



Fatality Review – The Method Makes the Difference

A cornerstone approach to all unattended deaths is - “It’s a homicide until proven otherwise”.

This does not mean that every unattended death is a homicide, but it does mean that every death must be taken seriously and always investigated as a potential homicide. We can learn a great deal by looking back and examining the history: the real, raw experiences of the family, friends, and intimate partners of a deceased child or adult.

Fatality review boards or committees have proven to be invaluable tools to reduce risk, enhance prevention efforts, and educate professionals and the public on significant patterns of abuse, safety risks, and insights into the human behavior that may have been involved in the death.

Fatality reviews of all suspected, unknown, or suspicious child related or domestic violence related deaths are invaluable to make determinations surrounding the death. Experience has taught us that a multidisciplinary examination is essential not only in reviewing case determinations, but for providing a comprehensive review of policies and procedures that could have prevented or mitigated the death.

Another benefit of a review of the circumstances of potentially suspicious deaths is that it can also lead to significant policy changes, better methods for investigating and prosecuting undetermined deaths, and provide meaningful prevention strategies.

Finally, child fatality review boards are the last line of defense for to ensure justice for child deaths, there are many red flags that warrant more questions and deeper investigations.

This presentation is intended for multidisciplinary professionals to better understand their respective roles and responsibilities, as well as effective strategies for actual case reviews.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss recommendations and reasons for fatality reviews
- The nuts and bolts: Who should be at the table, how should it be done
- Navigating Ego and the Systems
- On Child Fatality: how to see the red flags?
- Discuss fatality statistics and findings from a sample taken from prior fatality review cases
- Discuss and describe interpersonal challenges for first responders on potential child abuse and domestic violence calls
- Provide common scenarios and risk factors noted in family violence and child fatalities