

## All Schools Have Students Who May Be Affected by a Disaster Anywhere

Disasters anywhere may have an impact on students, families, school staff, and communities around the world. Students anywhere may react to the news of major earthquakes or any other international disasters because they have relatives and friends who have been directly affected or because the media images they experience trigger feelings of empathy, anxiety, fear.

*So, schools may find it relevant to provide support to those affected directly and indirectly by the event.*

Here are examples of the type of practices that may be called for:

- >For those at school who have relatives in the impacted country, schools can consider providing appropriate opportunities to share what they know about the situation, what concerns they have, how they might address those concerns (e.g., up to date information, ways their families/communities are reaching out to find/support friends and relatives, what plans are underway for recovery).
- >For those at school who have strong emotional reactions to the news reports (e.g., are anxious that such a disaster might occur in their community), schools can mobilize facets of their emergency aftermath plans to provide appropriate supports.
- >For those wanting to help with disaster relief (a good service-related and SEL activity), schools can follow the lead of and connect with those organizing such relief (e.g., the Red Cross, UNICEF, Doctors without Borders, etc.)
- >More generally, schools can tie the responses into their activities for promoting social emotional learning, character building, etc.
- >And, as always, schools should review school crisis plans and encourage families to involve their children in understanding what to do if there is a disaster, where to get help, etc..

For more resources related to crisis response and trauma, see our Center's Quick Find on the topic [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2107\\_01.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2107_01.htm)

Finally, part of our Center's function is to share what others are doing, so please take a moment to let us know about anything local schools are doing in response to disasters so that we can compile and share with others. Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu) .

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\*The material in this document was prepared by the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA in 2023.

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