

EVAP

External Violence Against Paramedics



#ProtectParamedics

Developing of a Violence Prevention Program in Peel Regional Paramedic Services

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Violence in Paramedicine
RESEARCH GROUP



Violence in Paramedicine Research Group



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**Violence in Paramedicine
RESEARCH GROUP**



External Violence Against Paramedics (EVAP): What are we talking about?

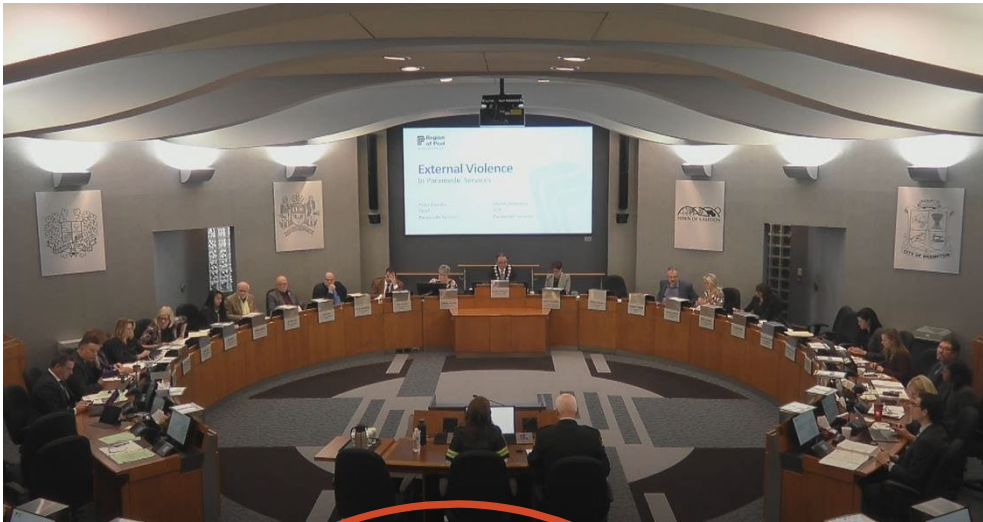


Is this normal?



Is this?

EVAP: Our beginnings



1



196

EVAP: What (little) we knew then

75%



- 98% had experienced verbal abuse
- 86% had experienced intimidation
- 80% had been physically assaulted
- 61% had experienced sexual harassment
- 13% had been sexually assaulted

¹Bigham, B., et al. (2014). Paramedic self-reported exposure to violence in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Workplace: a mixed methods cross-sectional survey. *Prehospital Emergency Care* ²Mausz, J. & Johnston, M. (2019). "Violence, in fact, is not part of the job" A qualitative study of paramedic experiences with workplace violence. Brampton, Ontario: Peel Regional Paramedic Services.

EVAP: Why it matters

"It's a whole other layer of negativity to unload before going home."

"I loose my compassion for people."

"I don't want to be treated that way."

"makes me want to go home."

"Definitely more aware and anxious on certain calls."

"It Happens So Often... It Feels Like It Is Part Of The Job."

"comments can be hurtful and degrading."

"It is frustrating that I'm expected to just take it."

"they make me feel worthless."

"YOU SHINE A LITTLE LESS BRIGHT."

"Chips away at my empathy tank."

"They can leave me feeling burnt out and just tired."

"Causes increased stress and anxiety."

"Makes me hate the public."

"They make me feel vulnerable to harm."

"I feel stressed out and hopeless."

"I felt a loss of power over myself and my job."

"AS I'M TYPING, IT IS BRINGING UP SOME ANXIETY THAT I DIDN'T REALIZED THAT I HAD ABOUT IT."

EVAP: **What (little) we knew then**

In a 2014 survey of paramedics from Ontario and Nova Scotia, Bigham & colleagues found that **75% had experienced violence** in the past year, but **81% never reported the incidents**¹

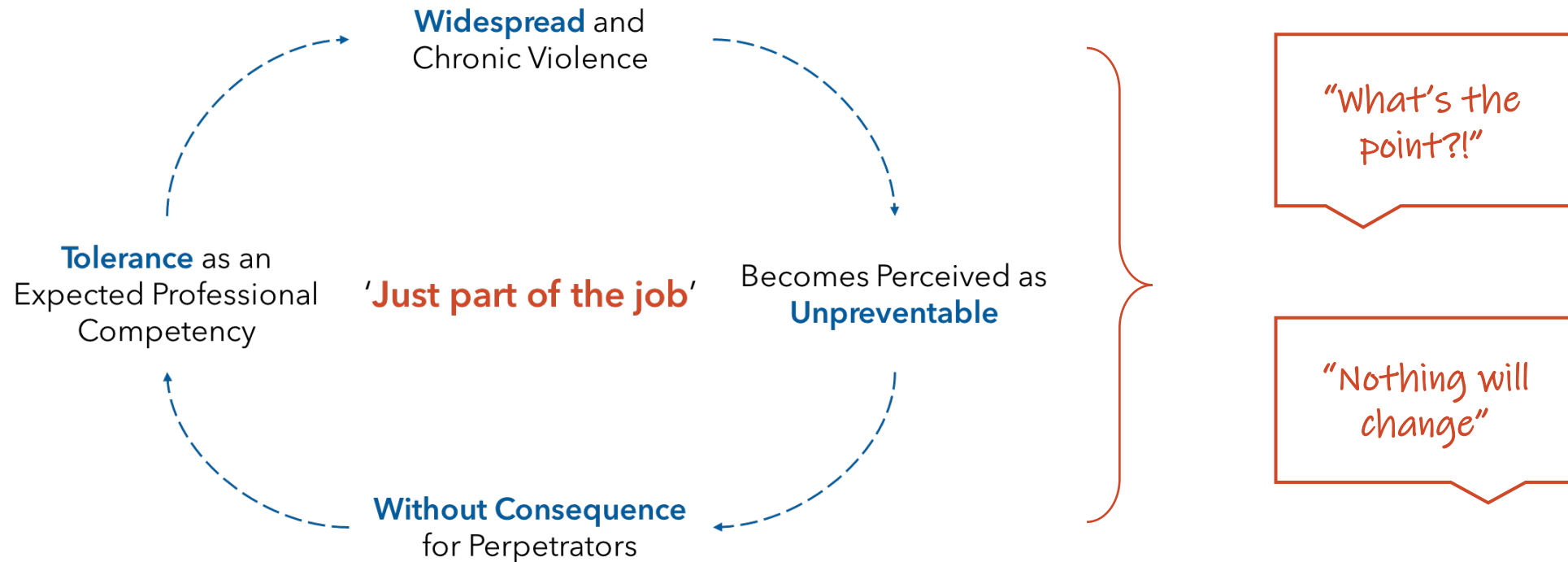
~~60%~~

Violence against paramedics is a '**serious public health problem**²' but one that remains '**vastly underreported**³'

¹Bigham, B., et al. (2014). **Paramedic self-reported exposure to violence in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Workplace: a mixed methods cross-sectional survey.** *Prehospital Emergency Care*, 18, 289-294. ²Maguire, B., et al. (2017). **Emergency medical service personnel's risk from violence while serving the community.** *American Journal of Public Health*, 107, 1700-1775. ³Murray, R., M., et al. (2020). **A systematic review of workplace violence against emergency medical services responders.** *New Solutions: a Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 29(4), 487-503.

EVAP: What we learned

How **Organizational Culture** Stigmatizes Reporting



EVAP: **Building our program**

Reporting violence
is critical to
change culture and
mitigate risk, but
an organization's
culture must change
to encourage
reporting.



EVAP: Building our program

What does a solution to violence against paramedics look like to you?

"Violence, in fact, is not part of the job"

A Qualitative Study of Paramedic Experiences with Workplace Violence



Justin Mausz, ACP, MSc, PhD(c) and Mandy Johnston, ACP

October 12th, 2019



Region of Peel
working with you

- ✓ Zero Tolerance Signage in Ambulance
- ✓ Public Awareness Campaign
- ✓ Advocacy for Legislation Changes
- ✓ Spit Hoods and Soft Restraints
- ✓ Collaboration with Peel Regional Police
- ✓ Zero Tolerance for Violence - Policy
- ✓ External Violence Incident Report
- ✓ Harassing Client Letters
- ✓ Research

EVAP: Building our Program

Zero Tolerance for Violence Policy



Zero Tolerance for Violence from the Public

Paramedics should not tolerate violence while at work. Peel Regional Paramedic Services has zero tolerance for our paramedics being subjected to violence from the public, and any incident of violence happening to one of our employees is unacceptable.

If you are a victim of violence:

- Contact police and exit the scene if you can
- Report the incident to your supervisor as soon as possible and let them know if you need them to attend the scene
- Ensure the incident is documented. Your supervisor will support you with this
- Document the address to be flagged if appropriate. This is crucial to keep you and your colleagues safer in the future
- Ask for support if you need it, even after the fact. Being subjected to violence can be emotionally impactful and the effects can be cumulative. You deserve care

What you can expect of your supervisor:

- When alerted of a violent incident and that their presence is required, supervisors will attend the scene, stand up for paramedics and set boundaries with perpetrators of violence
- If not already done so, supervisors will contact police and advocate for their timely arrival. If appropriate, they will also advocate for charges to be laid
- They will ensure that you receive emotional support and medical care if required
- They will support you in completing necessary documentation

As an employer we are committed to providing paramedics with a workplace that is safe, to preventing violence and to supporting paramedics following all violent incidents. **No one should ever be subjected to violence while at work.**



•To **address a workplace culture which has normalized violence...**



•To **dispel the paramedics' belief that their employer expects them to accept and tolerate violence** at the expense of their own well-being and safety or to provide 'good' customer service



•To **support and empower** both paramedics and superintendents in 'standing-up' and 'speaking-up'...



•To create **a strong, and bold statement which can be used publicly** condemning the violence...

EVAP: Building our Program

External Violence Incident Report (EVIR)

Paramedics Said	Our Solution
"Incident felt too minor" →	•The EVIR was developed to <u>easily collect information on ALL harassment and violence</u>
"Violence feels like a normal part of the job" →	•Developing an incident report, specifically for harassment and violence, <u>reinforces that violence is NOT a normal part of the job</u>
"Reporting is burdensome" →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The EVIR utilizes <u>auto-population, checkboxes, and dropdown menus</u> •EVIR is <u>not like the traditional IR</u>, all un-necessary fields have been removed •The EVIR <u>serves as a MOH required IR and Hazard Flag</u> •It contains all information needed by a supervisor <u>to complete a RAIDR</u>
"What's the point? Nothing will change." →	•The EVIR collects <u>data, to identify trends, high risk patients</u> and analyze, to better understand circumstance and risk factors surrounding violence <u>for future prevention</u>

EVAP: Building our Program

External Violence Incident Report (EVIR)

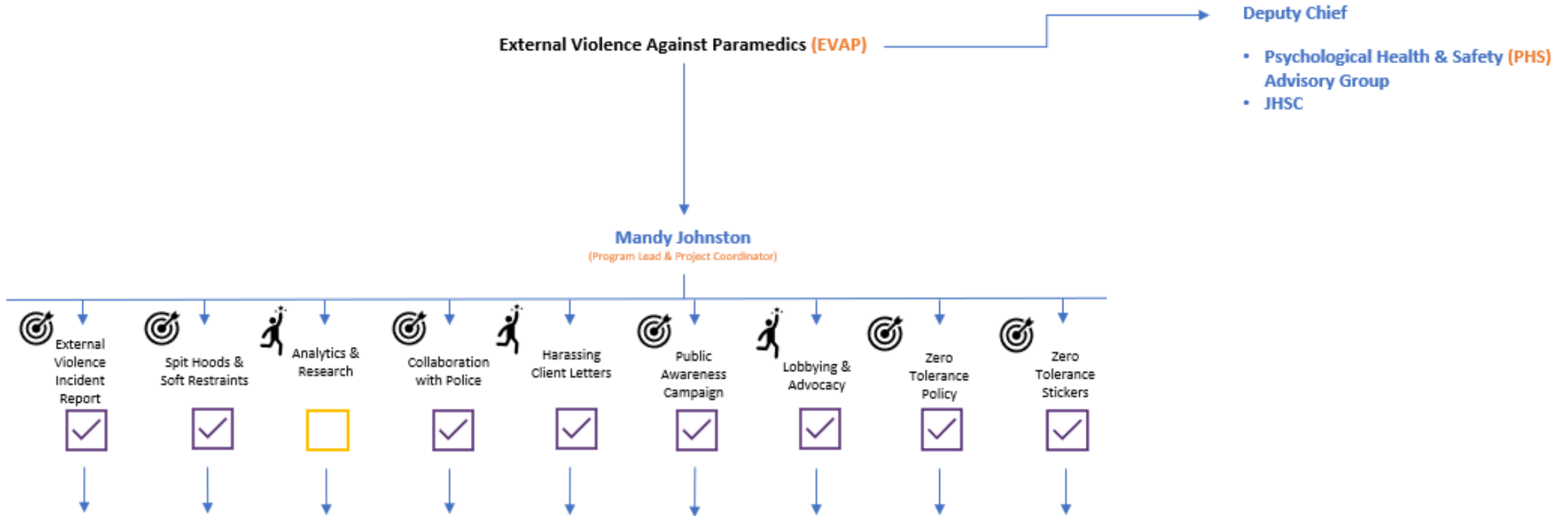
mDOCS External Violence Incident Report					
Save As Draft and Close		Submit and Close			
Reporting Section					
To Whom Does This Form Apply: -- Select Option --	Call Number:	Incident Date/Time:	Incident Type: Select All That Apply -- Select Option(s) --		
Identify Source: Select All That Apply -- Select Option(s) --	Please specify other source:		Circumstances: Select All That Apply -- Select Option(s) --		
Location of Incident: Select All That Apply -- Select all that apply --	At this time are you emotionally impacted as a result of the incident: Yes No I'm Uncertain		Were you physically harmed as a result of the incident: Yes No		
What happened? Please be specific and detailed. Due to privacy concerns please do not include any of your own personal Medical Information					
Was a hazard flag communicated by CACC: Yes No		Do you recommend the creation of a hazard flag for violent behavior: Yes No		Confirm criteria is met for creation of a hazard flag: Yes No	
Did police attend the call: Yes No	Did you request Police? : Yes No N/A	Did you activate a 10-2000 : Yes No N/A	Police badge number(s) :	Was Police Response Helpful: Yes No	Describe what they did:
Was a Superintendent involved at any time during or following call? -- Select Option(s) --			Would you like a Superintendent to follow up with you about this incident: Yes No		

- ✓ Incident Report
- ✓ Hazard Flag
- ✓ Tracks Cumulative Exposure
- ✓ Info for Employer to Address/Prevent Violence
- ✓ Data for Research



- ✓ Paramedic Friendly
- ✓ Superintendent Friendly

EVAP: Building our program



EVAP: Building our program

EVAP updates

External Violence Against Paramedics



EVAP accomplishments 2019 – 2022



Region of Peel
working with you

MILESTONES

2019

- ✓ Formation of EVAP working group
- ✓ PRPS EVAP survey
- ✓ Council presentation



2020

- ✓ Spit hoods and soft restraints
- ✓ Zero tolerance signs in ambulances
- ✓ Research and development of Legal Advocacy Plan
- ✓ Letter from Regional Chair to Minister of Justice calling for amendments to the Criminal Code to protect paramedics



2021

- ✓ Zero Tolerance for Violence from the Public policy HS-19
- ✓ External Violence Incident Report (EVIR)
- ✓ Development of Harassing Client Letters
- ✓ Public awareness campaign – “It’s not normal”
- ✓ PRP recruit fireside chats and paramedic-police scenarios



2022

- ✓ PRP-PRPS inter-operability workgroup



Research and publishing



2019

- Mausz, J. & Johnston, M. (2019). **Violence, in fact, is not part of the job: A qualitative study of paramedic experiences with workplace violence.** *Peel Regional Paramedic Services.*

2021

- Mausz, J., Johnston, M. & Donnelly, E. A. (2021). **Development of a reporting process for violence against paramedics.** *Canadian Paramedicine*, 4(1), p. 23-27.
- Mausz, J., Johnston, M. & Donnelly, E. A. (2021). **The role of organizational culture in normalizing paramedic exposure to workplace violence.** *Poster presentation at the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) Annual Meeting.* Held virtually, January 11-16, 2021.
- Mausz, J., Johnston, M. & Donnelly, E. A. (2021). **The role of organizational culture in normalizing paramedic exposure to violence.** *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, ahead-of-print.

Media



2019

- **Violence against paramedics is never acceptable: Changing the culture of tolerance.** *Mississauga News.*

2020

- **Threats, abuse, sexual harassment by the public: Paramedics on the dark side of the job.** *CBC Radio.*
- **Peel Paramedics to launch first-of-its-kind violence reporting system to protect first responders: Advocates want national strategy.** *The Pointer.*

2021

- **Is getting punched part of your job? Campaign hopes to curb violence against paramedics.** *The Pointer.*
- **It’s not normal: Violence against paramedics in Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon a big problem.** *Brampton Guardian.*

Collaboration



2021

- EVAP organization package shared with all Ontario paramedic services and regional councils

2022

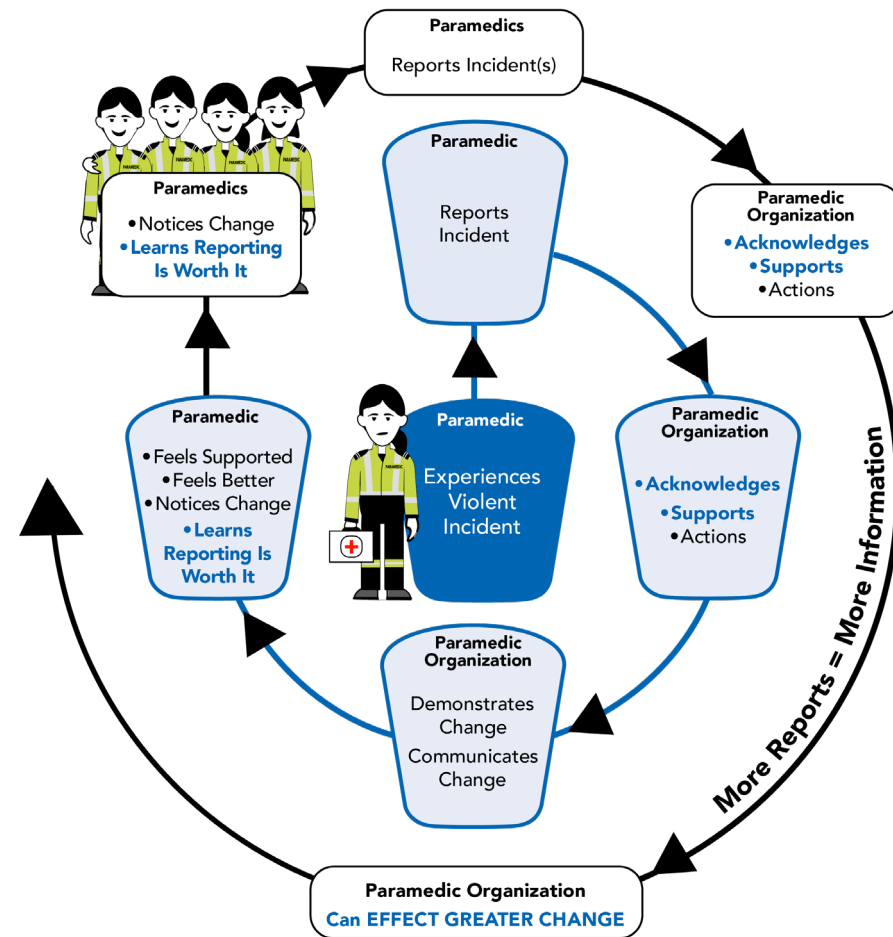
- Adoption of EVIR and research collaboration with 24 Ontario paramedic services



5 EVAP updates published to date

EVAP: Building our Program

Culture Change



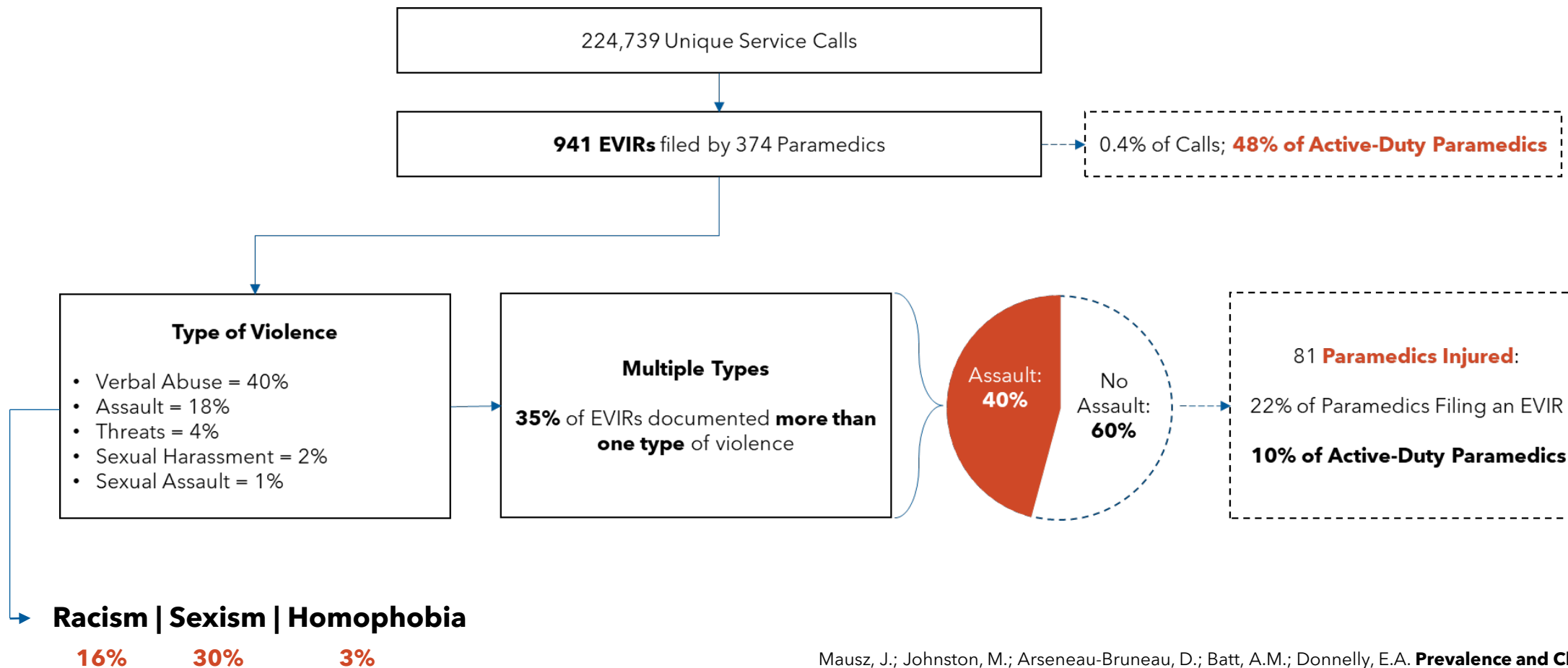
EVAP: Meaningful change



- ✓ Zero Tolerance Signage in Ambulance
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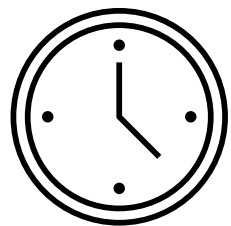
EVAP: What we know now

Prevalence

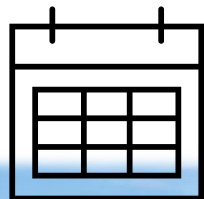


EVAP: What we know now

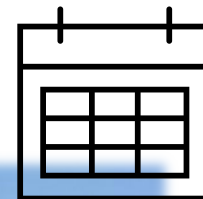
Prevalence



18
Hours



4
Days



9
Days



EVAP: What we know now

Circumstance



49% At Scene

9% In Transit

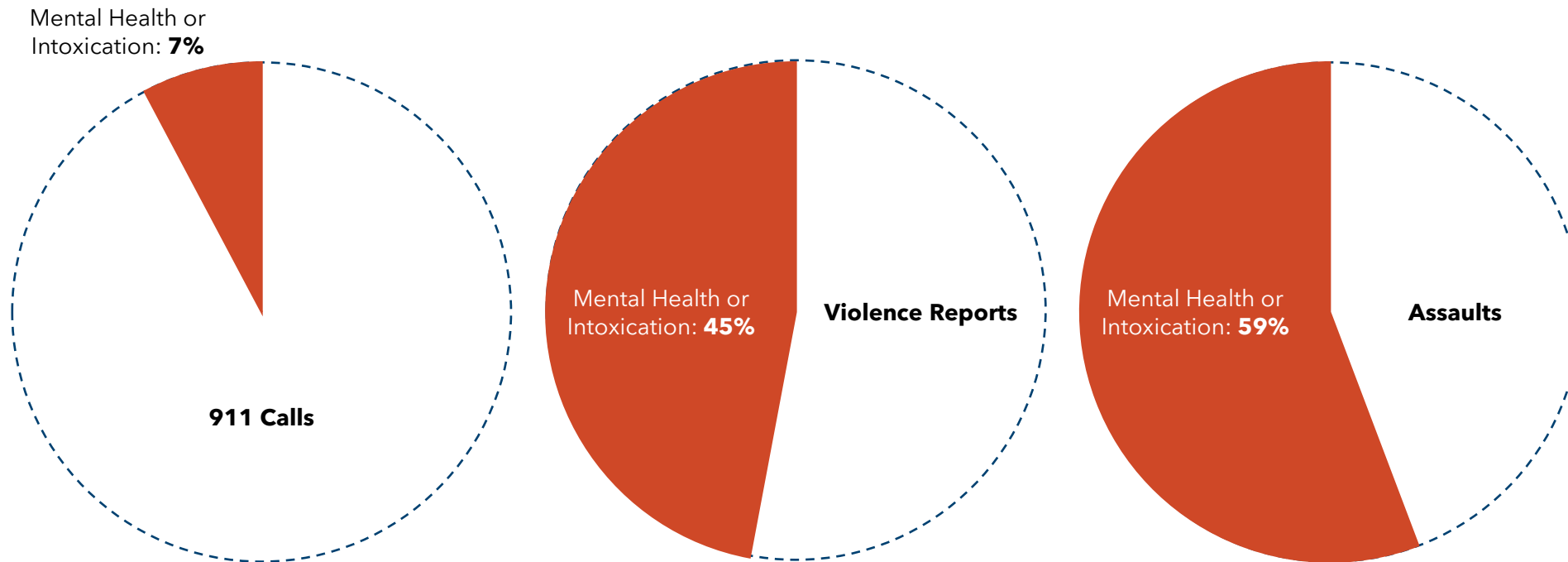
12% At Hospital

38% Any Violence **at Hospital**

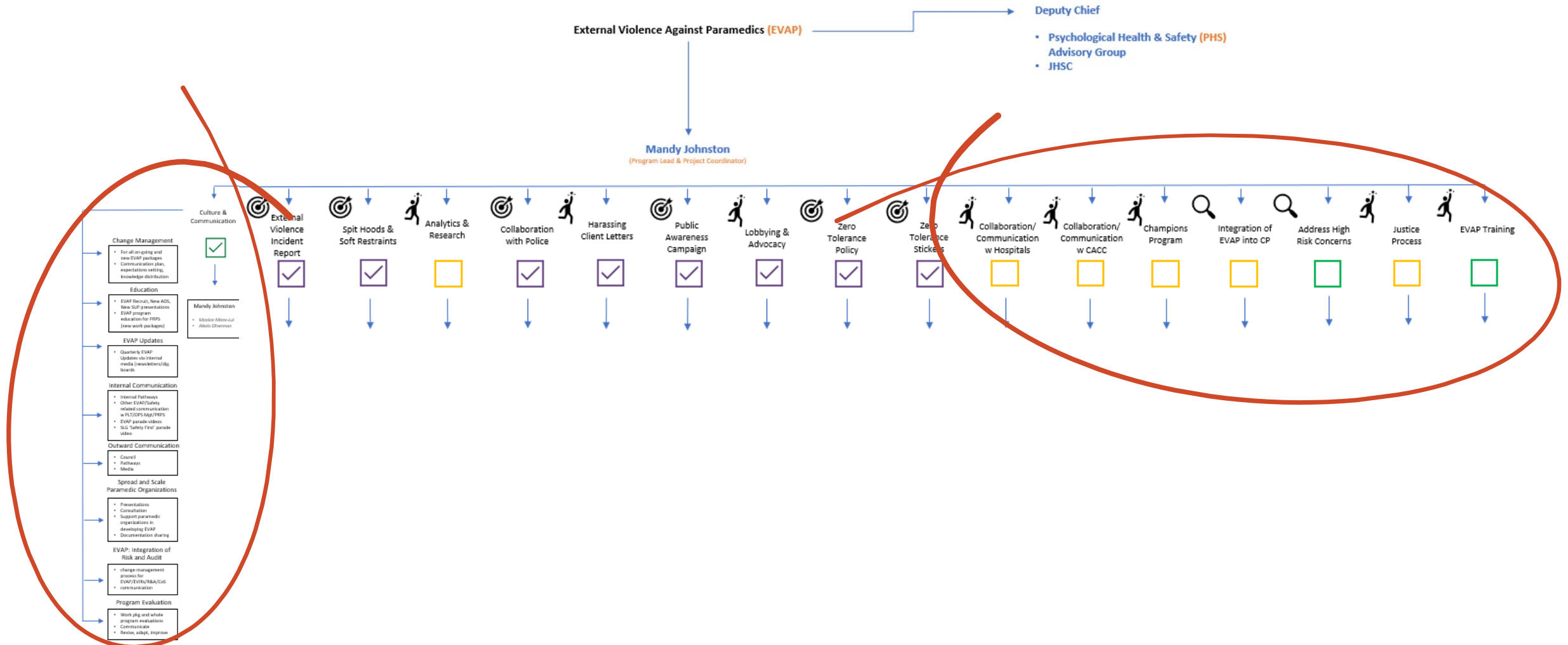
EVAP: What we know now

Risk Factors

Where **mental health**, **alcohol**, or **drugs** are listed as the primary presenting problem:

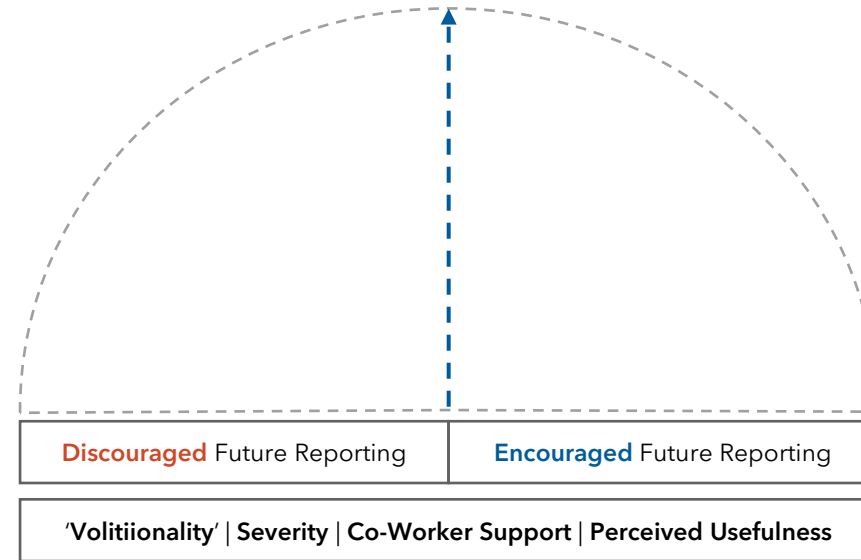


EVAP: Our program today



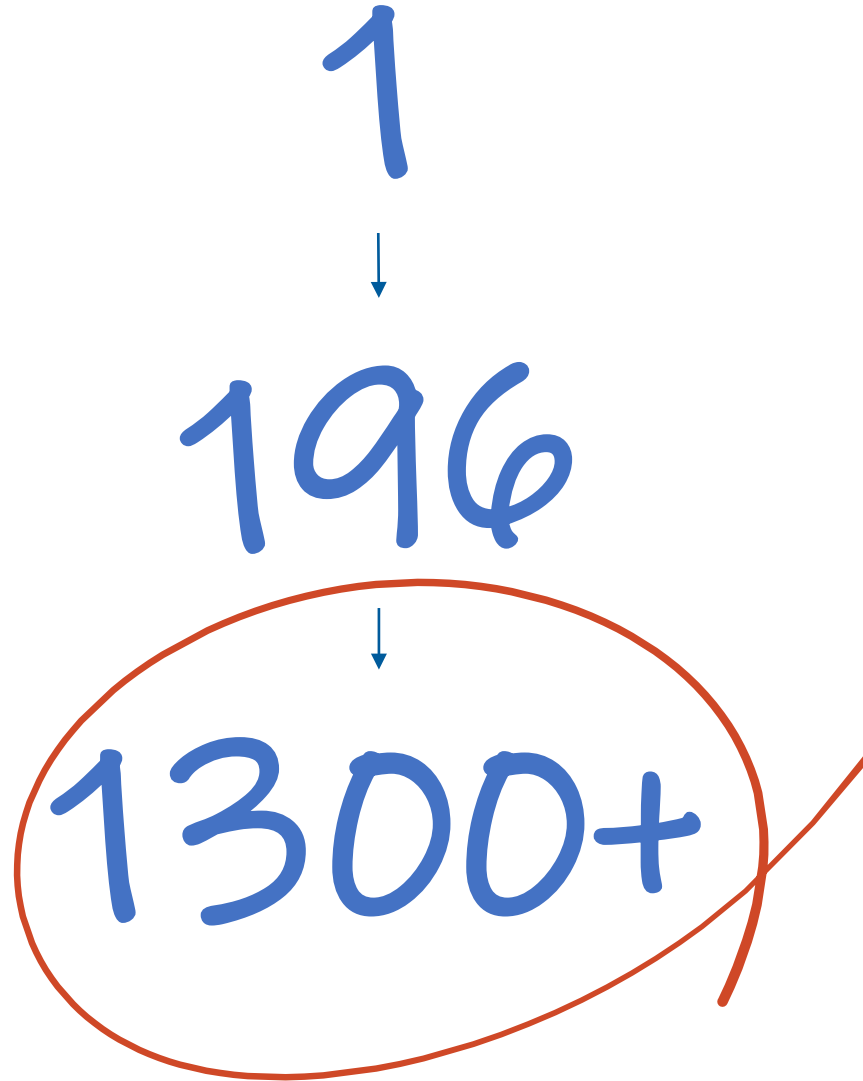
EVAP: Meaningful change

"I just felt justified and validated in filing a report and (it) normalized (me) feeling angry at what happened. It was a healthy way to share my story and talk to someone, even if it was just on paper."



"(I wanted) to show that it's not okay." "Wanting the data to help promote action to address violence against paramedics and to have hazard flags generated to mitigate violence against other responders." "Contribute to changing the culture for the greater good." "An attempt to incarcerate the perpetrator."

EVAP: Meaningful change



"I understand the value of reporting to support change within the profession. Even if not impacted myself, I (file reports) to keep my co-workers safe. I see the efforts of the service to address violence and appreciate them. Reporting is me doing my part."

EVAP

External Violence Against Paramedics



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Thank you!

Keep in Touch

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Keep Up to Date on our Work

Violence in Paramedicine Research Group
www.protectparamedics.com
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