



Navigating Crisis Response:

*Family Assistance Operations and Incident Management
Protocols in Airports and Public Spaces*

May 21, 2025

Hosted by:

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Ken Jenkins, MAS, ACC, TIPC
Crisis Response Strategist, Advisory Council Member

Guest speakers:

Ann SanCartier
Empathia Crisis Account Manager

Kate Murphy, CEM, MEP
Emergency Management & Preparedness Manager, MWA



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Webinar Summary

Purpose of the Webinar

To provide real-world insight into planning, activating, and operating Family Assistance Operations at airports in response to aviation and non-aviation emergencies.

This session focused on:

- Supporting survivors and families
- Coordinating multi-agency responses
- Implementing flexible, scalable Family Assistance Plans (FAPs)

Key Concepts

- Family Assistance Operations are coordinated procedures following aviation emergencies to assist victims, families and survivors.
- FAPs are typically activated in collaboration with airlines, emergency responders, the NTSB and support organizations.
- Initially developed for commercial aviation accidents, these plans can now apply to:
 - General aviation incidents
 - Environmental emergencies
 - Other mass casualty events

Presenter Insights

- **Jennifer Stansberry Miller**
Brought a mental health and social work perspective, emphasizing compassionate support and communication.
- **Ken Jenkins**
Offered strategic advice on partnerships, mutual aid and long-term recovery coordination.
- **Ann SanCartier**
Announced the AAAE conference in July and noted the Airport Family Assistance panel.
- **Kate Murphy**
Shared lessons from a recent FAC activation, highlighting gaps between planning and real-life challenges.



Webinar Summary

Guiding Principle

“The event drives the response.”

No two incidents are alike. Flexibility, coordination, and situational awareness are critical.

Key Takeaways

- FACs are critical infrastructure for aviation emergency response.
- FAPs must be scalable, interdisciplinary and well-exercised.
- Collaboration between airports, airlines and support agencies is essential.
- Regular training and updates ensure readiness for the unexpected.

Overall Summary of Questions

The webinar Q&A reflected strong engagement from attendees focused on family assistance center operations, inter-agency coordination and logistical challenges during mass casualty or aviation-related incidents. Key themes included:

- **Clarity around definitions and access:** How “family” was defined, how individuals were vetted and allowed through security and challenges related to expanding access to friends or extended networks.
- **FRC/FAC logistics:** Duration, staffing, use of space, and lessons learned in standing up and transitioning between centers.
- **Partner involvement and coordination:** Questions about the American Red Cross, law enforcement, chaplain services and inter-airport communication.
- **Policy and preparedness:** Interest in how MWAA plans to institutionalize family assistance centers in exercises and planning.
- **Media management and access control:** Several concerns about unwanted or unauthorized parties, including media, attorneys and influencers.
- **Training and mutual aid:** Strong interest in shared planning efforts, lessons learned and mutual aid agreements.



Webinar Slides

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and Incident Management
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Public Spaces

21 May 2025


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Presenters




Guest Speakers




Jen Stansberry Miller




Ken Jenkins



Ann SanCartier



Kate Murphy





Webinar Slides





Webinar Slides

Crisis Solutions Advisory Council

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	Sharon Bryson		Greg Crick
	Rick Hoaglund		Ken Jenkins
	George Nunez		Paul Sledzik
		Bob VandePol	

We never know when we may have to activate our incident family support team.

Ours was developed primarily for commercial accidents, but we learned it could be used for general aviation, environmental incidents, and other situations.

ACRP Report 171 Airport Case Study Respondent





Webinar Slides

Airport Family Assistance Operations refer to the coordinated procedures and support services provided by an airport following an aviation accident or emergency, specifically to assist survivors and the family members or loved ones of those involved.

These operations are part of a broader **Family Assistance Plan (FAP)** and are typically activated in collaboration with **airlines**, **emergency responders**, **governmental agencies** (such as the NTSB in the U.S.), and other **support organizations**.

Conversation Assumptions

Individuals who work at the airport are **airport employees**.

Individuals who are in the airport waiting for loved ones, and waiting to board, etc., will be referred to as **airport guests/customers**.

Contracted entities at an airport will be referred to as **business partners**, which includes air carriers.

Individuals who are referenced to be on an aircraft with the intent of flight (takeoff/landing), is considered a **passenger** including: crew, revenue, and non-revenue passengers.



Webinar Slides

Why

Support for affected individuals

Compliance with regulations

Efficient crisis management

Preserving public trust

Mitigating media and public relations risk

Coordination with airlines and agencies

Moral responsibility

Limitations

Role and responsibility

Legal and liability concerns

Limited resources and expertise

Focus on operational recovery

Coordination challenges

Existing protocols and frameworks



Webinar Slides

Airport Emergency



Non-Legislated (Aviation)

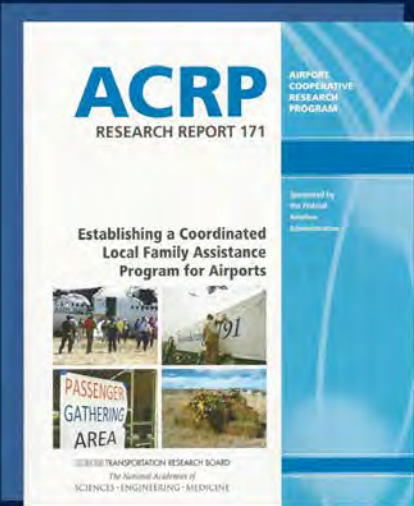


Legislated (Aviation)



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Event drives the response.



Interviews conducted with:

- 26 airports
- 4 case studies
- 37 victims, families, and survivors' groups
- 8 commercial air carriers

Deliverables developed:

- Guidebook
- Toolkit
- Training video
- Crisis communication training
- Exercise development template

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Webinar Slides

Airport Operations & Technology Symposium

JULY 28-30 | DENVER, CO

Enhance your planning skills and broaden your network!

Dive deep into airport planning while gaining insights into operations, safety, emergency response, and geospatial data management. Connect with professionals across various airport fields to expand your expertise.

REGISTER NOW to advance your planning knowledge and network with industry leaders!

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This is a closed session.

Please no screen shots
or recording of Kate
Murphy's conversation.

Thank you.



Webinar Slides



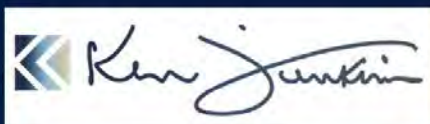
**METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY**

Kate Murphy, CEM
Emergency Manager

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Q&A: *Please place your questions in the Chat directed to Jen.*

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Webinar Reference List

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Webinar Reference List

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United States Code. 49 U.S.C. § 41313: *Plans to Address Needs of Families of Passengers Involved in Foreign Air Carrier Accidents*.

United States Code. 49 U.S.C. § 1136: *Assistance to Families of Passengers Involved in Aircraft Accidents*.



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Prepare. Respond. Recover.

Assisting Organizations in Critical Moments

Empathia's crisis solutions team has partnered with organizations in responding to and recovering from all types of critical events around the world, including mass fatality incidents, terrorist acts, active shooter situations, natural disasters and more.

Preparing for the Unexpected

Individuals. Organizations. Communities. With a large number of potentially impacted individuals and unique needs for crisis management, our team provides specialized services that are tailor-made for organizations and their stakeholders.

Ensure you have access to the support you need during the most critical moments. Empathia is fully equipped to help you deal with the unforeseen and unimaginable.

Responding to Crisis Events

- Dedicated, scalable, 24/7 incident-specific contact center, staffed by crisis counselors
- Global network of responders
- Critical incident response and management
- Accounting for people
- Information management resources
- Professional virtual and/or on-site support
- Organizational and leader consultation
- Survivor and family assistance services
- Emergency response plan development and refinement
- Customized trainings, functional exercises and drills
- Proactive outreach to those impacted by an event

Empathia's crisis response services help organizations respond to and recover from disruptive events that impact people, whether it's a small group or a large crowd.



Incident Response Contact Center

In the uncertainty of a crisis, we ensure your organization has the infrastructure to manage your people, information and reputation. Our stand-ready contact center activates within 60 minutes or less, while our team of crisis response professionals organizes and implements critical response mechanisms from our Emergency Operations Center.



Critical Incident Response

Empathia's team of crisis response professionals provides on-site and virtual support following a critical event. Through individual and group debriefings, management and leader consultations and educational presentations, we help impacted individuals transition to the "new normal" post-crisis.



Information Management Tool

Our proprietary Disaster Information Management System (DIMS®) is a multi-faceted tool designed to manage high volumes of people-centric information. DIMS is used to securely collect, document and organize critical data. Its scripting capabilities help with communicating vetted information to impacted individuals, families and responders during a crisis.



Survivor & Family Assistance

Our survivor and family assistance services provide needed support to individuals impacted by a crisis event. Empathia's team handles all logistical coordination involved with establishing and organizing an on-site or virtual Survivor & Family Assistance Center and pairing specialists 1:1 with survivors and affected families.



Emergency Response Plan (ERP) Development & Refinement

Empathia's ERP development & refinement services help establish a well-designed blueprint for responding when the worst happens. Our seasoned crisis management team has encountered an array of scenarios, guiding the work they do with your team(s). This partnership will help ensure your readiness for any situation, whether you are an ERP beginner or a seasoned professional.



Training, Exercises & Drills

Your ERP is unique to you, so your training should be, too. We tailor every aspect of our training, exercises and drills to be relevant to your organization and industry. We offer a variety of onsite and virtual formats, including micro-trainings and breakouts, with follow-up materials to ensure participants' knowledge retention.

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*Creating a more
compassionate world.*

Business Solutions

*Empowering
employees to reach
their full potential
with support, care
and compassion –
inside the workplace
and beyond.*

Education Solutions

*Helping students
succeed through
focused, meaningful
and accessible
resources meant to
enhance their life
and wellbeing.*

Crisis Solutions

*Supporting affected
populations with
compassionate
resources before,
during and after
a crisis.*

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