An Evaluation of the Efficacy of Active Attacker Training in the Postsecondary Setting

by

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COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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Abstract

Active attackers have become increasingly more common in schools across North America since 1999, particularly in the United States, so much so that regular training and drills take place, like fire drills. In postsecondary institutions, however, it is quite different, as students may opt out of offered training. The efficacy of active attacker training in postsecondary schools is an insufficiently researched topic. Postsecondary institutions in Ontario have been delivering active attacker training since approximately 2008, yet there have been no published evaluations on whether that training is beneficial to the postsecondary community. Does the training provide a benefit to the community, or is it provided so that institutions are perceived as addressing the issue of active attacker training? By engaging members of the postsecondary community, this study aims to determine what benefit, if any, the training provides to the community and how training can better reflect the needs of the communities.

Keywords: active attacker, postsecondary, training

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Active attackers have become increasingly more common in schools across North America since 1999, particularly in the United States, so much so that regular training and drills take place, much like fire drills. Before continuing however, an understanding of the definition of an active attacker is required. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (2018, p. 2.), defined an active attacker as "one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area." Implicit in this definition is that the subject's criminal actions involve the use of firearms (FBI, 2018). In the same study, the FBI also stated that the *active* statement implies that either law enforcement or the citizens have the potential to affect the outcome of the situation. In 2019, Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) updated its Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment protocol to include active threats. According to their website, the EMO definition of an active threat is "…a situation where an individual is actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area" (p. 202). Within the parametres of this study, however, the participants will provide the definition of an active attacker.

In Junior Kindergarten (JK)-12 schools, active attacker training and drills are mandatory, and students must participate. In the Ontario Ministry of Education's Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol, Appendix B stipulates it is mandatory that "All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a lockdown policy…" and that "A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each school year" (Ontario, 2022). Students in JK-12 schools are also minors and their safety is the responsibility of the teacher or other authority in the room. In postsecondary institutions (PSI), however, it is quite different, as students may opt out of offered training. Several American studies have examined the benefits and downfalls of lockdown, or active attacker training in JK-12 schools (Lero Jonson, 2017; Tonso, 2009). However, very little

empirical research is available on the benefit of active attacker training provided in postsecondary schools and whether community members were consulted in determining the type and level of training provided. What is the level of participation of postsecondary students in the training? Do students choose not to participate in training once they have a choice? What benefit do students see in the training? Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines benefit as "something that produces good or helpful results or effects or that promotes well-being." For the purposes of this study, training will be defined as something that is helpful, produces good results for the community and promotes safety and well-being. The efficacy of active attacker training in postsecondary schools is an under researched topic and one that we will explore in this thesis.

Postsecondary institutions in Ontario have been delivering active attacker training since approximately 2008, yet there have been no published evaluations on whether that training is beneficial to the postsecondary community. Does the training provide a benefit to the community, or is it provided so that institutions are perceived as attempting to address the issue of active attacker training? This study engages members of the postsecondary community to determine what benefit, if any, the training provides to the community. To put some perspective around the issue, it is worth noting that there are approximately 2.1 million postsecondary students in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2020), and 44 postsecondary institutions in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2020) with approximately 864,798 students (Statista.com, 2020). As a side note, the total population of Ontario in 2021 was 14,223,942 and the population of Canada was 36, 991,981 according to Statistics Canada's website.

The active attacker scenario is a frightening prospect for most postsecondary emergency managers. A major question for emergency management practitioners and administrators is how

to best prepare for the active attacker scenario? As an emergency management practitioner at an Ontario postsecondary institution, I have also struggled to understand this. What is the best method of training to protect our staff and students; or does the training to do more harm than good?

Chapter 2: Literature Review and summary

A review of English language, peer-reviewed literature on the topic of training for the active attacker scenario yielded several articles and papers, although none of them specifically discussed training in the postsecondary setting or the consultation of the community in determining the efficacy of the training. Consequently, one thesis and one dissertation serve as the basis for the literature review. Grimsley, (2015) and Snyder, (2014) specifically examine students' preparedness in the postsecondary setting for the active attacker scenario. Furthermore, Matt, (2017) noted that prior to the shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan in January 2016 "there had not been a single act of fatal youth violence in schools since the murder of Jordan Manners in 2007 in Toronto." However, the Dawson College shooting in Montreal in 2006 killed one and wounded sixteen others, and a shooting at the University of Alberta in 2012 killed three people (CBC News, 2016). In addition, the deadliest school shooting in Canada occurred in 1989 at École Polytechnique in Montreal when a gunman killed 14 women (CBC News, 2016). Ontario has never had a mass shooting at a postsecondary institution based on the FBI definition of a mass shooting an incident where "a number of murders (three or more) occurring during the same incident, with no distinctive time period between murder" (FBI, 2008). Matt's (2017) study focused on the perception of preparedness of staff within JK-12 schools and as such, it was not utilized as part of the literature review for this study, which is focused specifically on postsecondary institutions.

Grimsley (2015) researched the students' perceptions of institutional preparedness to respond to an active shooter along with the effectiveness of Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) used during an incident. Grimsley (2015) used quantitative methodology to implement an online survey for students to answer specific questions regarding their perceptions of the institution's preparedness and notification procedures. The method was chosen due to its quick turnaround for gathering data. However, the survey offered no interaction with the researcher and provided no means for participants to obtain clarification on question meanings. The study included only one institution based on the researcher's proximity to that institution. Grimsley (2014) utilized a stratified random sampling of students compiled equally from commuter and non-commuter populations to see if there was a difference in perceptions between the two groups. The researcher sent invitations to be part of the study to 2,000 students and received 214 responses. After coding and discounting invalid replies, 202 valid responses remained for analysis. The cumulative analysis indicated that twenty-two students indicated a positive level of perceived preparedness because they had previously taken training and considered themselves resourceful. One hundred and sixty-eight students reported negative feelings of preparedness for various reasons, including feeling as though they would panic, not being able to carry a weapon, lack of police presence on campus, and the lack of timely notification about an incident. The largest number of students, 61, stated that they did not have enough information from the school about what to do in an active threat, had never been trained, did not know the protocol, and that the protocol as not communicated. Due to the limited scope of the research, i.e., one institution, the data may not be generalizable to students across the country. The results of the study indicated that some students had an increased level of awareness of their institutions level of preparedness simply because the institution had an emergency plan. The study also noted the

influence of proximity to the shooter to the students' perceptions of their personal level of safety. For example, the farther away from the shooter, the more able students felt to protect themselves. Although no specific evidence was provided for administrators, Grimsley (2014) did note that administrators perceived their institution to be well prepared to respond to a crisis, despite no statistical increase in preparedness activities over several years preceding the study.

Snyder (2014) examines the impact of active attacker training on students' perceptions of resilience and safety. Snyder compared the effects on students of two prominent types of active attacker training– the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) "Active Shooter: What Can You Do?" and the Centre for Personal Protection and Safety's (CPPS) "Shots Fired on Campus: When Lightning Strikes (Student Edition)," which are both self-directed training programs. The researcher randomly assigned four groups of 30 students to different interventions. Group A watched the DHS video, Group B watched the CPPS video, Group C watched both and Group D, the control group, watched none. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the students' perceptions of safety after participating in the computer-based active threat response training. Snyder (2014) found that training had a positive influence on the students' perceptions of resilience, but not fear, when shown only one video. The group that viewed both videos showed the largest increase in feelings of resilience and safety. Students felt more of a connection to the CPPS training because it was set in the college atmosphere in which they lived and studied. By contrast, students in the control group had lower perceptions of safety and resilience due to their lack of exposure to awareness, training, and general information regarding campus safety. Data from the control group may be generalizable across the country, as the control group may be more representative of college students in general (Snyder, 2014). One limitation from Snyder's study was the collection of data from a single school.

While both studies included students from postsecondary institutions in determining the results of their specific research questions, neither study engaged students to determine what type of training was best suited to their environment, or if training should be delivered. Both studies focused on schools in the United States. Due to the rarity of active attacker events in Canadian schools, (two in Canada since 2000 [CBC News, 2016], compared to 15 in the United States [National Centre for Education Statistics, 2019]), very few studies focused on training in Canadian schools at any level, including postsecondary institutions. A literature review revealed that no studies included the engagement of postsecondary community members, in Canada or the United States, (students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners) in identifying fears and concerns that may be addressed to ensure self-efficacy in those that receive training, which is the gap in the literature this research intends to fill. Both studies used self-directed computer training programs that did not allow for interaction between the researcher and participants. In addition, this method did not allow participants to ask for clarification of questions, elaborate on their answers or provide full responses to the questions.

Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.27) note that one of the main reasons for conducting a qualitative inquiry is that very little has been written on the topic, so the research is exploratory, and the researcher listens to participants to gain an understanding of the issue being studied. In addition, this exploratory research intends to fill the gap in our knowledge pertaining to the benefit of active attacker training by engaging students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners from several institutions. By including several institutions from across the province, and including all constituents, it will make the results more generalizable across postsecondary institutions, not only in Ontario, but perhaps across Canada and the United States. Although the incidence of active attackers is lower in Canada than the United States, they do

occur and the topic warrants research and discussion. From 2000-2016, there have been two shootings at PSIs in Canada (CBC News, 2016), and 15 in the United States between 2000-2017 (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2019). It is in the best interest of colleges and universities to ensure sufficient preparation and training for this low likelihood, but high impact event. However, it is necessary to determine whether the active attacker training delivered in PSIs is benefiting the communities they are serving. Qualitative research methods give participants the opportunity to tell their story and provide rich, full, and unlimited responses to research questions (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Qualitative researchers collect information from participants and use thematic analysis to create codes and themes for examination. The analysis of qualitative data tends to take longer due to the nature of data gathered (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participatory research allows those affected by a given situation to contribute to decision-making processes and their own fate, (MacDonald, 2012). The intent of this research was to engage a broad selection of members of the postsecondary community in the evaluation of the benefit of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Research questions

Qualitative research questions should invite exploration of the central question being asked, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Questions should imply an "open and emerging design," therefore using *how* or *what* at the beginning of questions allows the participants the freedom to express themselves without restraint. Creswell and Creswell (2018), also note that asking a *why* question implies the researcher is trying to test a theory and this approach is better suited to quantitative inquiry. They also recommend one to two main research questions with no more than five to

seven follow up questions. Using broad, open-ended questions and exploratory verbs will elicit full responses and exploration of the phenomenon being studied. The central questions should be broad enough to allow for full exploration of the topic and the complex factors involved without guiding or influencing participants to a specific response (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The motivation for conducting this research was to talk to students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners at postsecondary institutions and find out what they think. Is there a better way to train, and if so, to provide consistency in training across institutions, or should we train at all? Therefore, the two research questions to be answered by this inquiry are:

RQ1a: How is active attacker training delivered in the postsecondary setting?

RQ1b: How does active attacker training influence the participation of postsecondary community members in training?

RQ2: How can we evaluate whether students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners in postsecondary institutions are benefiting from the training?

Potential follow up questions are:

1. What is preventing students from participating in the training?

2. What is preventing faculty and staff from participating in the training?

3. How can emergency management practitioners in the postsecondary setting make the training more palatable for their communities?

4. How can emergency management practitioners in the postsecondary setting get more engagement from their communities in training?

5. What are the obstacles to training delivery?

6. What are the obstacles to more community engagement?

7. What are potential positive alternatives to training?

8. Other potential questions may reveal themselves throughout the process that will also allow for additional research and investigation.

World view

Having spent most of my life working for government or quasi-government organizations, I have always believed that we need to continually review our processes, including training. In my experience, the best way to do that is to engage and include the communities we serve to ensure we are meeting their needs. Because of that, my worldview leans heavily to the social constructivist philosophy. Creswell and Creswell (2018), state that the goal of social constructivist research is to "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (p.8). They stress using open-ended questions and allowing meanings to develop socially within the group by interactions with each other. They also note that it is the intent of the researcher to make sense of the information provided by the participants, and the final theory or outcome is the result of inductive reasoning employed to reach that conclusion. However, the pragmatic worldview also influenced my research.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) also state the pragmatic researcher is not committed to a specific philosophy and does not see the world in absolute terms – that there is not one simple solution that works for all. Pragmatists also seek to "find solutions to problems" (p.9). As I started my research, I did not have a theory to be tested, but rather questions to be answered in hopes of finding a solution to a problem – how to best deliver active attacker training.

Method and Methodology

Methodology

The research employed a qualitative inquiry. Caelli et al. (2003) described generic qualitative research as inquiry that claims no allegiance to any particular research methodology; that is interpretive and exploratory, and research that simply seeks "to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and world views of the people involved" (p.2). In conducting a review of research options available it was clear that the questions do not conform to other established methodologies, as they do not seek to confirm a theory, or develop or test a new theory. Since existing data do not exist to compare, contrast, or use to develop a new philosophical framework or theory, the research questions do not lend themselves to mixed methods research, (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The research questions seek to break new ground in the development of a process or procedure to address the lack of consistency in active attacker training in postsecondary institutions and extend our body of knowledge on the subject. No literature supported the notion that the affected community (students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners) were asked for their opinions on the benefit of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 27), exploratory qualitative inquiry seeks to learn about a topic not yet explored and to listen to those affected by the topic of inquiry. Including members of the postsecondary community in the research helps to ensure that future training is more responsive to the needs of the community.

The interpretivist/constructivist approach is best suited to this generic qualitative inquiry. Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted that the interpretivist approach seeks to gain meaning of the world in which we live and relies on participants' views of the situation or scenario studied.

Broad, open-ended questions allow the participants to construct the meaning of the question asked. The researcher interacts with participants and inserts their own experience and knowledge into the discussion to make sense of and analyze the information provided by participants. Rather than developing a theory, the researcher inductively seeks to find a pattern to the meaning. Caelli et al. (2003) note that it is important to acknowledge the theoretical position of the researcher. I, as the researcher in this case, am an emergency management practitioner at a postsecondary institution with experience in developing and delivering active attacker training. Therefore, my experiences and biases in relation to active attacker training informed but did not -influence, my interaction and discussion with the participants.

The participatory research engaged community members from PSIs with the goal of gaining an understanding of their view of current training content and methods to determine 1) if they find it beneficial, and 2) do they think it would be useful in a real situation. While one could argue that participatory research is more widely used for inviting social change for under-represented or marginalized groups, I would assert that the spirit of participatory research also applies in this case. MacDonald (2012) noted that participatory research allows both the participants and the researcher to share information and learn from each other. It embodies the notion that people have the right to be involved in decisions or actions that directly affect them and to participate meaningfully in those discussions to affect some control over the outcome. Colleges and universities are a microcosm of the communities in which they are located. Therefore, postsecondary institutions consist of many under-represented and marginalized groups that may experience training differently and these groups deserve an opportunity to have their concerns heard. Participatory research will afford them that opportunity. Participatory research can be an educational process that enables the development of a community approach to

a social problem. MacDonald (2012) notes that the educational sector uses participatory research to improve curriculum and educational programs, of which active attacker training is one example; and offers the development of knowledge as a collective experience driven to improve the situation for all.

Method and Procedure

Due to the ongoing pandemic, and the unforeseen timeline in the change to the new reality, the method of conducting this research changed. At the time this study was conducted, all PSIs in Ontario were delivering most of their programming remotely. This had an impact on my ability to connect with the PSI community. The study consisted of six virtual focus groups of 1-8 individuals. In two cases, only one person logged in for the focus group, so it became an interview. The focus group script and questions were followed in the same order to ensure consistency in the process.

Each session consisted of either students, faculty, or staff. Each participant was asked the focus group questions. The intent of the questions was to elicit open discussion from participants on their thoughts, opinions, and feedback on the benefit of the current active attacker training provided at their institution.

Separate focus groups were conducted for emergency management practitioners recruited from postsecondary institutions in Ontario to obtain their feedback and opinions on the active attacker training they develop and provide for their respective institutions. The intent of separating the practitioner focused groups was to prevent unintended bias or influence on non-practitioners that may come from mixing the focus groups. The need to conduct focus groups virtually had to be balanced with confidentiality. Confidentiality was maintained by advising participants that they did not need to turn their camera's on during the session. This was

important because all sessions were recorded to allow me to refer back to the session during the analysis phase.

Recruitment

It was difficult to connect with students from various institutions virtually, however, by connecting with the Registrar's Office from other PSI's, I was put in touch with the right areas to assist me in my recruitment. A means of communicating to faculty and staff was also required, as all schools were working remotely. As part of the Research Ethics Board (REB) application process for several schools, I was required to provide recruitment messages that the school would post on internal staff portals. Connecting with practitioners was more straight forward. I have been working in the field of emergency management for over 20 years, and specifically in the postsecondary sector for over 15 years. I have developed a reputation as an honest, hard-working professional who is always willing to assist others develop their programs and skills. I have developed relationships with my colleagues that are based on mutual respect and trust, therefore, when I reached out to recruit participants, I was able to connect with my colleagues on a personal and professional level to gain their support and assistance. Approval from the Royal Roads University REB, along with approval from the REB of other participating schools, was required. Caelli et al. (2003) note that the method of data gathering should be congruent with the epistemological point of view of the methodology. In keeping with the spirit of generic, qualitative inquiry, the best method for data collection would be in person focus groups and interviews. However, due to the pandemic, it proved more difficult to maintain congruence between method and methodology. Great care was taken to ensure integrity and rigour during the process.

For the sake of others who may seek to undertake research at various colleges in Ontario, I offer the following summary of my experience. In Ontario, there is a body called the Multi-college Research Ethics Board. If you want to conduct research at more than one college in Ontario, you *must* submit a REB application to this board, which I did. I received a letter from that board indicating that approval was recommended for my research. However, it was not made clear that, despite that approval, I still had to submit a REB application to each individual college that I wanted to engage. Therefore, I had to submit seven different REB applications to seven different schools, all with different requirements; wait for responses, make any changes, resubmit, and so on. In the end, between my required REB from my home institution, the multi-college REB and the individual REBs, I completed and submitted nine REB applications. The entire process added an additional and unexpected four-month delay to my research timeline. I give this summary not to criticize the process, but to provide forewarning to anyone who is considering undertaking research at multiple colleges in Ontario. Take note of this requirement and be sure to add the additional work and approval wait-times to your research timeline and be prepared for other unexpected delays within that process. In the end, I received approval from five colleges. One college denied my request, stating that the subject matter was not in keeping with their institutional culture. One college had technological issues that precluded my application from being reviewed prior to their REB leaving for the summer. I was invited to resubmit in the fall, however, that was too late for my timeline. Of the five colleges that approved my research request, I received responses to participate from community members from only two institutions.

All volunteers who participated in the study were required to be current students, faculty, staff, or emergency management practitioners at a postsecondary institution in Ontario, be a least

18 years of age and be able to give informed consent. Consent forms were emailed to prospective participants prior to conducting virtual focus groups. No collection of personal data, such as names or date of birth took place. All data gathered is confidential and became the property of the researcher. Purposive sampling (Cooper & Endacott, 2007) was used to ensure a rich cross-section of participants from across PSIs. It was important to ensure a good cross-section of representation across institutions so that no one group was over or underrepresented. Fourteen participants were engaged in the process. The notion of how much data is sufficient was also of importance. Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that the idea saturation derives from grounded theory and states that data gathering is complete when no new data or themes present themselves. Caelli et al. (2003) note that the tendency in qualitative research is to state that saturation was achieved, without an explanation of what saturation means in terms of a specific study. For the purposes of this study, and since little research exists on this topic, I did not strive for saturation. It was important to gather as much data as possible for the initial inductive study to provide a baseline for initial data analysis and for future research. Detailed handwritten notes and audio recordings, where applicable, were utilized to track and record data. I also engaged in a reflexive process during the study by including my observations and thoughts about the process and participants, and what I uncovered along the way (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To ensure rigour, in cases where information was unclear, follow up and clarifying questions were asked during the focus groups to ensure an understanding information and data. In all cases, I was able to ascertain the meaning and intent of all data provided.

A thematic analysis of data identified, organized, described, and reported on common concepts and themes that emerged from the data, which were then coded and analyzed, (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis was well suited to this study as it is flexible, modifiable and

provides a more accessible approach to analyzing data. A detailed thematic analysis was conducted throughout the process that highlighted commonalities and differences in data sets. As each session was completed and notes reviewed, themes started to emerge. Themes were recorded, mapped, and categorized into groups, such as expected or contrary themes, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The lack of clear guidelines or rules for thematic analysis can prove challenging for the novice researcher, as noted by Nowell et al. (2017). It was important to stay focused on the data and the themes it presented. It is important to note again, that since this is an under researched area, the importance of demonstrating rigour cannot be overstated. The review of the data and identification of themes was essential, as the results of this study will set the baseline for future research. The analysis of the data provided recommendations moving forward regarding the benefit of active attacker training, and, if found beneficial, for a consistent approach to active attacker training and for future research. The conclusion provides a summary of the study, the method and methodology utilized, a detailed review of the thematic analysis and recommendations for future research. The intended outcomes of this research are:

- to determine the efficacy of current active attacker training in PSIs

- implications for future active attacker training in PSIs

- to produce an academic paper on the findings of the research

- to produce a template for a common and consistent approach to active attacker training at PSIs

- to set a baseline for future research

Limitations

The study did have some limitations and obstacles to overcome. The Covid-19 pandemic emerged as a new obstacle, which had at that time, shut down most of the province and the

country. Colleges and universities had closed and were delivering classes remotely, which presented difficulties in conducting focus groups and collecting data. However, technology provided solutions. All focus groups were conducted online. It is likely, though, that there would have been more participation, particularly from students, had I been able to conduct the focus groups in person. Another limitation could have been the inability to connect with emergency management practitioners in the PSI setting as they were and still are busy managing their responses to the pandemic and its impact on their institutions. Of the 22 emergency management practitioners invited, nine participated in the study. Despite the limited number of participants, the information obtained yielded beneficial results which could be replicated with future studies. Specifically, some of the limitations included:

- The inability to recruit students to participate in the study

- Not including universities in the study for community members (three universities were represented in the practitioner group)

- Having only two college represented in the focus groups

- Researcher biases on current active threat training, as I have been developing and delivering this training for several years. I had to set aside my thoughts on the subject and focus on feedback from participants

- The fact that I am in this profession could also have influence the responses received. It is possible that people, especially students, would give an answer they think I want, as a person perceived as having power. I was cognizant of this and worked to ensure that participants provided their honest feedback and not what they thought I wanted to hear.

I was pleased to see that my worries about individuals being apprehensive about being honest were unfounded. All participants in the study were very candid and blunt in their responses and

recommendations. I required diligence in connecting with various groups and worked to maintain a balance between not having enough participants and having too many or, having too many from one stakeholder group. It was important not to have any one group over or underrepresented in the study. I also needed to work on keeping my own biases in check while conducting the research. Although generic qualitative research acknowledges the participation of the researcher, it is important for the researcher not to become the focus, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter will provide a detailed summary of the findings of the focus groups and interviews. Since this is a first for this type of research in Ontario and Canada, I will provide an in-depth summary of the focus groups to provide a baseline for potential future research. A total of six focus group/interview sessions were conducted. All were scheduled to be focus groups, but in a few instances, only one individual logged in for the session, thereby becoming more of an interview. In all cases, questions were asked in the same order to maintain integrity of the process. First, I will provide an overall profile of the participants followed by the overall findings. Second, I will provide each question posed to the groups and a detailed summary of their responses. To conclude the chapter, I will compare the findings and identified themes of both the community and practitioner groups, highlighting similarities and differences between the groups.

Participants

To participate in the research, all participants were required to be community members at an Ontario postsecondary institution (student, staff, faculty, or practitioner), be at least 18 years

of age and able to give informed consent. As noted in Chapter 3 under "Method and Procedure",

the only separation of focus groups occurred between practitioners and community members.

The perception being that community members may not feel as though they could speak freely if

the person responsible for delivering active attacker for their institution was present. Therefore, a

separate focus group was held for practitioners. All other focus groups included a mix of

community members. As a result, two sessions were held for practitioners and 4 for

postsecondary community members. No demographic information was collected as a

requirement of these focus groups. All community participants represented Ontario colleges.

Practitioners represented three universities and five colleges in Ontario. All institutions

represented in the research study were large, urban institutions with a total student of population

of between 14 thousand and 24 thousand (colleges) and 25 thousand to 40 thousand

(universities). Students from several institutions were invited to participate in the focus groups.

Three students registered, but unfortunately, none logged in for the session. Therefore, no

student feedback is included in these results.

Overall Findings

The findings for the study will be presented using the format of each question asked

within the focus groups. As the summary for each question is provided, the themes that were

identified for each question will be provided. A final overall summary will be provided at the

end of this chapter. To track each comment, participants have been assigned a code to identify if

they are a Community Participant (CP) or Practitioner Participant (PP). Each is accompanied by

a number to attribute comments to the correct individual. For example, CP1 or PP4. See chart in

Appendix A.

Q1: What is your definition or understanding of an active attacker?

It was important to ask this question to establish a common understanding of the topic to be discussed, particularly between practitioners and community members. If participants are not all working from the same general understanding, the data will not be worthwhile. In terms of the definition of an active attacker, there were common themes that identified themselves immediately. For example, every participant noted that there is a level of violence associated with an active attacker, including the use of a weapon, most likely a gun. However, it was also noted that the weapon involved can be a knife, a baseball bat, or even a vehicle as was the case in the 2018 van attack in Toronto. CP1 noted that "anyone has the potential to be an active attacker". CP3 noted that the individual "has made a threat and has the means to carry it out". PP4 added that the individual is "actively engaged in killing people" and takes place in a "confined or populated area", while PP5 added that there is "no pattern or method to how they choose their victims". In summary, based on the comments provided, I could ascertain that all participants were working from the same or very similar definitions of an active attacker, which included the key theme of violence, and that common understanding would underly the rest of the focus group.

Q2: Tell me about your experience with active attacker training.

None of the six community members felt that they received any active attacker training from their current institution. However, it is interesting to note that, although they were given information or directed to a website, none of the participants considered that to be training. For example, CP1 stated that during their previous position at another organization (in the health care sector) they received very detailed, in-depth, and in-person training. All participants noted that they were pushed towards "self-directed" learning either by watching a video or reading material online. CP2 also stated that the training was self-directed, but they only had to do it once. They

felt that the training gave them sufficient information at the time, but it was three years ago. CP2 stated that they "would be hard pressed to remember it now". CP2 also noted that the training was mandatory at the time, but no refresher has been provided or required since then. CP3 also noted no training at their current institution, only being directed to "links to emergency protocols" and "would not call it training". CP3 did state though, that at their previous institution (a university), they did receive very extensive training in active attacker as a first responder for the institution. Training included not only what they would need to do as a first responder for the institution, but that they also received the same detailed training that community members received in how to respond to an active attacker. CP3 felt this put them in a better position than most at their current institution and noted that the information was "very passive". CP4 noted that they have been at their current institution for over 13 years and has "never had that type of training", noting that they do "drills that are announced and we know are coming", but to prepare for them, they had to "read myself". CP4 also noted that it was "not actual training, more static that active". CP5 and CP6 echoed the same response, indicating that they had never received any training at their institution. CP6 added that they were familiar with the training from a previous institution but has "not received any training here". CP5 was required to watch a video when the head of security attended a new employee orientation session which outlined what to do (leave if you can, lock door, hide), but it was not specific training on active attacker. CP5 remembered that they "felt more comfortable knowing what was expected of me as a professor" but has had no training since. CP6 then remembered perhaps being told to watch a video as part of orientation, but again, nothing since then.

The practitioner responses were quite different and not what I expected. I'll explain why at the end of this section. Practitioners discussed the training they deliver and the use of videos

and directing the community to a website. Several practitioners (PP5, PP6 and PP7) noted that they had videos for the community but received feedback that they were "too violent" or "triggering" for community members, so they had to stop showing the videos. All practitioners directed their communities to websites and videos for information for a variety of reasons. PP6 indicated that they do not "single out" active attacker as a potential threat but use an "all hazards" approach. PP2 noted that they attempted to conduct in-person training but that "attendance was very low, not getting good return on our investment". PP4 said they provide "in person for wardens, security staff" and that if anyone asks for it, they will deliver it, but that is "mostly upon request". PP6 also noted that they "push towards the website". PP1 noted that, when they started in the postsecondary sector, active attacker was a new concept, which required them to become "self-taught" in the response. PP1 specifically noted reading FBI reports and reaching out to colleagues to obtain information on how to respond. This led to an interesting discovery and differentiation among the practitioner and community responses regarding experience with training. The practitioners could not discuss the training they took because it did not exist when they started working as emergency managers in postsecondary institutions. Instead, the practitioners focused on the training they developed and how it is delivered.

In summary, when discussing their experience with active attacker training, two major differences surfaced. One – practitioners did not have experience in taking training as they were the ones developing and delivering it, for the most part directing community members to links and websites. Community members, on the other hand, do not equate simply reading or being directed to a website to watch a video with training. The dichotomy is interesting. From a community member lens, the desire seems to be for in-person training, or at least for the option of in-person for those who want it. However, practitioners indicate a low participation rate when

it comes to in-person delivery. Potential solutions will be discussed in the Recommendations chapter.

Q3: Do you feel there is value in the training? Why or why not?

Bearing in mind that the community members do not consider reading or watching videos training, they did all find value in the information. CP1 noted that it should be viewed through two lenses, that of staff and students. Staff are under contract and obligation and a "different level of expectation while you are working" to keep people safe. For this reason, staff require more in-depth, in-person training to ensure they know what to do. Students, on other hand are transient so it is "our job to keep them safe while they are with us". Everyone needs to know what to do, but the training should be different for each group. That continues to the be theme and assessment from the remainder of the community members. They all feel the information is valuable, e.g., numbers to call, listen to announcements, etc., however, they also feel that training should be mandatory and repeated. CP3 noted that the value for them was in the fact they had received extensive training at their previous institution. They felt that if they were a new employee at their current institution there would be little value "because it doesn't provide me with any experiential basis". CP3 also noted that training was taken "too casually" by institutions in general and experience in training can provide a better outcome in a real situation. CP1 noted that it takes "21 times to change a behaviour", and while we cannot conduct 21 drills or training sessions per year, repetition is key. Many also felt that holding drills once or twice a year was not helpful due to the lack of mandatory, repeated training. CP5 noted that their initial training was several years ago and remembering that information gets harder as time passes, stating that "you forget things if you don't do them repetitively". CP6 agreed and stated that training should be "required at least annually, part of requirements year over year". CP6 came from a hospital

setting and was struck by the fact that the hospital was more focused on education than the college. Again, it was noted that there should be in-depth training for staff and faculty, at least as a first introduction, and then a mandatory refresher annually that could be a bit shorter in length. It was also noted that "there is no reason it should not be mandatory for students" as well (CP5).

Practitioners also felt the training has value; however, they do also note that active attacker is only one of the hazards facing postsecondary institutions and they need to focus on all hazards, not just one. PP1 noted that active attacker is a scary topic, and many people are uncomfortable discussing it. Several of the practitioners noted that students coming from high school already know active attacker information and are less interested in the information than they are on how they will be informed of an incident. PP2 stated that students tend to ask, "what is the unique way you will tell me there is an emergency…". However, PP6 noted that international students have very little experience or knowledge of active attacker situations, and this was also the case amongst mature students.

In summary, all participants, both community and practitioners acknowledge the value of the training, however, there is a disconnect with the frequency, level, and the need for training to mandatory. Community members indicated that they want mandatory, repeated training while practitioners indicated they received push-back when they tried to do more.

Q4: Please tell me about the information you were provided during training.

Most community member participants could not remember the information they were provided because it was so long ago. For many, it had been years since they have taken the training or read the online information. CP3 felt the information was more "guidelines" than instruction on how to respond. They did note they were told to close the door, barricade the door,

turn out the lights, etc., saying it was useful but "hard to transfer this to real life". CP3 thought that conducting a debriefing of sorts of previous incidents might help people think through the situation, not to lay blame, but rather to discuss what happened and what people imagine they would do in the same situation. Rather than reading, if someone "actually showed me, I think I would be more likely to remember" (CP3). CP4 advised that they received email blasts, links to information, and reminders of drills for several days prior to the drills. Sometimes active attacker and fire drills are held at the same time. CP4 shared that they had a one-hour presentation from Health and Safety which included lockdown, or active threat, in the presentation, but that hour also covered several other topics including OHS policies, but it was not in-depth active attacker training. CP5 did not get any handouts, physical information, or tools to utilize and noted that the person just spoke for an hour. They did note that although they felt somewhat comfortable that they knew what to do after the session, they have not taken the training since and feel less comfortable as time goes by.

Practitioners focused more on how they delivered information rather than the information itself. PP4 noted they are at a large school so it is impossible to reach people in a detailed way and that the subject matter can be triggering for some. They noted that you need be "careful about how much information you give" and give notice to participants that the information may be sensitive and if "you don't want to see this, you don't have to". When asked if anyone acted out the response, many said no. However, PP8 did state that you must "read the room" to determine if it is something you could potentially do, or perhaps just "talk through it". One institution gave information in terms of how the conduct drills though. PP1 indicated that they conduct drills and often try to include local police in the process. They include several community members in their drills and garner feedback from the community on their experience

during the drill and then take that information to continuously improve their processes because they have to "evolve with the times". PP1 also stated a desire to deliver more in-person training and is working towards that goal.

In summary, again there is an interesting dichotomy between community members and practitioners. Community members overwhelmingly express a desire for in-person, interactive and more realistic training. Practitioners indicate that they have very little uptake on in-person training and that it is difficult to navigate how to deliver it without potentially triggering participants.

Q5: What recommendations do you have for improving the training?

Community member participants had very clear and direct thoughts on how to improve training. First and foremost, training should be delivered in person, at least for the initial training. CP1 went so far as to note that it is not just about the response to this type of incident, but the prevention of it as well. CP1 recommended risk assessment training, Student of Concern committees, "helping individuals developing a risk threshold". They also suggested doing smaller focus groups within the PSIs to bring people together to ask what their concerns and questions are and how they can be addressed. Faculty members need to become mentors within these discussions as well since they are responsible for the safety of the students in their classrooms. CP2 noted that training should be mandatory and "at least annually, like WHMIS", and said it should be "absolutely mandatory for all – first time and annual refresher". Bringing experts from other institutions and agencies was also suggested to get a different perspective. It was noted that sometimes we stop paying attention to the people we know and see all the time (CP4). CP3 echoed much of what CP1 expressed. They noted that training needs to be "thoughtfully designed and scaled to a number of employees" and to think about "who it is

you're trying to train". Training should be reflective of the role an individual plays within an institution as well. Many noted that one-size does not fill all and that full-time and part-time employees may have different needs, as do faculty and students. CP3 also noted that individuals have different world views and different reasons for taking the training, therefore it must "be thoughtful and give options". Consideration needs to be given to the dynamics of your organization when developing training. Consistent comments throughout the sessions indicated that training needs to be institution-wide, a more formal process rather than ad hoc, in-person, although online should be an option for those who prefer it, after they have taken the initial in-person training. CP6 reiterated that staff and faculty also need to "keep an eye on students" along with security to help to identify students at risk before a situation escalates to an active attacker. Although outside the scope for this thesis, it is worth noting that prevention activities are important to undertake as well. Almost every college or university in Ontario as a committee established to review and manage cases of students or staff at risk. These committees are key to sharing information, identifying troublesome behaviours, and implementing intervention techniques to prevent students or staff from undertaking violent actions that could potentially lead to an active attacker scenario.

Practitioners also had some very clear thoughts on improving the training. PP1 agreed that we must understand "our differences and similarities, catering to our diverse communities". They also suggested moving away from text heavy presentations and using more graphics and discussion. Understanding the process and what is required is also key. An uptick in training is needed to help develop "muscle memory" (PP1) to keep the information fresh, much like fire drills. Training senior leadership is also important to ensuring a top-down mentality on the importance of the training. For institutions with such programs, including students from police,

fire and paramedic academic programs could go a long way to building the credibility of the training and drills since the information and support is coming from peers rather than leaders or those in a position of authority (PP1). Other suggestions including being consistent with drills within the first two to three weeks of the term, videos on messaging boards, including closed captioning, offering training to each department or faculty and recommending training for new staff (PP6). Give an opportunity for community members to give feedback on training and drills (PP5). PP4 indicated that, based on the size of the school, we are limited in what we can do and noted that "it is up to the individual to inform themselves of the emergency procedures on campus", noting that it is hard to "compete with 1,000 other attempts for their attention".

In summary, although there are some similarities in the recommendations, there is still a disconnect between community members and practitioners. Community members had very clear, direct, and actionable recommendations for improving training, which include making training mandatory for all, annual, and in-person, at least initially. This follows the overarching theme from the community members of their desire for the information and tends to contradict the practitioners' notion that community are reluctant to take the training. However, practitioners did recommend utilizing first responder students in delivering training and conducting drills and for the first time it was noted that training leaders within an institution could potentially boost an uptick in training.

Q6: Please tell me about your thoughts on the continuance of this training in the postsecondary setting. Does it provide a benefit to the community or instill fear?

Community member participants unanimously expressed that training is a benefit to the community if done properly and regularly. The notion of mandatory training was raised again (CP5). Two members (CP1 and CP6) noted that the use of a gun or other weapons during

training would not be of benefit. Using the training to initiate difficult conversations about active attacker and putting a positive spin on it was also described as a benefit to training. It was noted that to not deliver training would be more of a disservice to the community and the impact of not delivering training is severe, as a person with a gun or other weapon can do a lot of damage in a very short time. The negative impression of the institutional leaders was also noted as potential impact of lack of viable training (CP2). If leaders are seen as not knowing what to do in response to this type of incident, it will have a negative impact on the reputation of the institution. It was noted that, while the training is a benefit, perhaps more could be done in terms of communicating why we are doing the training to help eliminate some of the fear around the topic (CP3). As one participant noted "if it saves one life, it's worth it" (CP6). It was recognized that most students coming from high school have experience with active attacker training and drills, but if they can take away or remember just one thing from the postsecondary training, then it is worth it. CP1 noted that everyone knows about these types of events now as they are quite common. The importance of knowing what to do should this situation ever occur was noted several times by participants, including the notion that people cannot avoid the training because the topic is uncomfortable, or they are afraid of the situation. The benefit of knowing what to do cannot be overstated.

Practitioners also agreed that training is beneficial, if delivered with the correct approach and perspective. "It is not beneficial to try to hide things from the community" PP1 stated, also noting that strategy is important in delivering training such as using orientation, open houses, and tours to provide information to parents about what we are doing to keep their children safe. PP1 also noted the increased access to information and that everyone knows about these events. The importance of instilling confidence in the community that they know what to do in this type of

incident was also stated, however, all practitioners also noted that an all-hazards approach is more beneficial from their perspective as opposed to focusing on one specific topic. They acknowledged that it is their duty to ensure that their communities are prepared to respond to any type of emergency that may occur. PP4 noted that it is a difficult situation to navigate. On the one hand, many in the community find videos and training too violent or upsetting; on the other hand, when an incident occurs, the community is quick to condemn the institution for not being proactive, stating that "it's too much and then not enough when people need it". PP8 noted that we do not necessarily do enough because feedback has been that training is too "scary". However, they are trying to move forward with a stronger program. Referring to the van attack in Toronto 2018, practitioners noted that they had to take advantage of the incident to push and promote training and exercises, noting that, when an incident occurs, the community appetite for information increases for a short time and you must "seize the opportunity". The same holds true for events that occur outside of your local area or country. These events can be utilized to increase the awareness of and participation in training, noting that "in-person training is highly requested" after an incident.

In summary, while the identified theme is that while both groups agree that training is beneficial to the community, there is a significant difference in the methodology. While community members state that training should be mandatory and that staff and students should not avoid the training because it is uncomfortable, practitioners must consider how all community members feel and find the best way to deliver the information to the entire community; finding a balance between the need to know and overwhelming some members of the community.

Q7: Do you have any final comments, statements, or questions?

Community members had a few comments to add to the end of their focus groups. In general, it was noted that, although one size does not fit all, there should be some standard of requiring active attacker training at colleges and universities. For example, approaches could be developed for large schools versus small schools, or urban versus rural. It was also noted that the culture and diversity of the schools must be considered as well, to ensure that differing world views are addressed in the development of institutional training. Complacency was also noted as an obstacle to delivering training, noting that many people think "it won't happen here" (CP1). It was also suggested to present training with the mindset that the school is safe, but you never know when a risk may present itself. CP2 noted that, coming from acute care and having drills regularly, "it's imperative that postsecondary take a look at some of the codes in acute care". This respondent also noted that they had been at their institution for four years (partial load) and had never been on campus for a drill. CP3 reiterated the benefit they received from having people from different institutions and agencies deliver their training. It gave them access to differing world views and depths of knowledge.

Practitioners had little in the way of additional comments but did have a few key salient points. First, again, they agreed that there is no one right way for all institutions, but they also agreed that training needs to be developed based on the type of institution, size, location, diversity, risk assessment, and likelihood. They also noted that these types of forums are beneficial in finding ways to come together and have a common format for the development of institutional training. All acknowledged that you need to approach training development with an open mind and ask questions, even if you think you know the answers, to ensure you cover all potential areas and points of view. PP4 noted that the lack of a national strategy and no direction from the province or the federal government makes it feel like "we are fighting a losing battle".

PP4 also noted that the federal government does have information on active attacker response but does not want the information made public. Practitioners also agreed that they spend a lot of time on this particular hazard and not a lot of time on other hazards that are "far more likely to happen" and that active attacker shouldn't be the only thing that is talked about, but "it's the sexy subject" that garners attention.

Both groups agreed that there is not a one size fits all type of response to an active attacker, but rather a mindful and purposeful approach is needed, taking into consideration each institution's community make up and risk assessments. Practitioners also had a level of frustration at the time and attention paid to the active attacker scenario versus other hazards and the lack of any lead or direction from either the provincial or federal government.

In summary, three major themes presented themselves throughout the focus groups. First, the definition of an active attacker. All groups agreed on the basic definition of an active attacker as being a person, armed with a weapon, intent on causing harm or killing as many people as possible, usually in a confined space. A common understanding of the definition was important to ensure that everyone was working from the same interpretation for the remainder of the focus group questions. The second theme is the difference in the perception of what constitutes training. While practitioners indicated that self-directed training is available on websites and through videos, community members felt this was reading as opposed to training. Community members considered training as something that is delivered in-person. While practitioners did not state how often self-directed training is to be completed, community members indicated that they were only directed once to read a website or watch a video. Community participants expressed a desire for training to be delivered at least annually, in-person and for training to be mandatory for all staff and students. Conversely, despite the stated preference for in-person

training, practitioners indicated low uptake for in-person training when it is offered. Since community members do not feel that reading on the website is training, they are less likely to read the information. Since community members do not feel that they are not required to repeat the training, they are less likely to do so. The difference in the understanding of what constitutes training is quite significant between community members and practitioners and is something that needs to be addressed by practitioners to ensure they are meeting the needs of their communities.

The third theme speaks to a "one size fits all" approach to training. All groups agreed that active attacker training is beneficial and that there is no "one size fits all" training for all institutions. Community members and practitioners did have some agreement in how to develop and manage training. Both groups indicated that training development needs to be mindful, deliberate, purposeful, and needs to consider the individual composition, location, risk assessment, culture, and audiences. Both groups noted the importance of determining what type of training is best suited to a specific institution and the groups within it. For example, full and part time staff may not need the same level and type of training. The same can be said for students and staff. Perhaps staff require more in-depth training than students since students are transient and staff for the most part are permanent. The main difference comes back to the frequency and requirement for the training itself. While practitioners did not mention frequency, community members were adamant that training should be mandatory for all (although perhaps different types of training for different audiences) and that it should be required annually with the first session being more in-depth and subsequent sessions shorter in duration. It is important to acknowledge the sense of frustration from practitioners on the lack of direction from any level of government. The implication being that, if there was some support and/or direction to postsecondary institutions on how to manage the response to an active attacker, it could potentially lend more credence to

the training and therefore make it easier to develop and deliver training to those communities. Overall, the groups agreed on the definition of an active attacker and that training is beneficial, however, there were some key differences on what is considered training. The groups did agree however, that development of training needs to be specific to each institution. These similarities and differences will be reflected further in the Recommendations section.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

This study was conducted to explore the perceived efficacy of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting in the province of Ontario, Canada. Although there is a plethora of information on active attacker training from the United States, there is very little, if any, available in the Canadian context. The goal of this study was to fill the gap in the research and provide missing knowledge to emergency managers in the postsecondary setting in Ontario, and perhaps throughout Canada. Since this is the first study of its kind in Ontario, I was compelled to provide as much information as possible in the results of the focus groups as well as to provide as much detail as possible with respect to the recommendations. The recommendations are derived from the themes and each recommendation includes a brief explanation.

Recommendation #1: Ensure everyone is working from the same definition of an active attacker

There are many definitions of an active attacker. The FBI defines an active attacker as "an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area" (FBI, 2018). Similarly, Emergency Management Ontario defines an active threat as "a situation where an individual is actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area" (EMO, 2019). I did not find a definition of active attacker from either Public Safety Canada

(PSC) or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), although the RCMP website (2015) does refer to the FBI definition provided in the Chapter 1. Since emergencies are first managed at the local level, PSC focused more on terrorism events than active attacker. Many agencies and organizations take these definitions either in whole or in part to use as their own definition. As noted in this study, both community members and practitioners had the same general understanding of an active attacker – which is a person, armed with a weapon, intent on harming or killing as many people as possible in a confined space. As noted by Kaner, (2014) "Without a shared understanding, meaning collaboration is impossible." In order to have any meaningful and beneficial training, it is important for all parties to have the same understanding and definition of an active attacker.

Recommendation #2: Ensure everyone is working from the same definition of training

As with the definition of active attacker, it is also important to have the same understanding of training. It was apparent during the focus groups that community members and practitioners had very different interpretations of training. While practitioners noted that training was self-directed, online and in videos, community members did not consider reading or watching a video to be training. To be truly successful, everyone must have the same understanding of the definition of and differences between training, education, and information. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website, training is defined as "to make proficient with specialized instruction and practice" (FEMA, 2022). Merriam-Webster defines education as the "action or process of teaching someone especially in a school, college, or university" and "the knowledge, skill, and understanding that you get from attending a school, college, or university", (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Information is defined as knowledge that you get about someone or something; facts or details about a subject

(Merriam-Webster, 2022). The definition of information implies a one-way communication without the opportunity for interaction. Although similar, there is a subtle difference between the definitions of training and education. The definition for training refers to "specialized training or practice" which implies some level of interaction between the trainer and the trainee and that some action, e.g., practice, takes place to enhance skills. The definition of education implies more of a one-way transfer of information or knowledge, without benefit of practice. The comments from the community members reflect the need and desire for training versus education or information. They feel the interaction and practice will help them remember the important information presented during the training. The principals of adult education should be considered when developing training of any kind. According to Finn, (2011), the art of teaching adults, or andragogy, is "distinct from the art of teaching children". Adults tend to have an internal need or drive to learn, are problem centred rather than subject centred, will draw on their life experiences and social roles, tend to be self-directed, and "need to know why they need to know what they are learning" (p. 37). Self-directed does not necessarily mean they prefer to read or take online training. Self-directed can also imply that the individual will determine what training is important to them. Practitioners need to consider these principles when developing their training and ensure that their training and delivery method meet the needs of their community. They can start to determine those needs by conducting focus groups, which is the next recommendation.

   Recommendation #3 –Conduct focus groups

   Talk to your community. Listen to your community and determine what they want. Practitioners should conduct focus groups with members of their own communities, like the ones conducted for this study, to determine what the community wants in terms of training and aim to

give them what they need. Despite the feedback from practitioners that community members are triggered by active attacker training and found videos too violent, community members in this study overwhelmingly stated that they not only want the training, but that they want it in-person, interactive, and often. I cannot explain this dichotomy in responses other than to say that it is important for practitioners to listen to their communities and respect the outcomes. Since this training is directed to and benefits the entire community, it is important to include community members in the process and allow them to speak freely to recognize various perspectives, experiences, and world views. As Kaner, (2014) noted, "This basic recognition is what allows people to think from each other's point of view" (p. 24). Conducting focus groups and obtaining feedback will result in training that is more robust and meaningful to the community. Practitioners should, however, inform community members that this training will be uncomfortable and will discuss uncomfortable topics and actions. They also should give their community members the ability to make the decision that is best for them in terms whether they take part in training. For those that chose not to participate, alternate options should be provided, such as online, videos, or reading information. However, it is important to give everyone the power to make their own decision. Given the feedback from this small sampling the data indicate that more individuals want the training that do not. Once practitioners have gathered this information, they can develop training that is thoughtful, mindful, and specific to their community that considers the size, geographic location, diversity and culture of their community and organization. However, implied in this recommendation, and in line with recommendation #4, is the notion of repetition. As the student base of colleges and universities is transient, and staff are generally more static, it is important to repeat these focus groups often and adjust training as necessary to reflect the current needs of the community. While each practitioner will

need to determine the best review cycle for their community, it would be advisable to conduct focus groups every two to four years.

Recommendation #4: Training should be Mandatory, Repeated, In-person, and Tailored to your community

Community members were clear and firm that they want active attacker training to be mandatory for all constituents – students, faculty, and staff; they want training repeated, at least annually, with options for in-person sessions, and that it should be thoughtfully designed and tailored to each institution's unique and diverse community. The ability to declare any training mandatory falls out of the prevue of emergency managers, however, they can urge senior leadership within their organizations to do so. Conducting focus groups as per Recommendation #3 and obtaining input and feedback from community members may assist in achieving that goal. Having data from focus groups to support the desire for mandatory training may help sway decision-makers. However, despite the inability to make training mandatory, emergency managers have control over the training they deliver and the frequency thereof. Practitioners can increase offerings and requirements for training to at least annually. They can also tailor training to suit various groups and populations within their organizations. For example, student versus staff; part-time staff versus full-time staff, etc. Acknowledging that not everyone needs the same level of knowledge and training, staff could receive more in-depth, in-person (at least initially), detailed training, perhaps 30-60 minutes in length; while students can participate in shorter training sessions of approximately 30 minutes, since most domestic students have received this training in high school. International students may require more in-depth information. The same type of formula could apply to full-time versus part-time faculty and staff, providing the level of training required for each position. However, no one should be denied the ability to participate in

any training session should an individual want to take a more in-depth or in-person session. The key part of this recommendation though is that the training must be repeated. Continuously throughout the community member focus groups, the importance of repetition was stated. Community members noted several times that, since they were only required to read information once, they did not remember it and over time forgot the information provided. As one participant stated in one focus group, it takes 21 times for a behaviour to be learned. While no one expects individuals to attend 21 training session per year, it is important to listen to the community members who highlighted the need for repetition.

Recommendation #5: Utilize students/external subject matter experts

Many participants, both community and practitioner, agreed that utilizing external subject matter experts from other postsecondary institutions or first responder agencies would be beneficial. Often times, individuals stop listening to the message if they repeatedly hear it from the same person or group. They incorrectly stop thinking of the messenger as a subject matter expert and start thinking of them as a nuisance. Having emergency managers from other schools, or first responders such as police, fire, or paramedics, participate in training can help to engage community members, provide a fresh perspective, and reiterate the messaging that the training is conveying. Groups also agreed that utilizing students can increase the benefit of training. Again, students will often not listen to practitioners or other trainers because they are seen as authority figures who are simply saying what they are told to say. However, if the school has first responder programs such as police, fire, or paramedic services, recruiting those students to participate in training delivery is of great benefit, because the information is seen as being delivered by a peer as opposed to an authority figure which may give it more credence with students.

In summary, one size does not fit all. Not all training will be the same because no two institutions are the same. Training will vary from institution to institution, community to community. However, if we follow the same guidelines in the development of training, the methodology will be consistently applied across all institutions and training will be suited to each school because it will be based on community needs. As per on the recommendations, the guidelines for training development are as follows:

1. Ensure understanding of the definition of active attacker
2. Ensure understanding of the definition of training
3. Conduct focus groups to determine needs
4. Training should be Mandatory, Repeated, In-person, and Tailored to your community
5. Utilize students/external subject matter experts

Research Questions Answered

The focus groups were conducted with the goal of answering the research questions regarding the benefit of active attacker training. Following an in-depth review of the recordings and notes from the various sessions, and the presentation of the findings, this section will review the research questions to determine if they are answered and, if so, to what extent.

RQ1a: How is active attacker training delivered in the postsecondary setting? Active attacker training is delivered in various formats across institutions, however, there was a disconnect between community members and practitioners on what constitutes training. Most community members indicated they were directed to a website or a video and did not consider this to be training. Practitioners indicated that training was self-directed via websites and videos, and they did consider that to be training. Community members also noted that training was not

repeated and only required once. They felt this did not keep them updated or prepared to act should they need to. Practitioners did not mention frequency of training. Community members felt the training should also be mandatory for all. Practitioners did not mention mandatory training. Despite the difference in responses and interpretation of training, this question was answered as the responses described the means in which information is conveyed to the community.

RQ1b: How does the type and method of active attacker training itself influence the participation of postsecondary community members in training? Community members stated several times that the active attacker training provided was online or through videos and that they did not feel that simply reading or watching a video constituted training as it is one-way communication. All community members stated that they were only required to review the information once. Community members stated that they would prefer in-person training at least once, with more interaction and discussion. Practitioners noted that training was available online and through videos and mentioned that when training was offered in-person, there was little uptake. Practitioners did not refer to a requirement to complete the training more than once. Based on the responses in the focus groups, the research question was answered. The type and method of active attacker training influenced participation since community members did not feel reading online was training, therefore there was minimal participation. Practitioners stated there was minimal uptake for in-person training but did not have information on how many community members had taken online training.

RQ2: How can we evaluate whether students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners in postsecondary institutions are benefiting from active attacker training? By evaluating the totality of the information gathered during the focus group, I was able to ascertain

that postsecondary community's do benefit from active attacker training, but only within a minimal timeframe of delivery. Several community participants noted that the information was useful at the time it was received, however, since training is not mandatory or repeated, it was forgotten as time passed. This was supported by many participants stating that it had been several years since they completed the training, and they could not remember the information provided. Practitioners stated anecdotally that there is a benefit to the training, however, these statements cannot be substantiated without supporting data. Overall, all participants believed the training was beneficial, however, data show that the training is not being delivered in a way that is meaningful to communities. The research question was answered, however, as the recommendations indicate, there is work to be done ensure that the benefit is lasting and impactful.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I undertook this research study for two reasons – my passion for emergency management and frustration at the absence of information about active attacker training in Ontario. The lack of any clear direction from any level of government, coupled with the lack of peer reviewed research, drove me to seek solutions that would provide realistic and actionable outcomes for practitioners along with a standardized approach to the development and delivery of active attacker training. For example, in the United States, the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), 2008, was updated after the mass shooting at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). Specifically, Part L, Section 821 (pp. 332-333), states that any institution receiving federal funding must have an emergency management program and that program must include, among other things, procedures for staff and students to follow in the event of an emergency and training on those procedures. There is no such legislation in Ontario

or Canada that requires postsecondary institutions to have an emergency management program, let alone provide procedures or training. The current Ontario legislation, the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA), 2006, applies only to elementary and secondary schools. It would be beneficial to have something like the HEOA in Ontario and Canada. Perhaps even a national training standard for active attacker response. Anecdotally, I have been advised that Public Safety Canada has an active attacker training protocol that has been developed for federal staff, however, it is not publicly available and can only be accessed by federal employees. It is difficult to understand the logic of keeping that information out of the public domain.

While it is true that there is no "one size fits all" solution for all schools, that does not preclude having a consistent approach and a standardized methodology as to how training is developed and delivered. As outlined in this paper, there are consistent parametres that can be applied to the development and delivery of active attacker training. The five recommendations outline a process that would allow for the methodology to be consistently applied across the board yet allow the training to be flexible and specific enough to reflect each institution and its community, culture, location, and risk assessment.

It is difficult to identify potential areas for future research in this area. The lack of available information is due to the low numbers of active attacker incidents that occur in Ontario and Canada. Perhaps we just need to take solace in that fact and recognize how lucky we are to live in a country where these are not such regular occurrences that people become complacent. As we all know, complacency is the bane of emergency managers, and it would be irresponsible for us as practitioners to become complacent on this topic. Active attacker incidents are (thankfully) rare in Ontario, but we cannot negate their impact simply because they are rare. It is

immeasurable. Other hazards, (floods, ice storms, tornadoes, power outages) are more likely to occur. Canada has not had a school shooting take place since 2016. Ontario has not had one since 2007, which supports the claim that school shootings are very low likelihood incidents, however, the impact is incalculable. The loss of life, injuries, psychological trauma, and reputational damage to a school because of an active attacker are dramatic. One need only say the names Columbine, Virginia Tech, or École Polytechnique to elicit a visceral reaction. When these incidents occurred, there were no emergency management programs in any level of school let alone lockdown or active attacker training. The victims of these incidents had no idea what to do or how to protect themselves and others. We have the knowledge, skills, and power to change that…but do we have the will?

By engaging communities in the process and having conversations about the risk of active attacker incidents versus other types of hazards, we can demonstrate the will to change the status quo. Practitioners must lead their communities to ensure that the information being delivered has been developed in a way that is thoughtful, purposeful, relevant, appropriate, based on risk assessments and most importantly, mutually beneficial for all. It has been 20 years since the last shooting in a postsecondary institution in Canada; 15 years since the last elementary school shooting in Ontario. There is a saying of unknown origin among emergency managers – the farther you are away from your last emergency, the closer you are to your next. Practitioners have a responsibility to ensure that their communities are prepared, trained, and know what to do – because it is not a matter of if, but when this will happen again.

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Appendix A- Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms

CP – Community Participant

CPPS – Centre for Personal Protection and Safety

DEM – Disaster and Emergency Management

DHS – Department of Homeland Security

EMCPA – Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act

EMO – Emergency Management Ontario

ENS – Emergency Notification Systems

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

HEOA – Higher Education Opportunity Act

JK – Junior Kindergarten

OHS – Occupational Health and Safety

PP – Practitioner Participant

PSI – Postsecondary Institution

PSC – Public Safety Canada

RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police

REB – Research Ethics Board

WHMIS – Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

Appendix B – Focus Group Participants

GROUP	FOCUS GROUP #	PARTICIPANT NUMBER	CODE APPLIED
Community	3	1	CP1
Community	4	2	CP2
Community	5	3	CP3
Community	5	4	CP4
Community	6	5	CP5
Community	6	6	CP6
Practitioner	1	1	PP1
Practitioner	2	2	PP2
Practitioner	2	3	PP3
Practitioner	2	4	PP4
Practitioner	2	5	PP5
Practitioner	2	6	PP6
Practitioner	2	7	PP7
Practitioner	2	8	PP8

Appendix C – Informed Consent

An Evaluation of the Efficacy of Active Attacker Training in the Postsecondary Setting

INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

My name is Kathy Branton. I am a Master's student at Royal Roads University in the Disaster and Emergency Management program.

I am conducting research on the efficacy and value of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting. The intent of the research is to 1) determine the efficacy of the current active attacker training delivered in postsecondary institutions in Ontario, 2) obtain input from the community affected, and 3) to develop a consistent training program for all colleges and universities to deliver. You may verify the authenticity of this research by contacting Dr. Justin Veuthey at Royal Roads University, Disaster and Emergency Management Thesis Supervisor at justin.veuthey@royalroads.ca.

To participate in this research, you must be a member of postsecondary community (e.g., student, faculty, staff, or emergency management practitioner), be at least 18 years of age and able to give informed consent.

Participation in the research will take place in the form of a focus group held via a private Zoom conference call. The date of the focus group is yet to be determined, however, focus group sessions will take place in February and March 2021.

Due to the subject matter of the research, it is possible that participants may become distressed during the focus group. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or distressed during the session, you may leave. If you feel you need any type of support as a result of the session, please contact me immediately following the session and I will put you in touch with appropriate resources. My email address is katbranton1@gmail.com.

Please note that your valuable ideas and opinions will appear in the report itself. However, no personal information such as your name or personally identifiable information will be used to attribute those comments to you. All information collected will be anonymous to the extent possible within the Zoom setting. There is always the possibility that participants may know each other. At the beginning of each session, participants will be advised that all comments made during the session are to be kept confidential and not to be discussed outside of the focus group setting. I may ask for a first name from participants in order to call on them or address them, but no surnames will be required, and attendance will not be tracked or recorded. The Zoom call will be recorded in order to allow me to review data as necessary after the session. Information from the focus groups sessions will retained by me for up to three years for the purposes of drafting the final report and for potential validation beyond thesis defense, after which time, the recording

will be deleted from all records. Participants are welcome to turn their cameras off if they do not wish to have their faces recorded during the session. The **Zoom** session data is stored in the USA. Data stored on servers in the USA may be subject to examination by the US government under the USA Patriot Act. While this likelihood is small, I am required to let my participants know this possible risk. Group methods will be used, confidentiality cannot be assured. Participants will be asked to not share information about who participated or others' contributions or interactions both in the consent form with reminders during session openings. All data collected will be retained by me for a period of up to 3 years, will secured on a password protected file, and may be used for further research or training development in the future. By signing this form, you consent to have the information you provide collected and recorded (both in written and audio format) by me. Consent may be withdrawn at any time during the process, however, information that has been collected and recorded by the researcher cannot be removed or withdrawn from the study. However, comments and responses provided during the focus groups are not attributed to any participant. Therefore, there is an extremely low risk of a privacy breach. Participants are also able to refrain from answering any question or questions they do not feel comfortable answering.

The information gathered during this research will be used to improve active attacker training in the postsecondary setting and increase the value and efficacy of the training. Each focus group session is expected to last for 60-90 minutes, after which, the time commitment of the participants will end.

At the end of the session, a random draw will be held among participants present, for two Starbucks or similar electronic gift cards in the amount of $20.00 each.

By signing below, you indicate your agreement with the above information. If you do not have a printer or access to a printer in order to print, sign and scan the consent form, a return email providing your consent will be sufficient.

Participant Name: (Please print) _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

I confirm I am over 18 years of age: Yes ☐   No ☐

Signature of Researcher: _____

Appendix D- Recruitment Message

An Evaluation of the Efficacy of Active Attacker Training in the Postsecondary Setting

RECRUITMENT MESSAGE FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

My name is Kathy Branton. I am a master's student at Royal Roads University in the Disaster and Emergency Management program.

I am reaching out to students and staff at postsecondary institutions to request participation in my thesis research. I have asked your institution to send this email out to community members on my behalf. Please respond directly to me if you are interested in participating in this important research.

I am conducting research on the efficacy and value of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting. The intent of the research is to 1) determine the efficacy of the current active attacker training delivered in postsecondary institutions in Ontario, 2) obtain input from the community affected, and 3) to develop a consistent training program for all colleges and universities to deliver. You may verify the authenticity of this research by contacting Dr. Justin Veuthey at Royal Roads University, Disaster and Emergency Management Thesis Supervisor at justin.veuthey@royalroads.ca.

To participate in this research, you must be a member of postsecondary community (e.g., student, faculty, staff, or emergency management practitioner), be at least 18 years of age and able to give informed consent.

Participation in the research will take place in the form of a focus group held via a private Zoom conference call. The date of the focus group is yet to be determined, however, focus group sessions will take place between March and May 2021. If you are unable to take part in a virtual focus group, you can also participate in the research either by completing an online survey through Survey Monkey or via telephone. If you participate through an online survey, a link will be sent to your email address. If you participate through a telephone interview, you will need to provide a contact number. The contact number will be deleted immediately upon completion of the phone call.

Due to the subject matter of the research, it is possible that participants may become distressed during the focus group. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or distressed during the session, you may leave. If you feel you need any type of support as a result of the session, please contact me immediately following the session and I will put you in touch with appropriate resources from your home institution.

Please note that your valuable ideas and opinions will appear in the report itself. However, no personal information such as your name or personally identifiable information will be used to attribute those comments to you. All information collected will be anonymous to the extent

possible within the Zoom setting. There is always the possibility that participants may know each other. At the beginning of each session, participants will be advised that all comments made during the session are to be kept confidential and not to be discussed outside of the focus group setting. I may ask for a first name from participants in order to call on them or address them, but no surnames will be required, and attendance will not be tracked or recorded. The Zoom call will be recorded in order to allow me to review data as necessary after the session. Information from the focus groups sessions will retained by me for up to three years for the purposes of drafting the final report and for potential validation beyond thesis defense, after which time, the recording will be deleted from all records. Participants are welcome to turn their cameras off if they do not wish to have their faces recorded during the session. The **Zoom** session data is stored in the USA. Data stored on servers in the USA may be subject to examination by the US government under the USA Patriot Act. While this likelihood is small, I am required to let my participants know this possible risk. Group methods will be used, confidentiality cannot be assured. Participants will be asked to not share information about who participated or others' contributions or interactions both in the consent form with reminders during session openings. All data collected, including the recording, will be retained by me for a period of up to 3 years, will secured on a password protected USB key, and may be used for further research or training development in the future.

The information gathered during this research will be used to improve active attacker training in the postsecondary setting and increase the value and efficacy of the training. Each focus group session is expected to last for 60-90 minutes, after which, the time commitment of the participants will end. At the end of the session, a random draw will be held among participants present, for two Starbucks or similar electronic gift cards in the amount of $20.00 each.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact me directly via email at katbranton1@gmail.com. Please indicate if you will participate in the virtual focus group, online survey or telephone interview. Prior to the session, I will send an Informed Consent form to participants which must be signed and returned to me before the session. I will review the informed consent form at the start of the session. Please note that you are free to withdraw from the session at any time, however, any comments made by you up until that point will become part of the research project. No names will be associated with any comments made. You can also choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

If you have any questions regarding the research process, please contact me via email.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katherine Branton

Masters Student – Royal Roads University

Appendix E – Focus Group Script

An Evaluation of the Efficacy of Active Attacker Training in the Postsecondary Setting

<u>FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT</u>

Hello everyone and welcome. Thank you for taking the time to join the discussion regarding the efficacy of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting.

My name is Kathy Branton, and I am conducting research on active attacker training as my thesis project in the Master's program in Disaster and Emergency Management at Royal Roads University. I will be facilitating our discussion today and we will be here for approximately 60-90 minutes. I have been an emergency manager in the postsecondary setting for the past 15 years. Active attacker training is something that I am very passionate about. This is a highly unlikely incident, but one that can have incomprehensible consequences and it is something that we must ensure our community members know and understand how to respond to. My goal is to have the output of my research put into practice at postsecondary institutions across Ontario and perhaps Canada.

I will be recording this session in order to access the information after the session, as necessary. You are welcome to turn off your camera if you do not wish to be seen in the video. The recording will not be shared with anyone. The recording will be used solely by me as the researcher to verify information and comments provided during each focus group, after the fact. Information from the focus groups sessions will retained by me for up to three years for the purposes of drafting the final report and for potential validation beyond thesis defense, after which time, the recording will be deleted from all records.

The purpose of today's discussion is to explore the efficacy or benefit of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting. I am conducting research on the value of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting. The intent of the research is to 1) determine the efficacy of the current active attacker training delivered in postsecondary institutions in Ontario, 2) obtain input from the community affected, and 3) to develop a consistent training program for all colleges and universities to deliver.

You were invited to participate because you are a community member at a postsecondary institution in Ontario and you are either a participant in, or deliverer of active attacker training.

Before we start, I want to review Informed Consent each of you has signed. Just to remind you, your consent to participate in today's focus group is voluntary. If at any time during the session, you decide you no longer want to participate, you are free to leave the session, or decline to any question you do not want to answer. However, any comments that you have made will be included in the research as I will have no way of knowing what comments are attributed to you in the recording. It is important to remember that the privacy of all participants is to be respected. Do not discuss the specifics of comments made during the focus group or attribute them to any participant. It is possible that participants may know each other, as they will come from the same institutions. Respect the privacy of others as you would have them do for you.

- I will review the key elements of informed consent and get verbal agreement from each. Where possible, the Informed Consent form would have been sent to all participants in advance and I will

have all signed copies in my possession at the time of the focus group
- I will remind the group that the session in being recorded, and they are welcome to turn off their cameras if they do not want to be recorded. I will encourage participants to respect the privacy of the others in the group by refraining from talking about the others' participation (in the event that they know anyone in the group) or discussing what they said. They are welcome, of course to share what this wish about their own participation, responses, and experience
- I will remind everyone that this is a safe space for free and open discussion and to raise any questions, concerns or recommendations they may have

I also want to assure you that during our discussion today there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I expect that you will have differing points of view and that is a good thing. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.

If you want to follow up on something that someone has said, you want to agree, disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. However, do not feel like you have to respond to every question. I am here to ask the questions, listen to your responses, and make sure everyone has a chance to share.

I am interested in hearing from each of you. So, if you're talking a lot, I may ask you to give others a chance. And if you are not saying much, I may call on you. I want to make sure I hear from all of you – each of you has something valuable to add to this discussion of active attacker training in the postsecondary setting.

I will be taking some notes as we go to help aid the discussion. As a reminder, I am recording the session to ensure I don't miss any of your comments or recommendations.

I will ask you for a name to refer to you by during our session. You will need to give at least first name for when we get to the discussion portion of the session and the "*raise hand*" function. No names will be included in any reports or articles generated through this research.

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

Research Questions:

For your information, the research questions I am attempting to answer with this research are:

RQ1a: How is active attacker training delivered in your postsecondary setting?

RQ1b: How does the type and method of active attacker training itself influence the participation of postsecondary community members in training?

RQ2: How can we evaluate whether students, faculty, staff, and emergency management practitioners in postsecondary institutions are benefiting from active attacker training?

Focus Group questions:

I will now move to the questions for the focus group. I will ask the question first and give you a minute to think about it. Then I will ask the question again and ask if anyone would like to volunteer to start the discussion. Please use the "*raise hand*" function when you would like to speak and I will call on each person in turn.

1. **What is your definition or understanding of an active attacker?**
   - *Can you tell me what the phrase "active attacker" means to you?*

2. **Tell me about your experience with active attacker training.**
   Potential follow up questions to assist participants:
   - *When did you take the training?*
   - *Where did you take the training?*
   - *How long was the training session?*
   - *Was it interactive or lecture style?*
   - *What type of response were you trained in – e.g., lockdown/passive response, or Run Hide Fight (Defend)*
   - *How did you feel after the training? Were you distressed after the training/feel more vulnerable; or did you feel more prepared?*
   - *If you felt distressed or more vulnerable, what can be done to alleviate that feeling? E.g., having someone there to discuss stress or counseling availability and options.*

3. **Do you feel there is value in the training? Why or why not?**
   Potential follow up questions to assist participants:
   - *Please tell me about the realism of the training. E.g., the level of reality or sensationalism in the training*
   - *Please tell me your thoughts on whether or not you could use the information provided if you had to.*
   - *Please tell me specifically what you liked or disliked about the training.*
   - *Tell me about the trainer and the knowledge and experience they brought to the training.*
   - *Tell me about the time allotted for questions or clarification on the training*
   - *Can you discuss your thoughts on if you think an active attacker could ever occur at your school?*

4. **Please tell me about the information you were provided during the training.**
   Potential follow up questions to assist participants:
   - *What information were you given on how to respond to an active attacker?*
   - *Can you tell me how you feel out about the information provided?*
   - *Do you think it would help you respond to an active attacker?*
   - *Can you describe the content or realism of the training?*
   - *Please discuss whether you think you could actually use the information/tactics provided. For example, if the training was Run Hide Fight (Defend) – please tell me if you think you could actually fight a potential gunman?*
   - *What other options or alternatives to the information provided did the trainer offer?*
   - *What feedback to you get from your participants? Did they find it useful, realistic, etc.?*

5. **What recommendations do you have for improving the training?**
   Potential follow up questions to assist participants:
   - *If passive lockdown, what are your thoughts on that response?*
   - *If Run Hide Fight (Defend), what are your thoughts on training people to engage or defend themselves in an active attacker situation?*
   - *Should training be more interactive and have more role play or scenario's?*
   - *How often do you think this training should be delivered?*
   - *Tell me your thoughts on consistency of training, e.g. whether training should be the same for students, faculty and staff, or different based on who you are.*

- *Please tell me about the overall benefit or value of this training.*
- *Or, please tell me about the overall lack of benefit or value to this training.*

6. **Please tell me your thoughts on the continuance of this training in the postsecondary setting. Does it provide a benefit to the community or instill fear?**

7. *Do you have any final comments, statements or questions?*

<u>Closing:</u>

I want to be sure to leave an open up space for anyone to add anything else that you may think of after or were uncomfortable saying in this session. If you think of something you would like to add after our session or have something you were uncomfortable saying in the group, you can email me up to one week after this session to have your comments included in the final report.

I'd like to thank you all for attending this virtual focus group and for sharing your thoughts and ideas with me. I appreciate the time out of your schedule to participate in this session. As a thank you, I will now conduct a random draw from the participants for one of two electronic Starbucks gift cards. I will write down two numbers between 1 and 20. I will ask each of you to pick a number. Winners will be the two people who pick the actual number or come closest to the number. In the event of a tie, the winner will be the closest number without going over. I will show you the numbers on the video screen after the draw. The winners can email after the meeting with their contact information so I can email them the electronic gift card.

If you would like a copy of the final report, please email me with your contact information. I will share the final report with you once it is completed.

Thanks again for your participation. I appreciate your input to my research.

(adapted from Krueger and Casey, 2000)