

Woods, Ivy Tech nursing students test their skills in mock disaster drill

Scenario: Treat the victims of a shooting attack

FOR THE TRIBUNE-STAR

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and Ivy Tech Community College nursing students learned the importance of being ready when disaster strikes during Friday's annual fall mock disaster drill.

The students practiced triage and other skills used in disaster medicine to treat those wounded or killed in the simulated shooting by a terrorist who disagreed with the values of the college.

In total, about 70 SMWC and Ivy Tech nursing students and 10 SMWC criminology students participated in the event.

"This is a really important experience for me because I want to work in the ER someday," said Emma Booher, an SMWC senior nursing major from Linton, whose role was to transport victims during the scenario. "If something like this were ever to happen when we're nurses, we'll have a better idea how we should react now."

This mock disaster is an essential learning experience for nursing students, like Booher.

"It bridges theory and real-world emergency response," said Amanda



Submitted photo

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O'Brien, senior lecturer of nursing at SMWC. "It provides hands-on application of skills, develops critical thinking skills, allows students the opportunity to practice communication under pressure, as well as interact with other professions."

"This is a real experience in interprofessional collaboration, which is vital for these students as they go into the medical field. Teamwork is simply a must in medicine," said Melyssa McCoy, a nursing professor at Ivy Tech. "There were weeks of preparation, including a full day of disaster management training, and now they get to practice what they've learned"

Training activities like this are becoming increasing-

ly vital for anyone going into the medical field.

"It's unfortunate that events like this really do happen, so we have to be prepared if and when it does," said Alexandra Gill, an Ivy Tech nursing major from Terre Haute. "We all have an idea in our minds about how we should react and what we should do in the case of an event like this, but now we get to put it into practice."

Louis Reeves, visiting assistant professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, said there were weeks of coordination between his emergency management class and the Vigo County Emergency Management Agency, Vigo County Sheriff's Office and Terre Haute Police Depart-

ment leading up to the event.

Students in the emergency management class helped with the event as part of their training to learn the job of the Vigo County Emergency manager, which includes conducting both disaster drills and training.

They oversaw the facilitation, including makeup for the actors, prepared and placed all the victims in the scenario and assumed the role of safety officers during the event.

"This is a great experience for me to get in my freshman year," said Felicia Omosebi, a criminology major from Orlando, Florida. "This is the kind of scenario we'll have to face when we get to the workforce, so I'm pumped and excited to be a part of this."

It's an eye-opening experience for students, and organizers hope it prepares them to jump into action when time is of the essence.

"This is a side of disasters that nursing students don't always get to see when they're in more controlled environments," said Vigo County Emergency Management Deputy Director Tracy Ramsey. "We hope mass causality incidents like this never happen, but this gives these students a new perspective."

This item was submitted to the Tribune-Star by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.