SPECIAL ENEWS

From: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Re: PERIODIC UPDATE (11/8/05) — Disaster Aftermath

We received the following from a colleague in Louisiana. It made us realize that this may be a critical time for capturing "Lessons Learned" from folks who have been involved in responding to the aftermath in school settings. A compilation of these will help improve preparedness.

Here is what this colleague told us:

"Our major issues have been:
　　1. As there was no previously set up collaborative working group in children's mental health in schools, though all collaborators are aware of each other, we needed to do that.

　　2. The school system was stressed before the hurricanes and has no new resources yet - though some are promised. Also, the school health systems were stressed as an organization and personally as providers, many of whom were and are housing people in their homes.

　　3. There was also no infrastructure for sending volunteer professionals into the schools - and many people requesting to do that - so that process was needed.

　　4. Although there are wonderful curricula out there for small groups, all of the above needed to be done before these were put in place.

　　5. The ideal, reliable, easily administered assessment tool does not appear to exist. So we have been using a modified version of the Dallas Independent School District one..."

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Please send us your "Lessons Learned," and we will compile and circulate them widely.

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In this respect, as a specific example, it would be helpful to learn more about what types of training for schools were useful in the aftermath. For example, a colleague in Mississippi noted: "Several teams from some areas in Florida that were hit by hurricanes last year came to our district. They trained every teacher in our school system on interventions and ways to deal with behavioral/emotional responses of students and staff."

We now need to learn more about the specifics of what training was done and what aspects worked well and what didn't.
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