

Finland - Shooting incidence in Hyvinkää in May 2012

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On Saturday 26:th May 2012 at 02 o'clock in night in Hyvinkää, a town with 30 00 inhabitants 50 kilometers from Helsinki, a 18 young man shot two young persons and injured seven. One of the very seriously injured was 23 year old police women, who were in duty that night. The shooting happened from the roof of the house in the square in the centre of the town, when people went out from the restaurants. Some customers had to stay in the restaurants for many hours, because the police did not know where the shooter was. The shooter escaped after the shooting and he was captured by the police five hours later in the wood 1½ kilometer from the shooting place. One deceased and two of the injured were players in the local baseball team playing in the highest level and the police women was playing football in a team also in highest level. This made the incidence still more dramatic.

Early intervention

Hyvinkää Crisis Centre personal opened a walk-in crisis centre at 3.30 the same night in the building of Hyvinkää hospital. They could not open it in their own house, because the police had sealed off the place. Five professional crisis workers and a medical doctor started the crisis work and during 24 hour the first 100 victims visited the Centre. The centre was open the whole weekend and during the weekend 160 persons visited the crisis centre. Among the visitors were people, who were at place, when shooting happened and also many who knew the deceased and injured persons visited the crisis centre. All who needed help of the medical doctor could have it immediately.

Red Cross volunteers were on the street and in the square, where the shooting happened and supported people, who brought candles and flowers and also other in need for support. The youth club was open the whole weekend and they had a possibility to get extra personal to work with those, who visited the club.

During Sunday preparations were made in those schools where the deceased and injured studied for crisis support and services. The shooter had also studied in a secondary school a year before. Crisis support was organized also in this school. In all schools the teachers came 45 minutes before the school day started to the school and had their own crisis session. They were also informed of the crisis help in school that day. The schools had all the same time a memory service and during that the students got information of crisis help organized in their school. Classmates of the deceased had both a psychological debriefing session in the classes. Also other groups were collected for group sessions. Many individual discussions took place during that day. About 200 persons got crisis help in schools during the first two days after the shooting. Most of this crisis help was given by Finnish Red Cross preparedness of psychologists. Altogether during those days 10 psychologists took part in the work.

Hyvinkää crisis centre organized debriefing sessions for the family members of the deceased and injured. Also the baseball and football teams had crisis sessions for the members of the teams.

The schools ended one week after the shooting incidence. During that weekend Red Cross volunteers and professionals working with young people were available, but there were no need for special services.

On Monday, one week after the shooting, the city and different other organizations arranged a demonstration against violence. More than 1000 took part in the demonstration.

Long-term intervention

The Ministry of Social and Health Affairs has given 400 000 euro for Hyvinkää city to organize long-term intervention for the victims of the shooting. It has been used for employing more psychologists and social workers in schools, for supporting the searching youth work and for supporting individual psychotherapies. This work is still going on.

Evaluation and implications for the future

- 1) In early intervention the work of the crisis centre in the hospital was well organized and functioned very well. Those responsible for this work had been in such situation earlier (Jokela school shooting), knew each other, working conditions and local circumstances well and the result was effective functioning and high standard crisis help for those who visited the crisis centre.
- 2) The crisis work in schools during the first school days after the shooting was also well organized and all, who needed help that time had a possibility to get it.
- 3) The collaboration of different organizations (Hyvinkää city, Hyvinkää Crisis Centre and Red Cross psychologist) was very good. The roles were clear, everybody new their responsibilities and the information to each other functioned.
- 4) The decision of the support of the state was made very soon and it made it possible to start the planning of long-term crisis help in time.
- 5) To take part in the demonstration was felt healing. The whole community had a possibility to express their feelings in active way.
- 6) Even, when quite many of those who were on the square when shooting happened, knew each other, we cannot be sure all, who need crisis help, has got it. The people in the square were there by accident and there is no exact information of who were there. It is impossible to organize screening and to organize help for those, who do not seek for help themselves.
- 7) The summer holiday of schools started after one week. It would had been better to have these young persons in school and keep them on eye of the teachers and other personal longer time after the shooting incidence.
- 8) The legal proceedings against the shooter is coming after some months. It opens again the wounds of many of the victims. Many of them have to testify in the court.