

(11/9/22) **This resource is from the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA**

Featured:

Crises – from awareness to prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery

Plus (a) a bit of information on how schools supported students and families before and after Hurricane Ian and (b) a news article clip on *What a Teachers' Union Leader Saw in Ukraine*

For discussion and interchange:

>Crises – from awareness to prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery

There was considerable interest in our November ENEWS focus on *Crisis related to students' Mental Health* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/nov2022.pdf>. For example, here is a comment from a colleague at a state department of education:

“Thank you very much for the current posting you recently shared. I read it and, as usual, agreed thoroughly! I might add an additional thought, too.

I work in the area of comprehensive school safety and comprehensive school safety planning. Although the planning process we implement (US DoE REMS TA Center Guide – https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/REMS%20K-12%20Guide%20508_0.pdf) is designed to bring all the various components, responses, etc., together, way too often, people approach the topic from several one-off points of view. The challenge is trying to get folks to understand that “that” is a part of “this.” One of the 6 domains of support which is noted in the recent document says, “Respond to, and where feasible, prevent crises”. I’d like to suggest that this be re-worded and expanded. When we are talking safety planning, we discuss 5 overlapping concepts: prevention, mitigation, protection, response and recovery. They are sequential, but often happen in rapid succession. As you suggest, we can’t prevent everything, but we can prepare. (I like to also add a precursor to all the above: awareness. If one is not aware of a potential threat, there’s no preparation.) Just some thoughts. Thank you again for sharing your excellent ideas and resources.”

We certainly agree with the comments above. And, as we focus on the domain of *Crisis Assistance and Prevention* in this week’s practitioner, we hope you will think in terms of awareness, prevention, mitigation, protection, response and recovery.

Where Crisis Concerns Fit in a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Student/Learning Supports

As schools address concerns about learning loss and mental health, those that have adopted an MTSS framework now need to rethink student and learning supports.

MTSS highlights that a full continuum of interventions is essential. However, addressing barriers to learning and teaching also requires organizing the supports cohesively into a well-designed and delimited set of interventions that reflect a school’s efforts to provide student and learning supports in the classroom and schoolwide.

Our analyses indicate the supports can be grouped into the following six domains.

- *In-classroom supports*
- *Supports to increase home connections and engagement with the school*
- *Crises assistance and prevention*
- *Supports to increase community involvement and engagement with schools*
- *Facilitating student and family access to special assistance*
- *Supports for transitions*

In the last two issues of the Center’s Practitioner, we featured strengthening *in-classroom supports and increasing home connections and engagement with the school*. This week we focus on *crises*. In coming weeks, we will feature the remaining three domains.

About the Domain of Crisis Assistance and Prevention

Crisis, emergency, disaster, catastrophe, tragedy, trauma – all are words heard too frequently in the schoolhouse. Preparing for possible crises/emergencies at school involves planning for

- >implementing interventions when an event occurs
- >countering the impact of traumatic events
- >preventing negative incidents (e.g., creating a caring/safe learning environment)

Before COVID-19, too many schools experienced significant crises. And any school may have another one soon. The proper handling of school crises is essential to minimizing a negative impact on learning and physical and mental well-being. Planning and implementing comprehensive crisis intervention provides ways for school personnel, students, and families to return to normalcy as quickly as feasible, address residual (longer-term) psychosocial problems, and explore preventive measures for the future.

Pandemics aside, students and staff may experience natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, earthquakes, fires) and violence (e.g., gang activity, snipers, hostage-taking, rape). Some individuals react with severe emotional responses – fear, grief, post traumatic stress syndrome. When a significant portion of a school’s population is affected, major facets of school functioning are jeopardized.

After a crisis, the first concern is to ensure physical safety and medical first aid; this is followed immediately by attention to psychological considerations (e.g., psychological first aid). Then, the emphasis is on the school’s need to regain stability and a sense of normality so that students and staff can resume learning and teaching. This includes attending to follow-up care as needed. (These matters call for sophisticated school planning. The nature and scope of such planning was well underscored by school re-openings after the COVID-19 disruption.)

Based on district policy, schools plan for emergencies. It is too often the case, however, that districts have not addressed, in sufficient detail, policies and procedures for what to do in the days and weeks that follow a crisis event. (Probably no school planned for a crisis such as COVID-19, but it is now a pressing agenda item.)

Districts differ in the amount of support and training they provide in helping schools establish and maintain crisis response mechanisms (e.g., crisis teams). Some, usually larger districts, may have regional support crisis teams that provide crisis management, medical and psychological/counseling support services, media relations, and debriefing. Others provide only an immediate response.

Given the complexity of crisis events and reactions, planning and implementing school-based crisis intervention require special expertise (e.g., how to deal with natural disasters as contrasted to dealing with gang violence or suicide, how to plan for crowd management, rumor control, aftermath counseling, prevention). Thus, individuals and subgroups with diverse expertise need to be involved in training staff.

Crisis intervention includes activity designed to establish:

- a safe and productive school environment (e.g., that deters violence and reduces injury)
- emergency/crisis responses at a site
- collaboration among local schools (e.g., an elementary to high school feeder pattern) and the community at-large for crisis planning and response and to develop and implement strategies to enhance safety and reduce violence, bullying, child abuse, suicide
- follow-up care when needed
- a violence prevention and resiliency curriculum designed to teach students anger management, problem-solving skills, social skills, and conflict resolution

Prevention is a fundamental element of well-designed crises planning. Prevention strategies play a significant role in creating an environment in which a positive school climate can emerge. A major focus of prevention is on developing strategies that deter violence and reduce injury (e.g., violence prevention and resiliency curriculum; initiatives for conflict resolution and restorative justice).

For a more detailed discussion of this domain as a facet of a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System of Student/Learning Supports, see

“Crises Assistance and Prevention.” Chapter 17 in *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mh20a.pdf>

The Center also features *Responding to Crises* on our homepage; click on the icon for many links to crises resources.

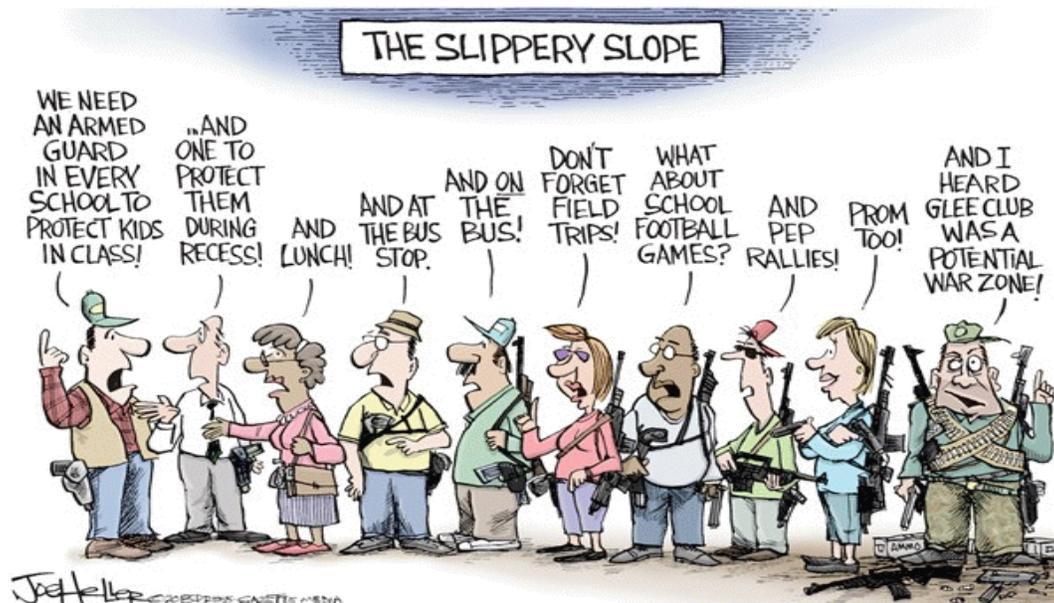
And, for more resources, go to the Center Quick Find on *Crisis Assistance & Prevention* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2107_01.htm . (Center Quick Finds cover over 130 topics providing links to a host of resources, some developed by the Center as well as online resources from many other sources.)

A Few Examples of Center Resources included in the Quick Find for Crisis Assistance and Prevention

- >A *self-study survey* on Crisis Assistance and Prevention <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/crissurvey.pdf>
- >*Responding to Crisis at a School* (includes guides and handouts for crisis planning, training staff, school-based crisis teams; also has handouts for staff, students, and parents). <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/crisis/crisis.pdf>
- >*School Responses to Natural Disasters* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/naturaldisasters.pdf>
- >*Suicidal Crisis* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/practicenotes/suicide.pdf>
- >*About Planning and Action for the Mental Health Needs of Students and School Staff in the Aftermath of a Natural Disaster* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/planningneeds.pdf>

How do schools address crises pursued in your locale?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu



We Learn from Each Other

We wondered how schools supported students and families before and in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Ian. We found informative the following series of information/support messages that were circulated by the Flagler Schools in Bunnell, Florida

<https://www.flaglerschools.com/about-us/news/details/~board/district-news/post/storm-information>

Messages before the hurricane:

September 26, 2022 – *Flagler Schools continues to monitor the weather situation evolving with Hurricane Ian, which is tracking towards the western part of the state. We are in regular contact with the Flagler County Emergency Management team. Plant Services personnel are also checking all our campuses and district sites to ensure they are storm-ready.*

Should any changes to our schedules be required due to tropical weather, Flagler Schools will communicate with our families and employees via phone, email, district and school websites, and our social media. We encourage everyone in Flagler County to take the time now to prepare and monitor any and all updates.

September 27, 2022 – *Flagler Schools Superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt announces all schools will be closed beginning Wednesday, September 28, 2022, due to the impending effects of Hurricane Ian. They will remain closed through Friday, September 30, 2022. “This is not a decision we take lightly, but we want to give our families enough time to prepare their homes for this storm or evacuate the area if they feel that is the best option for them,” says Superintendent Mittelstadt.” We also need to use this time to prepare the emergency shelter space our campuses offer, should people be asked to evacuate.”*

All after-school activities planned for Wednesday through Friday have been canceled. This includes extracurricular activities, including sporting events. ...

Two of our schools will serve as shelters of last resort for Flagler County residents. They are expected to open Wednesday. Rymfire Elementary is being prepared as a special needs shelter, and Bunnell Elementary will be a general population/pet shelter. Additional information on what to bring to these shelters will be provided later in the day.

We encourage all Flagler County residents to prepare for this storm. Please heed all warnings from our local emergency management officials, as situations can change hour-by-hour....

After the hurricane:

September 30, 2022 – *Teams from Flagler Schools Plant Services, Technology, and Custodial Services are joining school administrators in surveying possible damage from Tropical Storm Ian on Friday. All campuses and district sites will be inspected before determining whether classes will resume Monday morning.*

“First, Flagler Schools hopes our families and employees were able to get through this storm with minimal damage,” says Flagler Schools Superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt. “Second, we are focusing on moving the dozens of evacuees who sought shelter at two of our campuses, either to alternate shelter space or home. We can then begin preparing those schools for the return of our students and staff.”

Flagler Schools will inform parents, students, and employees about reopening plans through our regular lines of communication, including phone calls, text messages, website postings, and social media channels.

PM Update: September 30, 2022 – *Following a damage assessment at all our school sites, Flagler Schools Superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt announces that the start of classes for all students has yet to be determined.*

“We first want to ensure all our families have the supports they need to begin the recovery process following Tropical Storm Ian,” said Mittelstadt. “We are also working with our partners with Florida Power and Light to restore power to Indian Trails Middle School and Belle Terre Elementary School.” Our Transportation Department will survey bus stops Saturday in areas where flooding remains a concern. Should alternate bus stops be necessary, that information will be relayed to the families in the affected areas, as well as posted here.

October 1, 2022 – Following a damage assessment at all our school sites, Flagler Schools Superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt announces that classes for all students will resume at their regular time Monday, October 3rd.

“We know many families are still dealing with the effects of Tropical Storm Ian,” said Mittelstadt. “We also have several of our employees who live in neighboring counties still trying to recover. These are all things we take into account when we decide to reopen our schools.”

Our Transportation Department has surveyed bus stops in areas across Flagler County where there are still flooding concerns. In neighborhoods where alternate bus stops are necessary, that information has been relayed to the families.

Superintendent Mittelstadt says, “There are not enough words to describe the job our district leadership, in coordination with our Custodial, Food and Nutrition, Plant Services, and Technology Departments, did in providing dozens of our neighbors a safe place to stay during the storm. The speed at which they set up two shelters and then transformed them back for our educational use was amazing.”

from: **What a Teachers’ Union Leader Saw in Ukraine**

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/what-a-teachers-union-leader-saw-in-ukraine/2022/10>

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten traveled to Ukraine to meet with students and teachers, crossing the border from Poland into the war-torn country on Oct. 10. “Because of the bombings in the last two days, all schools are back to being online, so our trips to the schools have been derailed. But what we’re seeing as a result is what people have gone through for the last seven months. It’s pretty inspiring to talk to teachers...

This is what Ukrainian teachers are doing. They are really trying to not just create a hopeful future of light and peace for Ukrainian kids, but they get that their future is the education of kids. They’re going to do everything they can, obviously, to survive but to win the war and to create this kind of solidarity and safety net and education for kids.... That resilience, that fortitude, and that sense that the future of the country depends on the education of students and ensuring that students are OK—at the same time as there’s a fight for self-determination—is really incredible. It sends a very powerful lesson about the importance of democracy, the importance of children’s futures, the importance of the adults fighting to ensure that children have a future, and here you have teachers doing that....

Teachers are doing online teaching with their kids at the same time as they are volunteering on the front. Teachers who are displaced are also doing online teaching with their kids in southern and eastern regions....”

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

The Consequences of School Violence: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis
<https://ncvc.dspacedirect.org/handle/20.500.11990/1849>

Foundational elements of school safety
<https://www.schoolsafety.gov/foundational-elements-school-safety>

Preventing School Violence and Promoting School Safety: Contemporary Scholarship
Advancing Policy and Practice <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2372966X.2021.1949933>

Reimagining school safety

https://selcenter.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/08/SEL_Reimagining-School-Safety-A-Guide-for-School-and-Communities_ADA-2.pdf

“...Currently, many schools throughout the country are moving toward more comprehensive school safety.... There is a renewed focus on prevention that is rooted in supporting all students’ psychological safety, mental health, and identities. Finally, the movement toward a more comprehensive approach also provides an opportunity to break out of silos and work across disciplines and sectors, bringing more alignment and coherence to school safety efforts....

Creating systems and structures that elicit and support strong relationships and strong communities is crucial. Safety becomes less about walls and rules and more about the deepening of interconnectedness. ...

Comprehensive school safety plans that encompass safety beyond the physical and that include social, emotional, and psychological safety all emphasize the importance of developing strong, authentic relationships that lead to connection, belonging, and sometimes necessary healing ...

Because school safety operates at individual, collective, and systemic levels, adaptive, relational, and technical elements each play a role in implementing and achieving school safety...”

For a discussion of how the UCLA Center embeds school safety into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports, see *Intersection of school safety, mental health and wellness, and family and community issues* at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/safetychapter.pdf>

Climate, Technology, Trust: Ways to Help Students Report Threats to Their School
<https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/09/climate-technology-trust-ways-to-help-students-report.html>

Equity and Safety in School Dress Codes
<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-105348.pdf>

Supporting Evidence-based SEL Programs: What State Policymakers Can Do
https://www.prevention.psu.edu/uploads/files/PSU-Evidence_based-SEL-Issue-Brief-Oct2022.pdf

Re-envisioning, Retooling, and Rebuilding Prevention Science Methods to Address Structural and Systemic Racism and Promote Health Equity
https://www.dropbox.com/s/f6xjmxaxa53y6soc/Re%E2%80%91envisioning%2C%20Retooling%2C%20and%20Rebuilding%20Prevention%20Science%20Methods%20to%20Address%20Structural%20and%20Systemic%20Racism%20and%20Promote%20Health%20Equity_Murry%20et%20al.%2C%202022.pdf?dl=0

From Mental Health America

The State of Mental Health in America
<https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=dbb1203e-8c62-4970-9ccb-81318ce067d4>

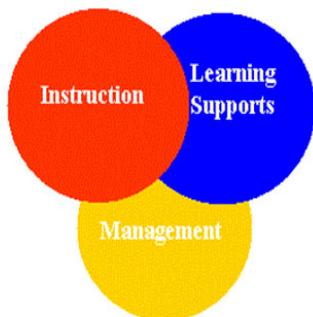
Rural Mental Health Crisis
<https://mhanational.org/rural-mental-health-crisis?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=dbb1203e-8c62-4970-9ccb-81318ce067d4>

Back to School
<https://mhanational.org/back-school?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=13dda996-b999-46b7-9697-87ff9187967f>

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

- 11/9 Cyberbullying: what we can do
- 11/ 9 Trauma-responsive Community Based Violence Intervention practice: What does it mean and what does it look like?
- 11/9 Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges
- 11/10 How to find the resources your school community needs
- 11/10 Foster supportive learning environments
- 11/10 Let's Talk About Grief
- 11/16 Leadership playbook for success
- 11/16 Helping special education students
- 11/17 Building bridges to equity: part four
- 11/17 Serving grieving students
- 11/17 Transformational change for mentoring
- 11/30 What educators needs from their administrators
- 11/30 Understanding Doubled Up



For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

Invitation to Listserv Participants:

Everyone has a stake in the future of public education. This is a critical time for action. Send this resource on to others. Think about sharing with the growing number who are receiving it. AND Let us know about what we should be including.

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

**We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange
on our website at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm>
and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)**