

# Crisis Response Checklist



This **Quick Training Aid** was excerpted from a Resource Aid Packet entitled: *Responding to Crisis at a School*, pp. 22-23. Center for Mental Health in Schools (2000).

In the midst of a crisis, it is hard to remember all the specific steps and preparatory plans that have been discussed. Each site and each person responsible for crisis response needs to have a checklist that provides a ready and visible reference guide for use during a crisis. Such a checklist is also an important training tool. The following is an outline of what such a checklist might cover.

## I. Immediate Response

Check to be certain that

\_\_\_ appropriate "alarms" have been sounded

\_\_\_ all persons with a crisis role are mobilized and informed as to who is coordinating the response and where the coordination/emergency operation center and medical and psychological first aid centers are located

This may include coordinators for

\_\_\_ overall crisis response

\_\_\_ communications

\_\_\_ first aid (medical, psychological)

\_\_\_ crowd management

\_\_\_ media

\_\_\_ transportation

\_\_\_ phone trees are activated

\_\_\_ team leader and others clarify whether additional resources should be called in (from the District or community -- such as additional medical and psychological assistance, police, fire)

\_\_\_ all assignments are being carried out (including provisions for classroom coverage for crisis response team members and for any instances of a staff death)

\_\_\_ corrective steps are being taken when the response is inadequate

\_\_\_ all communication needs are addressed by implementing planned means for information sharing and rumor control (e.g. Public Address announcements, circulation of written statements, presentations to staff/students/ parents in classes or in special assemblies);

This includes communications with

\_\_\_ staff

\_\_\_ home

\_\_\_ students

\_\_\_ district offices and other schools

\_\_\_ crisis team

\_\_\_ community

\_\_\_ media

\_\_\_ fire, police

- \_\_\_\_\_ plans for locating individuals are implemented (e.g., message center, sign-in and sign-out lists for staff and students)
- \_\_\_\_\_ specific intervention and referral activity are implemented (e.g., triage, first-aid, search, rescue, security, evacuation, counseling, distribution of information about resources and referral processes -- including teentalk and suicide prevention lines and interviews to assess need for individual counseling)
- \_\_\_\_\_ support and time out breaks for crisis workers are implemented
- \_\_\_\_\_ informal debriefings of crisis workers are done to assess how things are going and what will be required in the way of follow-up activity.

## ***II. Follow-up Activity***

In the **aftermath**, check to be certain that

- \_\_\_\_\_ continuing communication needs are addressed (clarifying causes and impact; debunking rumors, updating facts, providing closure; updating information on available resources)
- \_\_\_\_\_ if relevant, family contacts are made to learn funeral and memorial service arrangements, and to determine if there is additional assistance the school can provide (School-related memorial services for gang members, suicides, etc. are controversial; clear policies should be established in discussing crisis response plans.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ crisis-related problems continue to be monitored and dealt with (including case management of referrals and extended treatment)
- \_\_\_\_\_ facets of crisis response that are no longer needed are brought to an appropriate conclusion
- \_\_\_\_\_ debriefing meetings are held (to appreciate all who helped, clarify deficiencies in crisis response, and make revisions for the next time)
- \_\_\_\_\_ crisis response plans are revised and resources enhanced for dealing with the next crisis
- \_\_\_\_\_ additional training is planned and implemented
- \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate prevention planning is incorporated (e.g., at least to minimize the impact of such events)

For more from this Resource Aid Packet see  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/materials/resourcepackets.htm>