Crisis Response Checklist

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
____ students
____ crisis team
____ media
____ home
____ district offices and other schools
____ community
____ 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/resourcedpackets.htm