

SPECIAL ENEWS

From: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Re: UPDATE (10/12/05) — Disaster Aftermath

As previously noted, this and subsequent special ENEWS mailings will continue to distribute materials, additional guidance notes, and other information and sharing on a regular, but not daily basis.

We encourage you to keep sending us information to share with others, indications of what is needed and what is helpful. Your input is essential and is greatly appreciated by others across the country.

>>TIME TO FOCUS ON POTENTIAL DROPOUTS – Students who have not made a good school adjustment tend to think about not going to school. Truancy is a major symptom. For middle and high school students dropping out may seem like a good option.

This is the time for proactive staff development to focus on specific strategies to address these concerns. Student support staff need to work with teachers in their classrooms to intervene before problems become severe and pervasive .

Attached to this email is a set of Guidance Notes for
“Dropout Prevention”;
we hope you find them helpful.

(They are also online at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/dropoutprevention.pdf>)

Reminder: Attached to the last Special ENEWS was a set of Guidance Notes on “Addressing Student Adjustment Problems.” If you didn’t receive them, they are online at
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/adjustmentproblems.pdf>

Please share back any successful strategies so we can circulate them to others.

>>GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN ANCESTRY EXPOSED TO THE TRAUMA OF HURRICANE KATRINA. From the Association of Black Psychologists at <http://www.abpsi.org/>

>>UPDATES

>Available Consultation for Assessment and Treatment of Children Displaced by Hurricanes – “Many clinical programs have geared up to provide psychological services to displaced children who may have been traumatized during this disaster. Recognizing that some clinical programs may not have sufficient supervisory experience in evidence-based interventions for traumatized children and adolescents, members of the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology have volunteered to provide consultation to clinical programs involved with displaced youth. Telephone consultation can be arranged, and under certain circumstances, site-based consultation could be facilitated by the Society.” Contact Stephen Shirk, President, Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, at sshirk@du.edu

>Folks have been generous in sharing their experiences. Here’s what we’ve heard this week.

*From Louisiana:

>Four items related to the Caddo Parish School Board:

(1) Caddo “currently has over 1000 students scattered over our 74 schools in the parish.

As a system with some 47,000 children normally, it was easier for us to place students throughout our parish and have the resources to handle them this way. Our school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and behavior intervention specialists have been great. We are also thankful for the outreach around the nation and for the support of our Superintendent as well as the most generous support from the community. In addition, the mental health community and various agencies have also supported our needs as well. I, personally, cannot thank them enough!

(2) We now have approximately less than 400 families in shelters. We are beginning to see trailers move into our community and people find adequate temporary housing. This is really the beginning for establishing some sense of normalcy again...and the families are beginning to slowly rebuild their lives.

(3) Although adjustment is never easy, I do find that the younger students are adjusting more quickly than the students that are older. I just love the resilience of youth. The older students have really lost their status on their high school campuses, as well as a sense of who they are as individuals. Some are graduating Seniors this year and the high school life they knew now no longer exists. They have required more individual counseling on adjustment issues as well as grief and loss than the elementary students.

(4) The children that seem to be adjusting better, have strong parents who set the tone...by looking for jobs, living accommodations, etc.... and by having a positive outlook on the situation. Although children differ, this seems to be the primary issue rather than merely one of shelters v. homes. To quote Ruby Payne...it really is an issue of poverty...financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, etc.”

>From the state department of education:

“We have a cross department team that is working together to formulate short and long range plans for the social and emotional needs of affected children in Louisiana.”

>From a support staff member:

“It is my sense that the younger kids do not have the cognitive ability or processing skills to adequately express themselves. The older kids do have these skills and can grasp more abstract concepts. It would be interesting to compare art from younger to older to see if the themes are there but unexpressed in the younger. Just a thought. I am getting more calls on middle school kids than elementary kids.

They want to go home and they have no home. They have no space to call their own, new school, new people ; the culture in North Louisiana is different from South Louisiana. We all have the need to belong.”

*From Texas:

>“We have enrolled over 1,400 hurricane victims and we have 53 campuses. I'm basing my information on discussions I have had with counselors on the campuses and with Student Services. We are finding that most of the students who are here as a result of Katrina are continuing to need support, particularly in the academic arena. Most (not all) of the students are significantly below grade level and have not been able to do grade level work-this appears to be the case at all grade levels. We are providing Title 1 support services for these children. Of course, the district's concern is the TAKS test.”

>“It's kind of a mixed bag here. We have students at all levels who are adjusting very well, and then we have some at all levels who are needing a little extra support. The counselors at each campus have been visiting with not only the students who enroll, but with their families as well. The schools and our community are providing all kind of support from free counseling to clothing and school supplies. We have Student Assistance Specialists at each of our high schools who run all kinds of groups...Everything from grief and loss, recovery, drug awareness, etc... Some of our junior highs have a counselor from the community who runs groups for students who are at risk for dropping out. Some of our hurricane victims will more than likely be part of those groups. We are also getting ready to start a support group at the elementary level for some

of these students. It's called Kids' Connection Too. We already have regular support groups called, Kids' Connection. But Kids' Connection Too is a brand new curriculum designed for homeless kids. The organization that has developed both of these curriculums is called Rainbow Days. They are WONDERFUL!!! Here is their website: www.rdikids.org”

>“I, too, have thought that supports for displaced children may fade quickly as life ‘returns to normal,’ particularly in the Houston area. Because our community was not directly impacted by destruction, I believe that most people are able to feel far removed from the devastation in Louisiana. So, how are things going around our local schools? Here's what will be happening, here, to gather information:

Nov. 11, 2005 Region 4 ESC Psychological Services Advisory Committee Meeting
(Comprised of lead school psychologists from each District in our region)

Oct. 17, 2005 USDE representatives will present an information-sharing meeting at Region 4 ESC for all interested local school district representatives.

Also...I have been in contact with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as well as administrators with our agency, Region 4 ESC, and we have formally expressed our interest to TEA in serving as a lead to facilitate information-sharing and policy development regarding mental health in the schools. I will keep you informed as we make progress, and ask for your assistance!”

>“These students are a high priority in our district. As of Friday 10/7/05 we have 466 Katrina evacuee students. This does not include the Rita evacuees, FEMA just want us to track the Katrina students. There are none in our local shelter and we have a lot of families living in and around town in hotels. Our campuses have done an outstanding job welcoming these students and allowing them to become a part of their campus life and surroundings. Local churches have adopted families and the effort to assist both materialistically and psychologically appears to be going well. School supplies and placing students on the Federal Free Lunch Program has helped meeting their physical needs for breakfast and lunch time. At this time it is my understanding that the support system is in place to assist a lot of the evacuees. Other than the students from Katrina, we have students from the Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Jasper areas too who had to migrate further north to escape the flooding in that area from Rita. So our state and the Gulf Coast Region is healing and I feel as things improve in those areas as well as in the state of Louisiana those students will be leaving our area and returning to more familiar surroundings. However, we do have some who have said they will not return because there is nothing to return to. Finally, the younger students are adjusting quicker than the older students, and our state is telling us that these students must take and pass the state's standardized test if they are to graduate using our graduation standards. Funding is an issue from the state level and other issues as well. This is all new for all of us in Texas but we will do what is best for kids and let the chips fall where they fall.”

>“Referrals from the Child Abuse/Domestic Violence Office to CPS and police are on the increase.”

>“I do want to add some comments related to my experience of spending 3 days with families in our shelter here at GHS. I took on the task of organizing a "children's program" at our shelter. To my knowledge, the Red Cross would not have done so and I staffed the program with Georgetown community volunteers. We had games, art activities, story time, toys, and some active play. The children responded beautifully and we had absolutely no behavior problems. When children acted out in some minor ways, we were careful to talk with them positively, discover their interests, strengths, and concerns and then re-engage them. That prevented any kind of problems! For example, when a child began bullying some of the younger children, I discovered that he was a big brother and really liked to be a helper. I had him make a special sign for himself that said ‘kid helper’ and had him ‘help’ myself and the other volunteers. Another example was a child who was hoarding perishable foods. We found a carrying case for her and then gathered some non-perishable foods and toys and allowed her to keep those for herself. After those interventions, those children were happy for the rest of the weekend. These

small interventions and easy to implement activities helped to give the parents a much needed break, calm the children, occupy their minds and hearts, and prevent any behavioral problems. It was also a source of joy for myself and my volunteers!”

>“I can tell you that we have been very busy planning for students and responding to needs. The additional Hurricane Rita evacuation impacted us as well. This past week, we began to see more symptoms emerge. There are a lot of confounding variables that affect the older students' >adjustment. Many of those variables are the normal challenges of being adolescents. And, from a developmental perspective, their sense of belonging has been greatly impacted. There are many layers to the type of student responses based on whether the students evacuated early, at the final moment into the shelters of last resort, or were rescued after several days.”

>“I have groups going in 60 schools. The groups are co-led by a school counselor and a staff person from the psychology department or from my program. We are working as a team (heads of counseling and psychology, me) to work this through. ... Initially we sent about 100 to intensive mental health services (mental health team with psychiatrist). We have 2000+ enrolled in Dallas schools. This is a fluid population. I'll check the data on who has left. We did a booklet on how to do the groups and did a one-day training for the co-leaders of the groups. We started with a 'Friends in New Places' support group (could turn into grief and loss). We are adding social skills groups and therapy groups out of those initial groups. We are surveying each student with a Katrina Cumulative Trauma Inventory. The best specific information for Hurricane mental health work I've seen is from Florida. I'll find the reference. We did not use it because we wanted to start with a support group, AND one of the psychologist had developed a simple plan and we went with that. ... The best website is the Child Traumatic Stress Network. (I think that is the name.) More later.”

>“Some of the children that have seemed to struggle the most are those that were 'displaced' twice. They were evacuated to Houston due to hurricane 'Katrina' and then were evacuated to San Antonio due to Hurricane Rita.”

>“We have approximately 625 students from Hurricane Katrina and Rita. We are a military community that has had many difficulties to deal with the last few years with deployment. Because of this, I think the students for the most part have assimilated into our school environment and are getting their emotional as well as academic and social needs met. Those students having difficulties have been either placed in group counseling on the campus, seen individually by the counselors or referred for private counseling to an outside agency. We also have Communities-in-Schools with social workers who have access to many community resources. We have been working as a team! I believe only one student has been sent to our alternative discipline school because of getting into a fight and causing problems on the campus. Many of the students are living with military relatives and they have been a wonderful support systems for these students in transition because so many of them are also in transition.”

>“The feedback from campus Impact Teams have indicated significant adjustments across the grade levels with a lot dependent upon what students actually witnessed, i.e., dead bodies floating in the water, etc..”

>We have 5 students who were displaced by Katrina and then by Rita. The grades of the children are from Kindergarten to 4th grade. The 2nd and 3rd grade students are with their mother and father and attended a private parochial elementary. The other 3 students are related to each other and are with their mothers. They are from a school in the 9th ward of New Orleans. The private school children are adjusting well, they know they will be here at least through the end of the year. The other three are in apartments sponsored by a local church. We live in a suburban area and they are having a great deal of problems adjusting. They have no car and, while the church tries to meet their needs, they miss having public transportation and going to a downtown area. The children's mothers talk every day about moving back home. This has the children anxious and not investing in really doing their best because they expect to be here such a short time.

I am providing counseling for all 5 of the children. The church is providing support for the 3 children's families who are not investing in this experience. I also need to say that our school's standards are very high and the 3 who are not adjusting as well are experiencing difficulty academically as well as emotionally. We are referring the oldest, a 4th grade boy, for a Special Education evaluation because he is performing on the late 1st grade or early 2nd grade level. The other two are not that far behind, but all three are getting extra help in reading and math. The two girls who are adjusting better come from a community similar to ours. Their father works for a large insurance company and has been reassigned here to Waco, TX. Their mother was a school administrator who has started substituting here at our school."

*From Indiana:

>"In Indiana, the students were registered initially in the 'homeless' category because of the McKinney-Vento bill which gives schools authority to do that. We do not have 'homeless' coordinators in all of our schools, so the reporting back to our Homeless Consultant has been limited. We have some 400 children and youth between the ages of 5-18 and only nearly 200 registered as homeless. Each state has a Student Count Day or series of days in which students are counted and given a Student ID number. In our state this will end October 31st and by then we will have a better idea of numbers and where the students are. We all have received calls from our disciplines about specific needs, we have a web page of resources and the community mental health centers in the various counties have been told, 'pick up the ball and be ready for additional services.' At the state level the Division of Mental Health has been at front and center, and the Faith-Based Initiative has been helping. I would think that high school students would be the most vulnerable regardless of the move. We do have more services available in high schools than in the lower grades. We have been attempting to rekindle the SAP program to broaden the services and direct them to needs of students rather than a specific model."

Dropout Prevention

There is a high school dropout crisis far beyond the imagination of most Americans, concentrated in urban schools and relegating many thousands of minority children to a life of failure. We urgently need to address this problem as a nation. Our goal ... is to make the public aware of this issue and make improving high school graduation rates a central part of national education reform. We believe the first step must entail highlighting the severe racial disparities in high school graduation rates that exist at the school and district levels.

Gary Orfield (2004)

Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis
<http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hepg/dropoutsinamerica.html>

Every year, across the country, a dangerously high percentage of students — disproportionately poor and minority — disappear from the educational pipeline before graduating from high school. Nationally, only about 68% of all students who enter 9th grade will graduate "on time" with regular diplomas in 12th grade. While the graduation rate for white students is 75%, only approximately half of Black, Latino, and Native American students earn regular diplomas alongside their classmates. Graduation rates are even lower for Black, Latino and Native American males. Yet, because of misleading and inaccurate reporting of dropout and graduation rates, the public remains largely unaware of this educational and civil rights crisis.

The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, March 24, 2005

From: *Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis in California*
<http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/dropouts/dropouts05.php>

Young adults who leave school short of high school graduation face many potential hardships and society pays a great price. As a recent report from the Harvard Civil Rights Project states: "When high numbers of youth leave school ill-prepared to contribute to our labor force and to civic life, our economy and our democracy suffer. Life opportunities for these youth and for their offspring are dramatically curtailed. According to Russell Rumberger, Professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the 66,657 students who were reported as dropouts from the California public schools in the 2002-03 will cost the state \$14 billion in lost wages. These costs rise significantly when one considers that the actual number of students who leave school without diplomas is much higher than the estimates provided by the state. Since the greatest economic benefits of earning a high school diploma as are realized in the next generation, the most significant loss is to their — and our — future."

For some quick facts on the impact of the dropout problem, see
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/stats/quick_facts/econ_impact.htm

What Does the Literature on Dropouts Tell Us to do About the Problem?

- C Be proactive in preventing the problem. See the
 >> *Dropout "At Risk"* Checklist in the Center's intro packet on dropouts
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/DropoutPrev/dropout.pdf>

Available research suggests that being held back is the single strongest predictor of dropping out and that its effect is consistent for both early and late dropouts. School factors can account for approximately two thirds of the differences in mean school dropout rates.

- C For prevention to be effective, schools must engage all students in learning, and they must focus specifically on the problem of re-engaging students who have become disengaged from classroom learning. See:
 - >> *Re-engaging Students in Learning* (Quick Training Aid)
<http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/quicktraining/reengagingstudents.pdf>
 - >> *Re-engaging Students in Learning at School* (newsletter article)
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Newsletter/winter02.pdf>
 - >> *Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling* (Continuing Education Modules)
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/contedu/cfe.pdf>

- C The literature points to the need to provide one-on-one intensive attention to at-risk students, who often must be convinced that they are competent and can be successful in school. Children at-risk need to be identified at a young age (as early as preschool) so that early sustained intervention can be applied. See:

>>*Youth in Transition* – <http://www11.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/hrsdc/arb/publications/research/2002-000121/page01.shtml>

This long-term study of school dropouts provides many insights about the problem and what needs to be done. The document reports that being held back one grade increases the risk of dropping out later by 40 percent to 50 percent, two grades by 90 percent. However, there are some strategies that can be used as alternatives to retention.

- C Enhance the professional development of teachers to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to teach a wider range of students to meet standards
- C Redesign school structures to support more intensive learning
- C Provide students the support and services they need in order to succeed
- C Use classroom assessments that better inform teaching

Retention efforts for junior high and high school students use out-of-school efforts such as tutoring, mentoring, service learning, career advising, and arranging for older students (who might otherwise drop-out) to work with younger ones. Service learning, for example, is a teaching methodology, which integrates community service into the academic curriculum. Using service-learning, elementary school students tutor younger students, and both improve their mastery of essential literacy skills. Investigators have found that when rigorous study in academic disciplines is linked to serious work on real needs, students' motivation to learn increases. When teachers are rigorous about partnering with young people to design and carry out service-learning projects that are tied to curricular objectives and standards, they are likely to benefit in the following ways: Academic and intellectual benefits, Civic and ethical benefits, and social and personal benefits.

- C Educational alternative programs provide a non-traditional approach to curriculum by utilizing alternative teaching strategies. Programs focus upon the needs and interests of students by offering positive school experiences, which are geared for achievement, enhancement of positive self-concept, motivation, reduction of truancy, reduction of disruptive behavior, and reduction of teenage pregnancy.

The *National Dropout Prevention Center/Network* has identified 15 effective strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate. These strategies have been implemented successfully at all education levels and environments throughout the nation.

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| C School and Community Perspective | C Mentoring/Tutoring |
| C Systemic Renewal | C Service-Learning |
| C School-Community Collaboration | C Alternative Schooling |
| C Safe Learning Environments | C After-School Opportunities |
| C Early Interventions | C Making the Most of Instruction |
| C Family Engagement | C Professional Development |
| C Early Childhood Education | C Active Learning |
| C Early Literacy Development | C Educational Technology |
| C Basic Core Strategies | C Individualized Instruction |
| | C Career and Technical Education (CTE) |

For more information, see: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/effstrat.htm>

See the specially developed Center Introductory Packet entitled:

>>*Dropout Prevention* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/DropoutPrev/dropout.pdf>

Need More?

Use the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on *Dropout Prevention* :
(It contains links to key references, empirically supported programs, and centers specializing in the topic and related topics.)

Other **Quick Finds** that may be helpful:

- >>Alternative Schools and Alternative Education
- >>Barriers to Learning
- >>Bullying
- >>Classroom Climate/Culture
- >>Classroom-focused Enabling
- >>Environments that Support Learning
- >>Gangs
- >>Hotlines
- >>Learning Supports: Students to Succeed
- >>Mentoring
- >>Motivation
- >>Parent/Home Involvement in Schools
- >>Parenting Skills and Parenting Education
- >>Prevention for Students "At Risk"
- >>Resilience/Protective Factors
- >>School Avoidance
- >>Self-Esteem
- >>Social Promotion
- >>Substance Abuse
- >>Teen Pregnancy

Among the links you will find on various of the above Quick Finds are:

- >>*Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001*
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005046>
- >>*Keeping Kids in Schools* from the American School Board Journal
<http://www.asbj.com/2002/12/1202research.html>
- >>*The Real Truth about Low Graduation Rates, An Evidence-Based Commentary*
<http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411050>

A Few Websites Dealing Directly with Dropout Prevention

- <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/> - National Dropout Prevention Centers
- <http://www.tpronline.org/> — The Prevention Researcher
- <http://www.focusas.com/Dropouts.html> - Focus Adolescent Services: Youth Who Drop Out
- <http://www.ed.gov/programs/dropout/dropoutprogram.html> — School Dropout Prevention Program
- http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/pub_dropouts.asp— NCES: Public High School Dropouts and Completers from the Common Core of Data
- <http://www.truancyprevention.org/> — National Center for School Engagement
- <http://www.tutorsforkids.org/> — Tutors for Kids
- <http://www.youthbuild.org/> — Youth Build USA

And, if you can't find something you need, contact us directly:

By email — Ltaylor@ucla.edu
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The Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA is co-directed by Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor. Support comes in part from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health, with co-funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Mental Health Services. Both are agencies of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

