

PSNVNet

# PSYCHOSOCIAL EMERGENCY AND CRISIS NETWORK (PSNV) AT THE ATTACK IN BERLIN 2016

01.04.2018 – 31.03.2020



*The terrorist attack on the Breitscheidplatz Christmas market in Berlin in December 2016 was a drastic event for victims and helpers alike. Psychosocial emergency care (Psychosoziale Notfallversorgung – PSNV) provides on-scene support to those involved in such incidents and also helps arrange other appropriate support if required. By analysing actions taken during this particular incident, the PSNVNet project aims to develop concrete recommendations for coordinating psychosocial acute care in emergency situations and for preparing actions within the relevant network structures.*

#### **+** BACKGROUND

Twelve people were killed and 66 were injured during the terrorist attack on the Christmas market on Breitscheidplatz in Berlin on 19 December 2016. The attack brought to public attention just how immensely important early, comprehensive and effective support is for those involved in such incidents as well as for so-called spontaneous first responders. This psychosocial emergency care is a key element of acute care. It provides support to those directly affected in the first few hours and days following an event and is closely interlinked with the medium- and long-term support provided in a regular care setting. Important aspects include providing one-to-one, on-scene support to those involved in an incident, as well as the early assessment of psychosocial risk factors and assistance in arranging appropriate additional support. The existing national guidelines apply a network-based logic to psychosocial emergency care, which first activates the personal and social resources of those affected (and of their networks) and then provides supplementary and complementary support. However, as yet no insights are available concerning how this theoretical objective is turned into concrete action and effected under the specific conditions of a terrorist attack.

#### **+** RESEARCH AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project investigates the question of how the psychosocial support provided to those involved in the incident on the Breitscheidplatz developed. Based on the analysis of incident logs, transcripts of ethnographic interviews, site



📍 Psychosocial emergency care during a commemoration ceremony in the Berlin Memorial Church (Gedächtniskirche)

layouts, and in drawing on various perspectives (psychosocial emergency care providers, spontaneous first responders, the police and fire brigade), the pre-arranged operational structures and responses, concrete support measures and the quality criteria for actions were evaluated. The plan is to use situational and discourse analyses to reconstruct the views and perspectives of the involved actors and to identify possible interface problems.

### ⊕ EXPECTED RESULTS

The aim in conducting this scientific analysis of the complex case study of the terrorist attack on Breitscheidplatz is to formulate concrete recommendations for coordinating psychosocial acute care in an emergency as well as preparatory activities within the relevant network structures. Transferring the research results into practice, the project will make recommendations regarding the future organisation, modus operandi and handling of the relevant interfaces in such situations. The research project explicitly aims to strengthen, in a practically relevant manner, a network organisation which is built on civic engagement.

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