current media. The answers can be seen in the table below.

Question 10: If you teach a trauma journalism course and would be willing to share your course description and/or outline, please post below. They may also be emailed to the researcher at selder@murraystate.edu.

There were no responses to this question. There were also no materials emailed to the researcher.

Findings: Interviews

This research study used the purposeful and snowball sampling strategies as a means of amassing interview participants. These participants were professional journalists who had covered at least one traumatic event. These individuals were chosen from the following groups: alumni of the DART Center Oschberg fellows, Reporters Without Borders, the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation, A Culture of Safety Alliance,

the Kentucky Press Association, College Media Association, and personal references and referrals. In total, there were nine journalists who agreed to participate in this study and were therefore interviewed at various times between November 2016 and February 2017. All journalists were asked the same base questions. However, depending upon how the journalist answered there could have been follow up questions asked that may not have been sought in every interview. The names and positions of the journalists were asked in the first two questions. Not all journalists agreed to identify him or herself for this research study. Therefore, the first two questions were removed from this section.

Interview Results with Professional Journalists

Question 1: What traumatic event or events have you covered?

The journalists had covered myriad events. Many of the interviewees reported having covered multiple fires, car crashes, shootings, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods. One participant covered the September 11 terror attacks from another state in which an Army depot was located. “There’s all chemical and chemical weapons that kind of stuff down there,” the interviewee said. Another participant covered the death of a local high school football player who died during practice when a large piece of metal equipment fell on him and killed him. One participant was on the scene immediately after the Joplin tornado in 2011. Two of the participants covered the Aurora, Colorado Theater Shooting. One participant described what it was like being held at gunpoint in an alley with another reporter. That same participant also had a murder suspect try to turn himself into this individual but the local police department was trying to “double cross him.” The final journalist recalled a time when assisting with a car crash had a woman died in their arms.

Question 2: Did you receive trauma training prior to covering the traumatic event?

Eight of the nine journalists said they did not receive any form of trauma training prior to covering the traumatic event(s) listed in question 1. However, one journalist noted that she did receive trauma training after leaving broadcast television to work for humanitarian agencies. When Mindy Mizell worked for World Vision, she was sent all over the world to cover as the media relations director. As part of her training for her overseas deployments, she attended a series of courses. These courses included security training at a military base, CPR and first-aid training, and PTSD training. Mizell said they learned the signs and symptoms to watch out for among their co-workers as well as themselves for stress, anxiety and PTSD and the resources available. “You can call upon your HRs, health service, do you need to talk to a friend...whatever it may be. It’s just kinda educating you on those tools and resources.”

While she did not receive the training prior to covering traumatic events as a journalist and the training she received was not directly for journalists, it would have been helpful for journalists. “I do think the training itself could probably be modeled for journalists, because we’re in the same situation. I mean we’re side by side with them.”

Note, the next three questions approved for this study did not apply to the majority of participants and therefore were not asked during the interview process.

The questions were:

1. If so, who provided that training?
2. What did the training entail?
3. Did the training prepare you to cover the traumatic event?

Question 3: What training do you think collegiate journalists should receive as part of their studies?

The respondents identified below permitted the researcher to use their identity for the purpose of this study. Those respondents who did not provide such permission are referred to as participant or respondent. Chris Jung, sports editor for the Kentucky New Era newspaper said students would benefit from know what types of questions to ask during a traumatic event and how to keep your composure. “How to separate the person from the journalist, and then secondly, in that situation- what’s the appropriate line of questioning and what are those questions that should be asked when something like that happens.” Jung adds that journalists need to know what materials they can and cannot share with other media, particularly national media. When he got the call from national media about the story of the football player, he was unsure of what to do. He said journalists could learn from this situation.

Michael Driver, a photographer with the A&E television show, Cops, said when he goes to college journalism classes to speak he always tells students “the biggest thing about this business is how you can get people to respect you and open up to you, is just being a person and giving them the respect they need.” He described a time when he had to interview (along with a reporter) one of the victims of the Aurora, Colorado Theater Shooting. The woman had lost her fiancé when he threw himself on top of her to shield her from gunfire. When they knocked on her door a month after the shooting, she was not ready to talk. He politely said “Hey, whenever you’re ready to talk about this, we’d love

to tell your story. We don't wanna talk about the incident exactly, we want to talk about what kind of person he was.”

She eventually called and agreed to the interview. She suggested they go to the spot where he proposed to her. Driver said they spent about 20 minutes just talking before he even pulled out his gear. It was about getting the woman comfortable and eliminating of the nervousness, Driver said. He added that when he shoots situations like this he does not have the camera up in their face. He stays far enough back that he can get the shot but that the interviewee forgets he is there and just has a conversation with the reporter. He said that students hearing situations like this and how he handled it would be beneficial in trauma training for collegiate journalists.

Isaias Medina, a photographer at KDVR in Denver, Colorado said if he were teaching collegiate journalists about traumatic events he would teach them to be themselves and respectful. “Don't cross the line of ethics and morals.” Medina said to show the victim's families and the survivors that you are “a human being too.” He adds that students need to understand the demands of the job from the long hours to emotionally challenging stories and scenes they have to cover. He said he has become immune to dead bodies because he sees them so often. Yet, there are stories that take an emotional toll on him and the best advice he could give is to talk to someone, whether it be a doctor or a loved one.

Mizell said it is important for students to learn, especially those going into TV news, that it is more than just being on camera but what they are going to be exposed to. “You want to teach them compassion. You gotta teach people how to have empathy and how to practice that in the field.” She also adds that they need to learn “how not to

meltdown and what to look for” when it comes to PTSD. It will help them be “a better professional, a better human, reporter.”

One participant said she did not know how “you prepare for a (Hurricane) Katrina.” She suggested that going through a traumatic event and living it with the victims and survivors is the best way to train for those situations. “You can’t train to see an entire community wiped out.”

Another participant said there were a few things that would have been helpful had he known it going into covering traumatic events. The first would be first aid. While it may be “outside the realm of journalism” in some traumatic event situations “you have to be just a human and not a journalist and sometimes people need help.” Another recommendation from this interviewee would be to learn how to communicate with people in shock or may have lost a loved one, a pet or their home. “They have gone through a life changing experience. You know, the proper tone to take with them, how to tell your story but also be respectful of what they’ve gone through.”

He described the 2011 Joplin tornado he covered. He said he and his crew were immediately on the scene of the aftermath and saw it as the first responders did. “People that were injured, people that had died and were literally laying in the street.” While he knew, he had to cover it, he had to figure out how to do his job but “still have that human aspect.” He had to do his job but he saw that as a way of helping the community. He felt it was his job to tell the rest of the world about how dire the situation was in Joplin and “how desperate the city was for help.” People would come up to him and ask if he had seen their dog or “I have this really bad cut on my head, do you know where I can go

because the hospital is destroyed.” He said it would have been helpful to have better local knowledge of the area in that situation.

Canavan said students need ethics training more than trauma training. She said if you have a strong background and know how you would handle certain situations it would be easier in a traumatic situation. “What is the correct thing to do.” She talked about a story she did in 1985 on the first AIDS patient in Delaware. She was offered a glass of water from the patient. She took it and drank it because it was the polite thing to do. After the interview, her photographer asked if AIDS was contagious and her reply was “beats me.” However, it was the polite thing to do at that moment.

Manning recommended that students be prepared for the backlash that could come as part of their reporting on a traumatic event. The example he provided from his own experience was a photo he had taken of a car that was “sandwiched between two commercial trucks.” He said there was no doubt that somebody was dead in there but he could not see anything. The newspaper ran the photo and they received a call from a reader saying “You know there’s somebody in there. How can you run stuff like that?” He said it is important for students to be prepared for the phone calls and be able to stand by their reporting decisions.

Question 4: What should that training include?

This question was answered in the responses to question 3.

Question 5: What do you wish you had known before covering a traumatic event?

Most of the journalists answered this question when answering the other questions. Responses included knowing how to communicate with those in shock, knowing how to be empathetic to victims and survivors, and how to just be human.

Question 6: Anything else you feel would be beneficial to the outcome of this study?

The journalists provided various answers to this question including advice for journalism professors and students. One participant recommended that journalism professors bring in local journalists to share their experiences on the job. Canavan suggested that students always go back to their journalistic training when it comes to ethics and “choose your way of treating people.” Jung said it is difficult to know what to expect in a traumatic event and advised students when they cover a traumatic event to take “an inventory of the process and questions you do have along the way.” Mizell described a game she played with her family growing up called Scruples. The game brings up ethical questions and players have to decide how they would handle the situation. For example: you see a homeless person steal a loaf of bread. Do you tell on him or her? Mizell said this provided her insight into critical thinking about ethical situations and allowed her to talk through them with her family. She proposed that journalism educators could play Scruples to help teach students about handling ethical situations. “It’s just such a profound way of teaching exactly what we have to go through (as a journalist).”

Analysis: Emergent Themes

This study looked at how best to educate collegiate journalists to cover and cope with traumatic events. As the data revealed, there were three themes that emerged from the respondents for how to cover and cope with traumatic events. The themes for covering traumatic events were “be empathetic/human” and “ethical training.” There was only one theme for how to cope with traumatic events, which was “understanding PTSD.” These themes present a clearer picture of what journalism educators should focus on in their curriculum when it comes to teaching collegiate journalists about trauma journalism. For example, educators could provide a lesson on ethics to include how to be empathetic/human. It could also include ethical training as it relates to covering traumatic events. From learning, how to communicate with victim’s families and survivors to knowing what boundaries not to cross when covering a traumatic event, students can get the material and discussion of various situations as those mentioned in this study. Bringing in a professional psychologist or psychology professor to teach students what PTSD is, the signs and symptoms to look for, and what treatment is available could provide students a valuable lesson on how to cope with traumatic events. These ideas could be incorporated into an existing journalism course when discussing trauma or could serve as individual units in a trauma journalism course.

Theme 1: Covering Traumatic Events: Be Empathetic/Human. The first theme that emerged was with regards to how to cover traumatic events. Many of the professional journalists stated that in order to effectively cover these situations, one has to be empathetic. “Just being human, you know I feel like when you see someone’s home is

gone and you experience the storm, it's natural empathy and compassion and you approach it in a way of, from your heart.”

Whether it be in the approach of victim's families or survivors to obtaining interviews or the line of questioning asked when the interview is granted, it is more about being human in how one reacts during these situations. “You just try to be sympathetic as you can.” Another respondent said journalists need to be respectful of what the interviewee has gone through.

One participant suggested that empathy is something that should be taught to students as well as how to practice it in the field. It requires one to put aside their responsibilities as a journalist and say, “I'm gonna be a human being.” Many of the respondents said it will pay off in the long run when you are trying to get the story. “I found that just being a kindhearted person, people can see that.”

Theme 2: Covering Traumatic Events: Ethical Training. Another theme that emerged in relation to covering traumatic events was that of ethics. “I really believe that the most important and it is not trauma training as much as ethics training.” Many of the professional journalists recommended that journalism educators provide ethical training as part of their curriculum on trauma journalism. Journalists provided examples of situations where they were presented with how to approach a victim's family or a survivor. Do they keep hounding them for an interview because their news director or editor tells them to? Do they try to help the severely injured lying in the middle of the road after a tornado or do they go live on television? These are the ethical dilemmas that the journalists recommend students are equipped to handle. “Don't cross the line of ethics

and morals and other stuff that you know. Like, trying to get ahead because it's not worth it. It's really not.”

Another journalist brought up how editors (or news directors) could have varying ethical viewpoints. It is important for students to learn how to deal with a situation when their supervisor does not have the same ethical or moral foundation. “An editor who might look from the outside as if he or she has the same ethical goals that you do, but is willing to fold a little for advertisers or whatever. And I think that it's important to get a prospect you've got to keep going back to your journalistic training and choose your way of treating people.” It was also suggested that journalists receive this training in the collegiate setting as it would allow them to have those conversations with employers prior to encountering a traumatic event.

Theme 3: Coping with Traumatic Events: Understanding PTSD. The only theme that emerged regarding learning how to cope with traumatic events was “understanding PTSD.” The journalists expressed that it was important for students to know what PTSD is and to know what the signs and symptoms are. Many of the interviewees said they never received any type of trauma training but it would be helpful for collegiate journalists to know what they are at risk for by getting into this profession.

“You don't want them to suffer from PTSD or trauma or to be inhumane to people. So, you've gotta really help them to know how not to melt down and and what to look for, and what are the signs. And even like how to help your colleagues who are going through something. I never-- like I never knew when I started to see people suffering and having signs, what am I supposed to do? So, just be helpful to just kinda you know, be a better professional, be a better human, be a better you know, reporter.”

There was one journalist, Mizell, who left the field of broadcast news for public relations at humanitarian organizations. She worked for World Vision, “a Christian organization working to help communities lift themselves out of poverty,” (World Vision website). When deployed overseas with World Vision, Mizell said she did receive trauma training including training for PTSD. “We had instructors come in who have been to home specialist who would guide us through to find- to look for if you are starting to escalate to a stage of, you know, probably stress or anxiety or PTSD. So, we're just educated on the signs.” It wasn't until she received this training that she realized she “was already probably showing signs of early symptoms of PTSD based on already those things (covering traumatic events in television news) I had gone through.” After years in the journalism industry, Mizell suggested that PTSD is a larger problem than what many employers think. “I can't tell you how many people broke down and suffer today from PTSD.”

Another participant commented on how his first traumatic event impacted him. “You know, it's one thing to watch it on TV, but I feel like once I was actually put in that situation, just the realness of it, it's just so impactful.” Photojournalist, Michael Driver recalled his own emotions while covering a traumatic event. “I'm sittin' there behind the camera crying myself cause it's just, you know, just-- it's just hard to hear, you know?” One participant said it is important for journalists to deal with their own emotions first and then learn “how you separate at that time you know, between being a person and between being a journalist.”

Chapter V: Conclusions and Discussions

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine how best to educate collegiate journalists to cover and cope with traumatic events. This study was in alignment with previous studies conducted on trauma journalism. However, much of the previous research focused on professional journalists. Educating collegiate journalists is the first step in addressing and acknowledging solutions relative to trauma journalism. Trauma journalism may still be in its infancy stage but is gaining more and more attention, and the topic is demonstrating why collegiate journalists need to be trained in order to effectively cover (and cope with) traumatic events). This study supports the previous studies and takes them one step further to include what concepts educators should be presenting to students in relation to trauma.

Conclusions

1. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cover traumatic events?

From the data collected in this study from faculty members of various colleges and universities throughout the United States, journalism programs are either incorporating how to cover traumatic events into their existing courses or the topic is covered by their program at all. The majority of the participants who responded to questions seeking this information indicated that trauma journalism was not a stand-alone

course. Less than half of the respondents stated that they integrate trauma into their other journalism courses. Data from the professional journalists provides suggestions about how to educate collegiate journalists to cover traumatic events.

2. How are journalism programs educating collegiate journalists to cope with traumatic events?

As with the research question 1, the data in this study revealed that journalism programs throughout the country are not producing stand-alone trauma courses. Rather, they incorporate the material into existing courses for several reasons. That material also includes how journalists can cope with traumatic events. Professional journalists in this study recommended that learning how to cope with traumatic events be taught at the postsecondary level. Suggestions for what concepts to instruct students on were provided by the participants.

3. How have journalism programs incorporated trauma education into their programs? While the population sample of journalism educators was small in this study, the results were mixed. Four of the seven participants who responded to questions similar to this research question, stated that their college or university does not have undergraduate trauma journalism courses. The other three provided the names of the courses in which they incorporate trauma into.

4. How have professional journalists been prepared to cover traumatic events through education or professional development?

The professional journalists in this study indicated that they had not received any trauma training prior to covering traumatic events whether it be in the classroom or as part of professional development. Most respondents said they learned how to cover traumatic events through experience but believed that training for trauma would have been beneficial before covering their first traumatic event. This exhibits the lack of trauma training at both the postsecondary level as well as in the professional journalism field. This data collected to answer this research question provides evidence that trauma journalism education is an important area of journalism education. Preparing students to do more than the basics of reading, writing, editing, and researching is not enough in this century.

Relationship of Conclusions to Other Research

The findings of this study related to prior research on trauma journalism discussed in Chapter II. Trauma journalism is a newly evolving area of the journalism industry. The research showed that trauma journalism is not a teaching priority among journalism schools for various reasons including not being a part of the ACEJMC accreditation standards, a lack of experienced faculty to teach such a course, and the perceived doubt that this is not an imperative topic for collegiate journalists to be taught. However, additional data from this study displays a need for such training and education on the part of professional journalists.

Trauma journalism is defined as reporting on violence, conflict or tragedy with a particular focus on the aftermath and long-term impact of events on individuals, families and communities (B. Shapiro, personal communication, August 23, 2016). A lack of

training and education in the area of trauma journalism has led to scenes such as that of the Virginia Tech Massacre where journalists were found lying their way into the hospital to interview survivors, grabbing the arm of survivors immediately following the shooting to ask for an interview, and the media being labeled a “mob” for the unethical and unprofessional actions.

Prior research showed that journalists are considered first responders by some. Literature says that traditionally police officers, EMT’s and firefighters are considered first responders because they are the first to arrive on the scene. While there was some support in previous studies and through the CDC for journalists being considered first responders, the notion is still lacking outside the industry. This study supports that research through data collected by the professional journalists. One participant indicated she held a woman in her arms after a car wreck while she died waiting for the first responders to arrive on the scene. Another participant arrived in Joplin, Missouri seconds after the 2011 deadly tornado that ripped through the town. The individual said had he or she known first aid it would have been extremely helpful.

Chapter II clearly defined post-traumatic stress disorder according to the CDC. This study supported the findings of prior research linking journalists to PTSD and related disorders. At least one participant admitted to having signs and symptoms of PTSD without realizing it until he or she was educated on the issue. Other journalists reported their immunity to the gruesome scenes of traumatic events after repeated exposure. This study advances the research and supports the need for journalists to be educated on PTSD and other trauma-related disorders that they are at-risk of because of their profession.

The literature review also delved into the lessons that journalists learned from covering events such as Columbine and Virginia Tech. The extensive coverage of the Columbine shooting rampage does not seem to have provided to be a much of a lesson for journalists today. With the 24-hour news cycle and increasing presence of social media as a main news source, the constant coverage of traumatic events does not seem to be decreasing. The aggressive and at times unethical coverage of the Virginia Tech Massacre does, however, appear to have taught journalists how to properly cover such an event with regards to ethical decision making. This study involved journalists who had covered similar events without crossing the ethical line. Yet, many say there is still a need for collegiate journalists to be prepared for such events and know the right decision in those situations.

Research shows that only a handful of colleges and universities in the United States have trauma journalism programs, courses, or incorporate the material into the existing curriculum. This study found similar results among the faculty members who participated. Most reported they were incorporating trauma material into existing journalism courses. None of the participants indicated that their college or university had a stand-alone trauma journalism course. However, interviews with professional journalists suggest a need for such a course.

Discussion/ Recommendations for Journalism Educators

The desired outcome of this study was to determine what collegiate journalists should be learning about how to cover and cope with traumatic events. This study revealed the need for such incorporation into existing journalism curricula. Therefore, the researcher has provided two options. The first option is a 16-week course outline for

those educators wishing to create a trauma journalism course. This outline provides weekly topics including readings from two suggested textbooks and supplemental material. It also provides suggestions for bringing in professional journalists for experiential learning opportunities for the students. It implies coordination with the institution's department of psychology to provide classes on coping with traumatic events. If that is not available, working with a local psychologist would be sufficient. It also provides suggested activities, assignments, and projects to assess the student's knowledge and understanding of the material. This outline is intended to be a flexible tool that can be adapted to any journalism curriculum to assist journalism educators. The outlines are provided in Appendix E.

This study also revealed a need for professional journalists to receive similar training. Data indicated that none of the professional journalists received any form of trauma training prior to entering the journalism industry. PTSD training with a licensed psychologist in the area in order to teach journalists how to spot the signs of PTSD in themselves and their colleagues would be beneficial. It would also be helpful for the organization to provide information on the treatment offered by the organization when it comes to PTSD. It is also recommended that journalists have an annual or bi-annual training on how to properly cover traumatic events with regards to interviewing victim's families and survivors, shooting video, and taking photographs. There is a high turnover rate in the field of journalism, thus continually providing this type of training is imperative.

Limitations to the Study

Although this research study reached its goal of learning how to best educate collegiate journalists about how to cover and cope with traumatic events, there were some unforeseen limitations. First, the population sample for both journalists and faculty members was smaller than expected. Due to a lack of time for the study and access to participants who met the criteria for the study, there was a limited number of participants.

Second, previous research on trauma journalism as it relates to postsecondary education was lacking, making a foundation for this type of research marginal at best. Much of the prior research focused on trauma journalism as it relates to the profession or individual traumatic events and the aftermath of the media frenzy. Finally, the interviews with professional journalists and the questionnaire taken by faculty members were all self-reported data. This data was not verifiable by the researcher in most cases.

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative study provided insight into the importance of educating collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events. The researcher recognizes that while professional journalists see the need for this type of training, journalism educators are still reluctant to fully incorporate into their existing curriculum. These reasons include limit knowledge and experience of the skills needed to teach the material, trauma journalism is not currently in the ACEJMC accreditation standards, there is not enough personnel to teach a course such as this, and some are already incorporating it into classes but not in a formal manner.

This area of the journalism industry is still being explored. As stated in previous literature, the first journalism schools did not start teaching this type of material until a decade or two ago. Therefore, additional research could provide greater insight. One suggestion for future research would be to take the findings of this study and do a comparative analysis of professional journalists who received trauma journalism as part of their postsecondary studies.

In addition, a larger sample size of journalists who have covered traumatic events could provide greater evidence for the need of this type of education. The responses of the professional journalists who participated in this study are based largely on their own experiences. Therefore, having more journalists provide experiences would be beneficial to exploring this evolving area of journalism.

This study could serve as a foundation for other researchers interested in implementing a trauma journalism course into their programs. A future longitudinal study could start with the creation of a trauma journalism course and extended five or ten years into those initial student's professional careers in the journalism industry. Did the course prepare them for the traumatic events that they covered after college? What changes would they suggest for the course based upon their experiences of covering and coping with such events? Is this course better suited as an elective or a requirement? This would give a better sense of how beneficial the course would be for journalism programs.

The scholarship was lacking on exploring whether personality traits are linked to trauma journalism. Therefore, another recommendation for a future study would be to examine whether strong personality traits, such as competitiveness, is linked to trauma journalism. Many journalists are competitive and seek to get the story out first. Do

individuals with stronger personality traits cope better with the psychological effects of covering traumatic events?

Prior research was also lacking in examining whether symptoms of PTSD or depression are generational. For example, looking at the differences between the rates of PTSD symptoms between veteran journalists and those just entering the field. Therefore, it is recommended that this be done in a future study to better aid in the understanding of trauma journalism as it related to all journalists.

The final recommendation for future research would be to compare the reasons why journalists choose to leave the field of journalism to the trauma training they received. Is there a correlation to having to cover and cope with traumatic events and the exiting of the industry? Are those journalists receiving training on how to cover and cope with traumatic events at the postsecondary level or through professional development? Is this a contributing factor for journalists leaving the field? Would having received trauma training have made a difference in their decision?

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

Educating Collegiate Journalists on How to Cover and Cope with Traumatic Events

Researcher: Stephanie Elder Anderson **Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Teresa Clark, Assistant Professor, Murray State University – tclark24@murraystate.edu or (270)809-6956.

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted through Murray State University. If you choose to participate in this project, your signed agreement to participate in this project is necessary. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate and cannot be a registered Murray State University faculty, staff, or student. This document contains information about the conduct of this research, which is intended to help you make an informed decision regarding your participation. You may ask the investigator any questions you have about the study prior to the scheduling of the interview by emailing selder@murraystate.edu. If you then decide to participate in the project, please provide consent by signing the attached form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this study is to identify how colleges and universities are educating their collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events and seek what information should be taught at the postsecondary level.

PROCEDURES AND DURATION: Upon agreeing to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher which will be audiotaped. Before interviews can be scheduled participants must read, sign, and send the informed consent to the researcher. Your participation will require one hour or less of your time to be interviewed by the researcher. Interviews will be conducted over the telephone.

RISKS AND/OR DISCOMFORTS: A potential discomfort exists as the participants will be asked to recall situations in which they were involved in covering traumatic events.

BENEFITS: There are no anticipated benefits for you as an individual, but your responses will assist our research into the training methods for journalism programs at colleges and universities.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Participant names will not be used in reporting and analysis of this study. Any publication resulting from this study will not include names of the participants unless specifically allowed by the research participant. Research records will be stored securely for three years following the study on the researcher, Stephanie L. Elder Anderson’s computer on the Murray State campus. Only the researcher and faculty mentor will have access to the records.

Withdrawal: Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from this research will involve no penalty or loss of benefits.

I acknowledge that the risks and benefits involved and the need for the research have been fully explained to me; that I have been informed that I may withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice or penalty; and I voluntarily consent to participate in this research project. By signing this form, I give the researcher consent to audio record my interview for the purposes of this study.

The dated approval stamp on this document indicates that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Murray State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects. Any questions about the conduct of this project should be brought to the attention of Dr. Teresa Clark, tclark24@murraystate.edu or (270)809-6956. Any questions about your rights as a research participant should be brought to the attention of the IRB Coordinator at (270) 809-2916 or msu.irb@murraystate.edu.

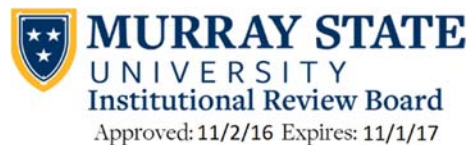
Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Please also check one of the following options; if nothing is checked, your responses will not be quoted or attributed:

- You may quote my responses without attribution.
- You may quote my responses with attribution.
- You may not quote my responses.



Appendix B: Interview Questions

Questions for One-on-One interviews with journalists

**It should be noted that these questions are the basis for the interview. The researcher allowed for follow-up questions.

Do you mind if I record this interview?

1. What is your name?
2. What is your current position?
3. What traumatic event(s) have you covered?
4. Did you receive trauma training prior to covering the traumatic event?
5. If so, who provided that training?
6. What did the training entail?
7. Did the training prepare you to cover the traumatic event?
8. What training do you think collegiate journalists should receive as part of their studies?
9. What should that training include?
10. What do you wish you had known before covering a traumatic event?
11. Anything else you feel would be beneficial to the outcome of this study?

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Faculty Member Questionnaire

Study title: Educating Collegiate Journalists on How to Cover and Cope with Traumatic Events

Researcher: Stephanie L. Elder Anderson M.S.

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Teresa Clark tclark24@murraystate.edu (270) 809-6956

Dear Faculty Members,

I am a doctoral student at Murray State University and this study is part of my dissertation. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation. Your completion of this questionnaire indicates that you voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I am aware of similar study regarding the topic of trauma journalism. Your participation in this study is independent of any other studies currently underway.

Purpose of the Project: The purpose of this study is to identify how colleges and universities are educating their collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events and seek what information should be taught at the postsecondary level.

Discomforts and Risks: A potential discomfort exists as the participants will be asked to recall situations in which they were involved in covering traumatic events.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private and will be protected to the fullest extent provided by law. Any publication resulting from this study will not include names of the participants. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher and faculty mentor will have access to the records. Records will be kept on Stephanie L. Elder Anderson's computer on the Murray State campus for three years. All survey responses that the researcher receives will be treated confidentially and stored on a secure server. However, given that the surveys can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses. As a participant in this study, the researcher wants you to be aware that certain "keylogging" software programs exist that can be used to track or capture data that you enter and/or websites that you visit.

Benefits: There are no anticipated benefits for you as an individual, but your responses will assist our research into the training methods for journalism programs at colleges and universities.

Withdrawal: Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice from the researcher.

I acknowledge the risks involved and the need for the research has been fully explained to me; that I have been informed that I may withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice or penalty. I voluntarily consent to participate in this research project.

Disclaimer: Students, staff, and faculty of Murray State University are not eligible to participate in this study.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Murray State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) from November 2, 2016 through November 1, 2017 for the protection of human subjects. Any questions about the conduct of this project should be brought to the attention of the faculty mentor: Dr. Teresa Clark tclark24@murraystate.edu or (270) 809-6956. Any questions about your rights as a research participant should be brought to the attention of the IRB Coordinator at (270) 809-2916 or msu.irb@murraystate.edu.

Please answer the following questions.

1. Are you a student, faculty, or staff member at Murray State University?
 - Yes
 - No

2. What department do you work in at your university or college?

3. Select the statement below that best describes your involvement with teaching trauma journalism.
 - I teach a trauma journalism course
 - I incorporate trauma journalism into my existing courses
 - My department offers trauma journalism courses but I am not the instructor
 - My school does not offer trauma journalism in its existing curriculum

4. What courses (if any) does your college or university offer undergraduates related to trauma journalism?

5. If your college or university does not offer a trauma journalism course, please indicate why?

6. Do you feel prepared to teach trauma journalism? Why or Why not?

7. What are your thoughts on incorporating trauma journalism courses into journalism curriculum?

8. If it is your opinion that trauma journalism should not be offered at the postsecondary level, please skip to question 10. If you do think trauma journalism should be offered at the postsecondary level, what suggestions do you have for doing so?

9. If it is your opinion that trauma journalism should be offered at the postsecondary level, please explain why.

10. If you teach a trauma journalism course and would be willing to share your course description and/or outline, please post below. They may also be emailed to the researcher at selder@murraystate.edu.

Thank you.

Appendix D: Sample Recruitment Email

Example of the email sent to various journalism schools seeking participation

Dr. Lieberman,

I wanted to see if you would be willing to share the following information with your department at UNLV.

I appreciate your assistance.

Thank you!

Recruitment for faculty participants:

Research Participants Wanted: I am conducting a research study on educating collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events. I am searching for faculty members from various colleges and universities throughout the United States (only) who teach in a journalism or mass communications department. Participant names or university affiliation will not be collected. Please consider participating in this study by filling out the online questionnaire at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/elderanderson>. Please read the information contained in the letter at the beginning of the survey, as completion of the questionnaire indicates you are consenting to the collection and use of that information. The questionnaire is available October 31, 2016 through December 7, 2016. Any questions, comments, or concerns can be sent directly to me at selder@murraystate.edu or (270) 994-1552.

This study is not open to participants affiliated with Murray State University.

Recruitment for journalists:

Research Participants Wanted: I am conducting a research study on educating collegiate journalists on how to cover and cope with traumatic events. I am searching for journalists in the United States (only) who have covered at least one traumatic event. A traumatic event for the purposes of this study is defined as an event that causes a “sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death,” (Coping with, n.d.). Please consider participating in this study by agreeing to a one-on-one interview. Interviews will be conducted from October 31, 2016 until December 7, 2016. Interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of the journalist. Any questions, comments, or to schedule your interview please contact me at selder@murraystate.edu or (270) 994-1552. Informed consent forms will be emailed to the journalists prior to the scheduling of the interview.

This study is not open to participants affiliated with Murray State University.

Coping with a traumatic event. (n.d.). Retrieved October 1, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/masstrauma/factsheets/public/coping.pdf>

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Appendix E: Proposed Course and Unit Outlines

Proposed Course Outline for Trauma Journalism

Week 1: What is trauma journalism?

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Chapter 1: Tracking a Media Movement

Watch: <https://dartcenter.org/media/ted-talk-trauma-aware-journalism>

Week 2: Case Study: Columbine High School

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Columbine pages 100-102

Reading: The Columbine Shooting: Live Television Coverage by Alicia Shepard

Week 3: Case Study: Columbine High School

Reading *Covering Violence*: Chapter 9: Columbine: A Story That Won't Let Go

Week 4: Trauma journalism history/ Dart Center Introduction

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Chapter 2: Transformer

Reading *Covering Violence*: Chapter 2: The Journalist: At Risk for Trauma

Week 5: Coping with the physical and psychological effects

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Chapter 3: Frontline Reporting

Week 6: Coping with the physical and psychological effects

Visiting Lecturer: Psychologist or psychology professor

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Chapter 5: Traumatic Stress Studies

Week 7: Case Study: Virginia Tech Massacre

Reading: Twice Victimized: Lessons from the Media Mob at Virginia Tech by Kim Walsh-Childers, Norman Lewis and Jeff

Neely

Week 8: Case Study: Virginia Tech Massacre

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Virginia Tech pages 117-120

Week 9: Learning from the Experts

Panel of Journalists

Week 10: Media Training

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Chapter 6: Media Training and Intervention

Week 11: First-Aid Training

Reading: American Red Cross First-Aid training manual

Week 12: Interviewing and Reporting

Reading *Covering Violence*: Chapter 5: The Interview: Assault or Catharsis?

Week 13: Case Study: September 11

Reading *Covering Violence*: Chapter 3: 9/11 Lessons from a Sunny Morning

Week 14: Case Study: September 11

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: 9/11 pages 102-107

Week 15: Final Presentations

Final presentations (journalists visiting)

Week 16: Final Exam

Instructor supplemental reading and material:

Journalism After September 11

Reporting Disaster on Deadline: A Handbook for students and professionals

Assignments:

Journal: Keep a weekly journal of how you are feeling, what you are thinking about while going through this course. Reflect upon what you have learned in this course, from the journalists, visiting professor, from the readings. This can be an emotional class as it deals with difficult issues. This is a way to put those thoughts onto paper. This should be 1-2 pages each week. Your journal will be due at the end of the semester.

Coping Paper: You are to research what assistance is available for journalists throughout the world. You may research scholarly articles on the University Libraries website. You may research books and essays on the topic. You may consult the DART Center website. You are free to choose your own resources. You need to have 3 to 5 resources a journalist could use if they feel they or someone they know is suffering from PTSD or related disorders. The paper should be 5 to 7 pages, double-spaced. It must include a bibliography.

Covering presentation: In a group you are to take the course material and create a presentation you could give to professional journalists on the proper way to cover a traumatic event. Review your course material and the lessons learned from each of the case studies and readings. You need to provide specific examples. You are not limited to the traumatic events discussed in this course. However, should you choose to use a traumatic event outside of the course, it must be approved by the instructor. Others could include Oklahoma City Bombings, Aurora, Colorado Theater Shooting, Orlando Nightclub Shooting, 2016 attack on Paris etc. The presentation is designed to show what you have learned in this course about how to properly cover a traumatic event. Do not make the focus on one specific event. You are to use at least 3 to 5 references. You must have a PowerPoint. The presentation should last 10 to 15 minutes. Local journalists will be invited to attend your presentations.

Case Study Papers: You will write 1 paper for each case study (Columbine, Virginia Tech, September 11). This paper should follow the following outline:

Introduction

Define the case

What went wrong/what went well with media coverage

What can journalists learn from this case

Conclusion

References

Each paper is to be 5 to 7 pages, double-spaced.

Activities:

Journalist Panel: bring in local journalists including photographers, reporters, MMJ's, newspaper reporters, editors etc. with a diverse background and specialty. Have the students prepare questions ahead of time to ask the panel. Instructor will moderate the panel. This will allow students to ask how local journalists cover and cope with traumatic events.

Covering Columbine: Watch the video *Covering Columbine* in class. This is great insight into the tragedy that occurred and how it affected the journalists, survivors and victims' families. This is a great opportunity for class discussion.

First-Aid Training: Bring in your local American Red Cross or another Health Service organization in your area to provide students with certified training for CPR, AED and First-Aid.

Victims' Family and/or Survivor: Bring in the survivor of a traumatic event or a victim's family. Let him or her tell their story and ask him or her to share their experience (good or bad) with the media during that time. Allow the students to ask them questions or do a mock interview.

Prerequisites: Must at least include reporting and writing course.

The second option is a unit that could be included into an existing journalism course. The data from this research study showed that the majority of faculty members are incorporating trauma journalism into a current course they teach. While the course titles and objectives may vary, this unit will provide a flexible starting point. This unit includes:

Proposed Trauma Journalism Unit Outline

Week 1: What is Trauma Journalism?

Watch: <https://dartcenter.org/media/ted-talk-trauma-aware-journalism>

Week 2: Case Study: Virginia Tech Massacre

Reading: Twice Victimized: Lessons from the Media Mob at Virginia Tech by Kim Walsh-Childers, Norman Lewis and Jeff Neely

Week 3: Lessons from Columbine Shooting

Reading: The Columbine Shooting: Live Television Coverage by Alicia Shepard

Week 4: Coping with the Physical and Psychological Effects

Visiting Lecturer: Psychologist or psychology professor

Reading *Trauma Journalism*: Chapter 5: Traumatic Stress Studies

Assignments:

Journal: Keep a weekly journal of how you are feeling, what you are thinking about while going through this course. Reflect upon what you have learned in this course, from the journalists, visiting professor, from the readings. This can be an emotional class as it deals with difficult issues. This is a way to put those thoughts onto paper. This should be 1-2 pages each week. Your journal will be due at the end of the semester.

Case Study Paper: You will write a paper on the Virginia Tech Case Study. 5 to 7 pages in length, typed, double-spaced. This paper should follow the following outline:

Introduction

Define the case

What went wrong/what went well with media coverage

What can journalists learn from this case

Conclusion

References

Coping Paper: You are to research what assistance is available for journalists throughout the world. You may research scholarly articles on the University Libraries website. You may research books and essays on the topic. You may consult the DART Center website. You are free to choose your own resources. You need to have 3 to 5 resources a journalist could use if they feel they or someone they know is suffering from PTSD or related disorders. The paper should be 5 to 7 pages, double-spaced. It must include a bibliography.

Covering presentation: In a group: you are to take the course material and create a presentation you could give to professional journalists on the proper way to cover a traumatic event. Review your course material and the lessons learned from each of the case studies and readings. You need to provide specific examples. You are not limited to the traumatic events discussed in this course. However, should you choose to use a traumatic event outside of the course, it must be approved by the instructor. Others could include Oklahoma City Bombings, Aurora, Colorado Theater Shooting, Orlando Nightclub Shooting, 2016 attack on Paris etc. The presentation is designed to show what you have learned in this course about how to properly cover a traumatic event. Do not make the focus on one specific event. You are to use at least 3 to 5 references. You must

have a PowerPoint. The presentation should last 10 to 15 minutes. Local journalists will be invited to attend your presentations.

Activities:

Covering Columbine: Watch the video *Covering Columbine* in class. This is great insight into the tragedy that occurred and how it affected the journalists, survivors and victim's families. This is a great opportunity for class discussion.

Victim's Family and/or Survivor: Bring in the survivor of a traumatic event or a victim's family. Let them tell their story and ask them to share their experience (good or bad) with the media during that time. Allow the students to ask them questions or do a mock interview.

Trauma in Journalism Course: The Poynter Institute partnered with the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma to create this free training opportunity for journalists. This self-directed course takes about an hour. <http://www.newsu.org/courses/journalism-and-trauma>

Instructor Resources:

Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting About Victims & Trauma by Roger Simpson and William Coté

Reporting Disaster on Deadline: A Handbook for Students and Professionals by: Marty Steffens, Lee Wilkins, Fred Vultee, Esther Thorson, Greeley Kyle, and Kent Collins

Trauma Journalism: On Deadline in Harm's Way by Mark H. Masse

Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at the Columbia Journalism School- The Dart Center is the leader in trauma journalism. They have spent years conducting research and offering trainings and assistance to journalists all over the world. This website has classroom resources, videos, thousands of articles, publications, tip sheets and more. www.dartcenter.org

Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board

328 Wells Hall
Murray, KY 42071-3318
270-809-2916 • msu.irb@murraystate.edu

TO: Teresa Clark
Educational Studies Leadership and Counseling

FROM: Institutional Review Board
Jonathan Baskin, IRB Coordinator

DATE: 11/2/2016

RE: Human Subjects Protocol I.D. – IRB # 17-045

The IRB subcommittee has completed its review of your student's Level 1 protocol entitled *Educating Collegiate Journalists on How to Cover and Cope with Traumatic Events*. After review and consideration, the IRB has determined that the research, as described in the protocol form, will be conducted in compliance with Murray State University guidelines for the protection of human participants.

The forms and materials that have been approved for use in this research study are attached to the email containing this letter. These are the forms and materials that must be presented to the subjects. Use of any process or forms other than those approved by the IRB will be considered misconduct in research as stated in the MSU IRB Procedures and Guidelines section 20.3.

This Level 1 approval is valid until 11/1/2017.

If data collection and analysis extends beyond this time period, the research project must be reviewed as a continuation project by the IRB prior to the end of the approval period, 11/1/2017. You must reapply for IRB approval by submitting a Project Update and Closure form (available at murraystate.edu/irb). You must allow ample time for IRB processing and decision prior to your expiration date, or your research must stop until such time that IRB approval is received. If the research project is completed by the end of the approval period, then a Project Update and Closure form must be submitted for IRB review so that your protocol may be closed. It is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner.

The protocol is approved. You may begin data collection now.

Opportunity
afforded

murraystate.edu