This **Quick Training Aid** was excerpted from a Resource Aid Packet entitled: *Responding to Crisis at a School*, pp. 21. Center for Mental Health in Schools (2000).

Responding to Crises: A Few General Principles

***Immediate Response* -- Focused on Restoring Equilibrium**

In responding:

- Be calm, direct, informative, authoritative, nurturing, and problem-solving oriented.
- Counter denial, by encouraging students to deal with facts of the event; give accurate information and explanations of what happened and what to expect -- never give unrealistic or false assurances.
- Talk with students about their emotional reactions and encourage them to deal with such reactions as another facet of countering denial and other defenses that interfere with restoring equilibrium.
- Convey a sense hope and positive expectation -- that while crises change things, there are ways to deal with the impact.

Move the Student from Victim to Actor

- Plan with the student promising, realistic, and appropriate actions they will pursue when they leave you.
- Build on coping strategies the student has displayed.
- If feasible, involve the student in assisting with efforts to restore equilibrium.

Connect the Student with Immediate Social Support

- Peer buddies, other staff, family -- to provide immediate support, guidance, and other forms of immediate assistance.

Take Care of the Caretakers

- Be certain that support systems are in place for staff in general
- Be certain that support (debriefing) systems are in place for all crisis response personnel.

Provide for Aftermath Interventions

- Be certain that individuals needing follow-up assistance receive it.