



First Responder: The Role of the School Psychologist in a Crisis Situation

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction to School Crisis Response
- The National Incident Management System
 - Incident Command Structure
- The P·R·E·PaR·E Model of Crisis Intervention
- Concluding Comments

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Introduction to School Crisis Response

- The skill sets of school mental health professionals are best utilized when they are embedded within a multidisciplinary team that engages in crisis prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- By virtue of their professional training they are best prepared to address the psychological issues associated with school crises.
- School crisis management is relatively unique and as such requires its own conceptual model.

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Introduction to School Crisis Response

Crisis Response Models

- U.S. Department of Education (2003) crisis management phases.
 - Prevention
 - Preparedness
 - Response
 - Recovery
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2004).
 - National Incident Management System (NIMS).
 - Incident Command System (ICS).

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Introduction to School Crisis Response

Crisis Defined

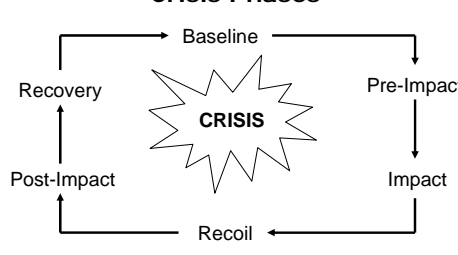
- Sudden, uncontrollable, and extremely negative events that have the potential to impact an entire school community.
- Types of crisis events include:
 - Severe illness and/or injury.
 - Violent and/or unexpected death.
 - Threatened death and/or injury.
 - Acts of war and/or terrorism.
 - Natural disasters.
 - Man-made/industrial disasters.

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Brock (2002)

Introduction to School Crisis Response

Crisis Phases



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Brock, Jimerson, and Hart (2004)

Introduction to School Crisis Response

School Crisis Teams Provide

- ❑ Leadership for prevention and preparedness of crises.
- ❑ Structure and organization to immediate crisis response.
- ❑ Student, staff, and family support through immediate, short-term, and long-term interventions.

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Introduction to School Crisis Response

School Crisis Team Activities

- ❑ Crisis Prevention
 - Reduce the incidence of crisis events.
- ❑ Crisis Preparedness
 - Ensure response readiness for crises that are not, or cannot be, prevented.

United States Department of Education (2003) 8

Introduction to School Crisis Response

School Crisis Team Activities... *Continued*

- ❑ Crisis Response
 - After a crisis event minimize crisis impact and restore equilibrium.
- ❑ Crisis Recovery
 - Repair crisis damage and return to baseline (or pre-crisis) operation/functioning.

United States Department of Education (2003) 9

Introduction to School Crisis Response

Advantages of a Team Approach

- ❑ Builds specific crisis response capacity.
- ❑ Focuses on teamwork/support.
- ❑ Increases innovation/creativity and better decisions.
- ❑ Improves communication and information flow.
- ❑ Regarded by school psychologists as the most effective crisis preparedness strategy.

Colorado Society of School Psychologists (2005); Kline, Schonfeld, and Lichtenstein (1995); Nickerson and Zhe (2004); Pitcher and Poland (1992) 10

Introduction to School Crisis Response

Advantages of a Team Approach

- ❑ Role of School-Based Mental Health Professional Assume leadership roles in preventing student crises.
- ❑ Advise school leaders how to cope with crises.
- ❑ Evaluate current crisis response capabilities.
- ❑ *However*, < 10% have taken a graduate course in crisis prevention and intervention.
- ❑ School psychologists implement crisis response more than they develop and evaluate these efforts.

Allen et al. (2002); Astor, Behre, Wallace, and Fravil (1998), Furlong, Morrison, and Pavelski (2000); Knoff (2000); Nickerson and Zhe (2004) 11

Introduction to School Crisis Response

Multiple Hierarchical Levels

- ❑ School Crisis Team (Building Team).
- ❑ District Team (District Resources).
- ❑ Community and/or Regional Teams (Community Groups).

Brock, Sandoval, & Lewis, (2001); Colorado Society of School Psychologists, (2005); Kline, Schonfeld, & Lichtenstein, (1995); Poland, (1994) 12

National Incident Management System

NIMS

- ❑ Developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2004).
- ❑ Provides a common set of concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes.
- ❑ All federal departments and agencies are required to adopt NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS).

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National Incident Management System

- ❑ Incident Command System (ICS) A structure designed to be used across agencies and disciplines to manage emergencies.
- ❑ Functions
 - Incident Command (the managers).
 - Planning and Intelligence (the thinkers).
 - Operations (the doers).
 - Logistics (the getters).
 - Finance/Administration (the payers).

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National Incident Management System

School Crisis Team Management

- ❑ District Level: Emergency Operations Center Director.
 - Usually Superintendent or designated representative.
 and/or
- ❑ School Site Level: Incident Commander.
 - Typically the principal.
 - If law enforcement involved, they are often incident commander.

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National Incident Management System

School Crisis Team Planning/Intelligence

- ❑ These are the "thinkers."
 - Gather information for the crisis team.
 - Document crisis needs and status.
 - Write evaluations of school crisis team activities.
 - Relies upon flexible and reliable communication system.

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National Incident Management System

School Crisis Team Operations

- ❑ These are the "doers."
 - Implement intervention, "PREPaREdness," response, and recovery priorities established.
 - Coordinators:
 - ❑ Security and safety.
 - ❑ Student care.
 - ❑ Emergency medical.
 - ❑ Translation and/or cultural mediation.

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National Incident Management System

School Crisis Team Logistics

- ❑ These are the "getters."
 - Obtain resources needed to support ICS functions.
 - Coordinators.
 - ❑ Facilities.
 - ❑ Supplies and equipment.
 - ❑ Staff and community volunteer assignment.
 - ❑ Communications.

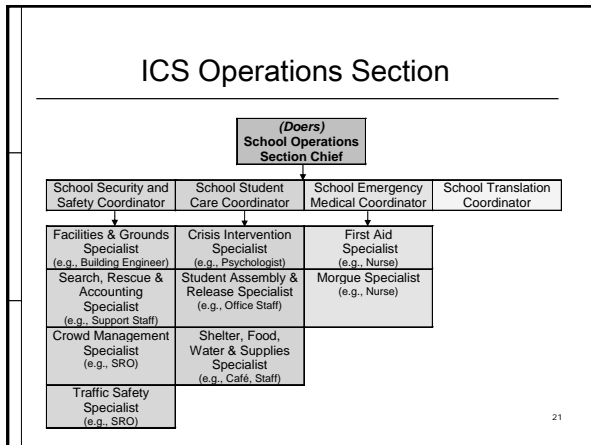
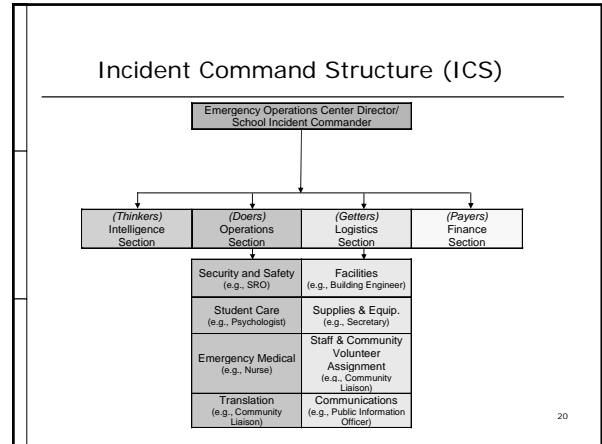
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National Incident Management System

School Crisis Team Finance

- These are “the payers.”
 - Develop a budget.
 - Authorize purchases.
 - Track costs.

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PREPaRE WS1 Handout 1: Illustration of How the Components of PREPaRE Work Within Existing Conceptualizations of Crisis Phases, Levels of Prevention and Intervention, and Crisis Preparedness and Response Phases

Crisis Phase (Raphael & Newton, 2005; Venter, 2005)	Pre-impact (The period before crisis: Preparation Threat & Planning Warning)	Impact (When crisis occurs)	Recoil (Immediately after crisis impacts end)	Post-impact (Days/weeks after the crisis)	Recovery/Reconstruction (Months/years after crisis)
PREPaRE: School Crisis Prevention & Intervention Training Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent & prepare for psychological trauma risk Prevent & prepare for crisis Foster student resiliency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep students safe Avoid crisis scenes and images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaffirm physical health, and ensure perceptions of security & safety Meet basic physical needs (shelter, shelter, food, clothing) Facilitate perceptions of safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate psychological trauma Evaluate crisis exposure and reactions Evaluate internal and external resources Make psychotropic/medication treatment referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide interventions and respond to psychological needs Re-establish social support systems Provide psycho-education (Empower survivors and their caregivers) Provide immediate crisis intervention Provide/refer for longer term crisis intervention
Level of Prevention (Caplan, 1956)	Primary	Primary	Primary & Secondary	Secondary	Tertiary
Level of Therapeutic Intervention (Gordon, 1963)	Universal	Universal	Universal & Selected	Universal, Selected, & Indicated	Selected & Indicated
Lineity of Violence Prevention (Capey & Osher, 2008)	Schoolwide	Schoolwide	Schoolwide & Early Intervention	Schoolwide, Early, & Intensive Interventions	Early & Intensive Interventions
U.S. Department of Education (2003)	Crisis Prevention/Mitigation and Preparedness	Crisis Response and Recovery			

Prevent & Prepare for Psychological Trauma

- **Crisis Prevention**
 - Ensure physical safety
 - Ensure psychological safety
 - Foster internal and external resiliency
- **Crisis Preparedness and Planning**
- **Keep Students Safe**
- **Avoid Crisis Scenes and Images**

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Reaffirm Physical Health

- **Provide**
 - Shelter
 - Food and water
 - Clothing
 - Other issues?

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Ensure Perceptions of Security & Safety

- Adult behavior in response to the crisis is key.
- Security and safety measures may need to be concrete and visible.

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Reaffirm Physical Health and Ensure Perceptions of Security & Safety

“Once traumatic events have stopped or been eliminated, the process of restoration begins. Non-psychiatric interventions, such as provision of basic needs, food, shelter and clothing, help provide the stability required to ascertain the numbers of youth needing specialized psychiatric care”
(Barenbaum et al., 2004, p. 49).

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Evaluating Psychological Trauma

Psychological Triage Defined

“The process of evaluating and sorting victims by immediacy of treatment needed and directing them to immediate or delayed treatment. The goal of triage is to do the greatest good for the greatest number of victims”
(NIMH, 2001, p. 27).

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Evaluating Psychological Trauma

Rationale

- 1) Not all individuals will be equally affected by a crisis.
 - One size does not fit all.
 - Some will need intensive intervention.
 - Others will need very little, if any intervention.

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Evaluating Psychological Trauma

Rationale

- 2) Recovery from crisis exposure is the norm.
 - Crisis intervention should be offered in response to demonstrated need.
 - “Not everyone exposed to trauma either needs or wants professional help”
(McNally et al., 2003, p. 73).

EXCEPTION: Students with pre-existing psychopathology.

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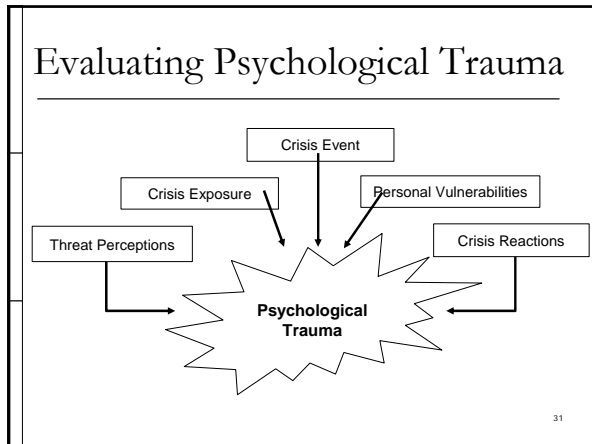
Evaluating Psychological Trauma

Rationale

- 3) There is a need to identify those who will recover relatively independently.
 - Crisis intervention may cause harm if not truly needed.
 - i. It may increase crisis exposure.
 - ii. It may reduce perceptions of independent problem solving.
 - iii. It may generate self-fulfilling prophecies.

Berkowitz (2003), Everly (1999)

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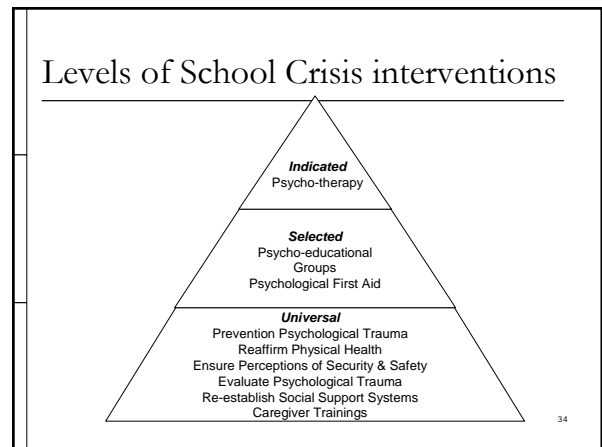
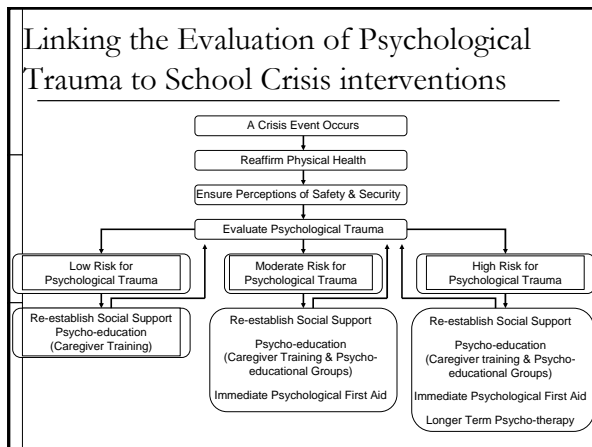


Conducting Psychological Triage

A Dynamic Process

- Levels of triage
 - 1) Primary assessment of psychological trauma.
 - 2) Secondary assessment of psychological trauma.
 - 3) Tertiary assessment of psychological trauma.

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Preparing to Deliver Crisis Intervention Services

- ❑ Recognize signs of students in need of more direct crisis intervention.
- ❑ Be aware of populations predisposed to risk for psychological trauma.
- ❑ Maintain a calm presence when providing any crisis intervention.
- ❑ Be sensitive to culture and diversity.

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Re-establish Social Support Systems

The Primary School Crisis Intervention

- Being with and sharing crisis experiences with positive social supports facilitates recovery from trauma.
- Lower levels of such support is a strong predictor of PTSD.
- This support is especially important to the recovery of children.

Litz et al. (2002), Caffo and Belaise (2003), Ozer et al. (2003) Barenbaum et al. (2004)

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Re-establish Social Support Systems

Challenges

- Extremely violent and life-threatening crisis events (e.g., mass violence).
- Chronic crisis exposure.
- Caregivers significantly affected by the crisis.
- The presence of psychopathology.

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Re-establish Social Support Systems

Specific Techniques

- Reunite students with their caregivers
- Reunite students with their close friends, teachers, and classmates
- Return to familiar school environments and routines
- Facilitate community connections
- Empower with caregiving/recovery knowledge

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Psychological Education

Empowering Crisis Survivors and Caregivers

- Psycho-education is designed to provide students, staff and caregivers with knowledge that will assist in understanding, preparing for, and responding to the crisis event, and the problems and reactions it generates (both in oneself and among others).

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Psychological Education

Rationale

- Children often have incorrect beliefs about the crisis event.
- Children are more likely than adults to use avoidance coping.
- Facilitates a sense of control over the recovery process.
- Capitalizes on strengths and promotes self confidence.
- Provides connections to mental health resources (without stigma).

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Psychological Education

Limitations

- Not sufficient for the more severely traumatized.
- Must be paired with other psychological interventions and professional mental health treatment.
- Limited research.

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Psychological Education

Specific Techniques

- Psycho-Educational Groups
- Caregiver Trainings
- Informational Bulletins, Flyers, and/or Handouts

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Psychological Interventions

- a) Immediate Psychological First Aid Interventions.
 - i. Group
 - ii. Individual
- b) Long Term Psychotherapeutic Treatment Interventions.

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Psychological Interventions

Group Psychological First Aid

- Actively explore individual crisis experiences and reactions.
- Strive to help students feel less alone and more connected to classmates, and to normalize experiences and reactions.
- A psychological triage tool.
- Cautions/limitations.

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Psychological Interventions

Group Psychological First Aid

- Goals
 - a) The crisis event is understood.
 - b) Crisis experiences and reactions are understood and normalized.
 - c) Adaptive coping with the crisis and crisis problems is facilitated.
 - d) Crisis survivors begin to look forward.

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Psychological Interventions

Group Psychological First Aid

- Elements:
 - a) **Introduction to the Session:** Purpose, process, and steps are understood; facilitators identified; rules reviewed or established.
 - b) **Provide Crisis Facts and Dispell rumors:** Gain cognitive mastery of the crisis event.
 - c) **Share Stories:** Crisis experiences and commonalities are identified (normalized).
 - d) **Share Reactions:** Crisis reactions and commonalities are identified (normalized).
 - e) **Empowerment:** Identify coping strategies and/or take some action.
 - f) **Closing:** Begin to look forward.

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Psychological Interventions

Group Psychological First Aid

- General Considerations
 - a) Who should participate?
 - b) What is the optimal size?
 - c) Where should the session be offered?
 - d) When should the session be offered?
 - e) Who are the facilitators?
 - f) What is the role of the teacher?
 - g) What are the follow-up needs?
 - h) What are the contraindications?
 - i) Is permission needed?

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Psychological Interventions

Individual Psychological First Aid

- Goal:
 - Re-establish immediate coping.
- Subgoals:
 - Ensure safety.
 - Provide support (physical and emotional comfort) and reduce distress.
 - Identify crisis related problems.
 - Support adaptive coping and begin the problem solving process.
 - Assess trauma risk and link to helping resources.

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Psychological Interventions

Individual Psychological First Aid

- Elements:
 - a) **Establish Rapport:** Make psychological contact with the person in crisis.
 - b) **Identify and Prioritize Crisis Problems:** Identify the most immediate concerns.
 - c) **Address Crisis Problems:** Identify possible solutions and take some action.
 - d) **Review Progress:** Ensure the individual is moving toward adaptive crisis resolution.

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Psychological Interventions

Psychotherapeutic Treatment Interventions

- Empirically Supported Treatment Options (Feeny et al., 2004).
- Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches.
 - a) Imaginal and In Vivo Exposure.
 - b) Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).
 - c) Anxiety-Management Training.
 - d) Group-Delivered Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions.

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Psychological Interventions

Psychotherapeutic Treatment Interventions

- "Overall, there is growing evidence that a variety of CBT programs are effective in treating youth with PTSD" ... "Practically, this suggests that psychologists treating children with PTSD can use cognitive-behavioral interventions and be on solid ground in using these approaches" (Feeny et al., 2004, p. 473).

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Psychological Interventions

Psychotherapeutic Treatment Interventions

- "In sum, cognitive behavioral approaches to the treatment of PTSD, anxiety, depression, and other trauma-related symptoms have been quite efficacious with children exposed to various forms of trauma" (Brown & Bobrow, 2004, p. 216).

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Evaluating and Concluding the School Crisis Intervention

- The school crisis response can be concluded when all individuals have obtained the knowledge and/or support they need to cope with crisis generated problems.

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Evaluating and Concluding the School Crisis Intervention

Outcomes reflecting effectiveness.

1. Crisis interventions indicated by psychological triage have been provided.
2. Individuals with psychopathology have been provided appropriate treatment.
3. Individuals with maladaptive coping behaviors (e.g., suicide, homicide) have been referred to the appropriate professional(s) and lethality has been reduced.

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Evaluating and Concluding the School Crisis Intervention

Outcomes reflecting effectiveness

...Continued.

4. Students attend school at or above pre-crisis attendance rates.
5. School behavior problems (i.e., aggressive, delinquent, and criminal behavior) occur at or below pre-crisis levels.
6. Student academic functioning is at or above pre-crisis level.

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Debriefing and Caring for the Caregiver

Recommendations

- Debriefing with other crisis responders.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Mentor/Mentee relationships.
- Exercise.
- Rest/Sleep.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol and drugs.

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Debriefing and Caring for the Caregiver

Recommendations

- Maintain normal routines and comfortable rituals.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals.
- Use relaxation techniques (diaphragmatic breathing, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, spirituality).

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Debriefing and Caring for the Caregiver

Recommendations

- Surround yourself with support.
- Pursue your passions.
- See http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/pfa/Self_Care_for_Providers.pdf for a psycho-educational handout addressing the topic of self care.

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Debriefing and Caring for the Caregiver

Recommendations

- Responding to teachers and other staff members who need intervention.
- In advance of a crisis...
 - Form alliances with EAP providers and community mental health as site-based personnel may not be in the best position to provide such assistance.
 - Discuss with school administrators the circumstances under which a staff member may need to be removed from a caregiving situation.
 - Discuss with school administrators how to remove a staff member from an inappropriate caregiving situation.

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Questions and Comments

- About the P·R·E·PaR·E model or this workshop:
 - Stephen E. Brock, Amanda Nickerson, Melissa Reeves, & Shane Jimerson; P·R·E·PaR·E primary authors
- About the Crisis Prevention & Intervention (CPI) Workgroup:
 - Richard Lieberman, NCSP, CPI Chairperson
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 - Melissa Reeves, Ph.D., NCSP, CPI Co-Chairperson
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Questions and Comments

- Immediate Crisis Intervention Consultation
 - National Emergency Assistance Team (NEAT)
 - Frank Zenere, NCSP, NEAT Chairperson
 - fzen3@hotmail.com
- Online Crisis Intervention Resources
 - <http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/crisismain.html>

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Authorship

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- Adapted from the California Association of School Psychologists' Crisis Intervention Specialty Group's *School Crisis Intervention Workshop*, authored by Stephen E. Brock, CSU Sacramento, CA; Shane R. Jimerson, University of California Santa Barbara, CA; Richard Lieberman, Los Angeles Unified School District, CA; Ross Zatlun, Sweetwater Union High School District, CA; and Lee Huff, Fountain Valley Unified School District, CA.
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