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School-based Crisis Response Systems: An overview of school-wide response and *behavior health emergencies*

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Northeast and Caribbean (HHS Region 2)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center
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**Northeast and Caribbean
Region 2**

**General Mental
Health Workforce**

**Provider
Wellness**

**Youth & Young
Adult Services**

**School Mental
Health Workforce**



Northeast and Caribbean (HHS Region 2)

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Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

EPBs for serious mental health conditions

Wellness & Recovery for Providers and people with mental health conditions

School Mental Health
Comprehensive, multi-tiered services & supports

Hispanic and Latiné mental health education

Online Education Courses
Wellness Matters, IMR, Functional Thinking & more

Services Available

No-cost training, technical assistance, and resources





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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

A woman with dark, curly hair and a nose ring is looking out a window. The window shows a view of a blue sky with clouds and green foliage. The woman is in the foreground, looking towards the right side of the frame.

988

SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

For people experiencing:

- Suicide, mental health, substance use crisis
- Emotional distress
- People concerned about someone in crisis

Meet Today's Presenter



Tania Leonard, MS

Senior Training and
Consultation Specialist

Northeast and Caribbean
MHTTC

OBJECTIVES

01

Define a Serious Incident

02

Recognize possible barriers to school-based responses

03

Understand Incident Management Guidelines

04

Positively engage leadership/staff during an emergency

05

Provide layers of support during and after a school-based emergency

Readiness and Emergency Management

School Districts, schools, and school communities include all staff, students, parents, and partners in creating safe schools.

Each school should have an individual school safety plan that addresses everyday behaviors and emergency responses.

All schools are required to develop and document a plan to **Prevent/Mitigate**, **Prepare** for, **Respond** to, and **Recover** from daily incidents, or school-wide/school community disasters.

Defining school crisis

- An event with the potential to disrupt normal functioning of school environment and potentially cause physical or emotional harm to individual or school community
- May include (not be limited to)
 - Death of a student or staff member
 - Community violence or disruption
 - Natural disaster
 - Traumatic events that impact students and community members

What Would You Do?

*Review the group- assigned scenario. Describe the steps you would take to **respond** to and **recover** from the impact.*

School Safety Planning

Prevention/Mitigation

- Address possible risks, hazards, and threats in social and physical environments

Recovery

- Provide structural recovery
- Ongoing process



Preparedness

- Establish Incident Command System
- Provide Training and conduct drills

Response

- Activate the Safety Plan and Incident Command Team
- Effective decision making

Prevention/Mitigation

Addresses what schools can do to reduce or eliminate risk to life and property



- Plan responses and training for school's unique situations
- Establish visitation procedures
- Practice evacuation drills

Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Natural Surveillance
- Access management
- Territoriality
- Physical maintenance
- Order maintenance

Hazard & Vulnerability Assessment

Proper safety and security measures work in line with the school's primary purpose of providing a safe and secure learning environment. The security and vulnerability assessment focuses on areas most vulnerable to hazards and to what extent injuries and danger may occur.

This assessment is designed to identify potential security and vulnerability threats within your school building and develop corrective actions that can prevent and/or mitigate the occurrence of serious incidents (e.g. Intruder, civil disturbance, utility failure, etc).

The completion of this assessment will provide you:

What these hazards can do to physical, social, and economic assets

Which areas are most vulnerable to damage from those hazards, and

The resulting cost of damages or costs avoided through future mitigation [projects](#)

Exterior Grounds	Y/N	N/A	Comments
School's name is visible from beyond the school			
Schools territory is established with property lines and signage			
Pedestrian safety is addressed with well-designed crossing areas and separation from vehicle traffic			
Perimeter fences, walls, and vegetation provide access control without limiting surveillance and are well-maintained.			
Curb areas in front of schools are marked to prohibit parking			
Building Interior	Y/N	N/A	Comments
Entries are wide enough to avoid crowding at peak times			
Foyer/reception area has protective features (counter, desk, telephone, radio etc).			
Confidential student materials/records are separated from the reception area in locked, vanda and fire-resistant containers			



Task Checklist

- Personnel/equipment inventory
- Hazard/vulnerability assessment
- Deployment plan
 - Include community partners

Preparedness

Focuses on the process of planning for the worst-case scenario



- Work with community partners to develop appropriate emergency management policies, protocols, and procedures
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Establish Incident Command System
- Provide training and conduct drills and exercises



Task Checklist

- Identify school safety team members
- Establish/document emergency response protocols
- Vulnerable population planning
- Reunification process
- Training and exercise

Response

Refers to the steps taken during an incident



- Activate the Safety Plan and Incident Command Team
- Use effective decision-making
- Maintain communication with school community, Network Administrators, and media when designated

Major Incident Crisis/Emergency Response Checklist

Assault/Group Assaults (Major Fights)	Sexual Assault/Rape	Student/Staff Death
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Building LOCKDOWN Procedures • Dial 911 and contact School Police Dispatch • Notify administrative office • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dial 911 and contact School Police Dispatch • Notify administrative office • Notify appropriate child servicing agency • Convene Safety/Leadership Team • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification with resources for families • Debrief, complete and submit Emergency/Crisis Incident Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify administrative office • Convene Safety/Leadership Team • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification with resources for families • Debrief, complete and submit Emergency/Crisis Incident Report

Major Incident Crisis/Emergency Response Checklist

Intruder	Student Abduction	Active shooter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Building LOCKDOWN Procedures DO NOT MOVE unless directed by PPD • Dial 911 and contact School Police Dispatch and administrative office • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Wait for All Clear from PD • Notify parents and begin reunification if needed • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Building LOCKDOWN or Reverse Evacuation Procedures • Dial 911 and Contact School Police Dispatch and administrative office • Notify Assistant Superintendent • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Notify parents and begin reunification if needed • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Building LOCKDOWN Procedures DO NOT MOVE unless directed by PPD • Dial 911 and contact School Police Dispatch and administrative office • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Wait for All Clear from PD • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report

Major Incident Crisis/Emergency Response Checklist

Fire/Explosion/Chemical Spill	Severe Weather/Utility Failure/Flood	Pandemic/Outbreak/Biohazard//Airborne Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound Fire Alarm, begin Evacuation procedures • Dial 911, contact School Police Dispatch, administrative office and notify Facilities Area Coordinator • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Notify parents and begin reunification if needed • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation or Shelter In Place • Dial 911 and contact School Police Dispatch, administrative offices, notify Facilities Area Coordinator • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Notify parents and begin reunification if needed • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dial 911 and contact School Police Dispatch • Notify Assistant Superintendent and Facilities Area Coordinator • Follow Department of Public Health guidance • Prepare/distribute Parent Notification Letter with resources for families • Notify parents and begin reunification if needed • Debrief and submit Serious Incident Report



Task Checklist

- Activate communication plan
- Implement Incident Command System
- Complete Emergency Response/Reporting Protocols

Recovery

Refers to the caring and supportive environment that allows for healing to begin



- Provide mental health/emotional recovery
- Recognize that recovery is an ongoing process
- Emphasize the importance of triage and developmentally appropriate interventions
- Provide academic, physical, and business structure recovery

Effective School-Community Partnerships to Support School Mental Health

School mental health supports and services must be a critical component of any educational system - on par with high-quality academic instruction.

Access to school-based mental health services **improves**:

- Physical and psychological safety
- Academic performance
- Social–emotional competence

Access to school-based mental health services **reduces negative outcomes** such as:

- Disciplinary referrals
- Dropout
- Substance use
- Criminal justice system involvement

Resources and Community Partnerships





Defining Community and Identifying Stakeholders

Tier III Supports:

- Mental and Behavior health supports
- Individual counseling
- Emergency Services
- Shelter/housing services

Tier II Supports:

- Seniors/Older adult mentoring
- Small group intervention
- Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution

• Tier I Supports:

- Faith-based partnerships
- Access to health and medical services
- Parent/family support



Task Checklist

- Damage Assessment
- Reopening of school & programs
- After-action debrief
 - Lessons learned

Guidelines For School Based Incident Management

Activate Incident Command System (ICS)

Review facts, incident specific *sensitivities*, *required supports*;

Identify Vulnerable Populations

Develop classroom/student presentation script

Decide on Parent Notification approach (Letter, School Messenger, etc.)

Decide on Next Steps; REOPENING OF SCHOOL

Update Safety Plan





- Have you ever worked with a team to mitigate a behavioral health or school-wide emergency?
- What did the situation look like?
 - What went well?
 - What would you do differently looking back?

Components of a Successful Response to Crisis

1. Leadership
2. Teamwork: Multi-Disciplinary Response Team
3. Responsibility: Liability, Jurisdiction, and Responsiveness



Classroom Scripts

Provide guidance to Incident Commanders/Communicators during emotionally charged responses

- **State the facts**
- **Normalize emotional responses**
- **Acknowledge connection to previous losses**
- **Elicit responses and questions**



Supporting the Impacted School Population

- Identifying impacted student population (individual and small groups)
- Identifying existing supports
- Plan and refer





When Things Go Wrong



- What are components of an unsuccessful response to crisis?
- What are the short- and long-term impacts on a community when needs are not addressed or met?

Reflection

- Are you prepared to respond or be part of a large system response to crisis?
- What steps will you take to prepare yourself and/or your organization?
- Is there anything that you would add to a response to crisis?

Long-Term Benefits of well-facilitated Responses

- Increased communication and effective protocols
- School and community trust
- Decrease in long-term impact of psychological trauma
- Sense of personal and physical safety



Question and Answer



Resources

- [The New York State Center for School Safety](#)
- [NY Quick Guide to Emergency Response Planning](#)
- [NJ DOE School Preparedness and Emergency Planning](#)
- Homeland Security: [Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships](#)
- [Federal Law Enforcement Training](#)

References

Robert D. Macy, et. al., Community-Based, Acute Posttraumatic Stress Management: A Description and Evaluation of a Psychosocial-Intervention Continuum; Harvard Review of Psychiatry, Issue # 12.4, Taylor & Francis, September 2004

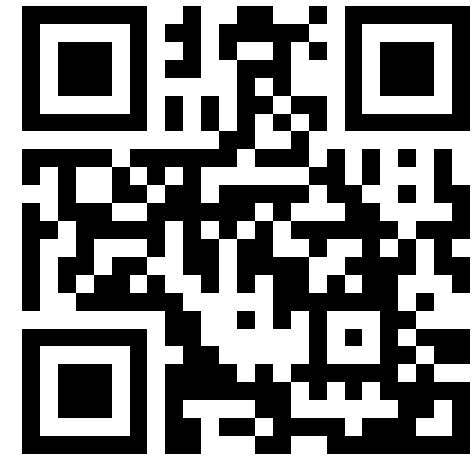
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Evaluation Information

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The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals. Our services cover the full continuum spanning mental illness prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

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