School Crisis Interventions
EDS 246b
Preventive Psychological Intervention
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The Importance of Being PREPaREd

1. Crisis intervention expectations.
2. Multidisciplinary team membership.
3. Unique needs of students.
4. Unique aspects of schools.

Provision of Crisis Intervention is Expected

Events in recent years underscore the importance of school emergency management planning to help protect the approximately 50 million children annually entrusted to the nation’s K-12 public schools. It is important for school districts to be prepared to confront a range of threats and hazards, from man-made to natural.


Local Reports

School crisis teams respond quickly to teen’s death
Connections made with boy’s father

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Provision of Crisis Intervention Is Expected (cont.)

- 20 states require plans address recovery
- But only 49% of district plans address recovery

The Importance of Being PREPaREd

Multidisciplinary Team Membership

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Unique Needs Of Students

It is generally accepted now that children represent a highly vulnerable population, for whom levels of symptoms may often be higher than for adults.

Recent literature also suggests that childhood trauma can have a lasting impact on child cognitive, moral, and personality development, interpersonal relationships, and coping abilities.

Barenbaum et al. (2004, p. 42)
The Importance of Being PREPARED
Unique Aspects Of School Environments
As outside providers enter the school setting specifically to provide mental health services, a clear understanding of the school structure and culture is warranted.

Brown & Bobrow (2004, p. 212)

Workshop Objectives & Outline
Outline
1. Background Knowledge
2. Evaluating Psychological Trauma
   a) Social Support
   b) Psychological Education
   c) Psychological Intervention
4. Examining the Effectiveness of Crisis Preparedness and Crisis Response
5. Caring for the Caregiver

Background Knowledge
1. Characteristics and Types of Crises
2. Crisis Event Variables
3. Crisis Intervention Levels
4. Crisis Reactions
5. Crisis Preparedness and Disaster Phases
6. Crisis Response
7. The PREPARE Model
Background Knowledge
Characteristics of Crises
1. Painful
2. Uncontrollable
3. Unpredictable

Background Knowledge
Types of Crises
- Acts of war, terrorism
- Violent, unexpected death
- Threatened death or injury
- Human-caused disasters
- Natural disasters
- Nonfatal illness or injury

Identify variables that help to estimate the number of individuals traumatized by a crisis.

Rank order these crises from most to least traumatic
Non-fatal illness or injury
Natural disasters
Human-caused disasters
Threatened death or injury
Violent/unexpected death
Acts of war/Terrorism
Background Knowledge

Types of Crises

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- Natural disasters
- Nonfatal illness or injury

Identify variables that help to estimate the number of individuals traumatized by a crisis.

Background Knowledge

Crisis Event Variables

- Predictability
- Consequences
- Duration
- Intensity

Identify variables that help to estimate the number of individuals traumatized by a crisis.

Background Knowledge

School Mental Health Crisis Intervention Levels

Crisis Event Type + Affecting Individual Group School Community

1. Minimal
2. Building level
3. District level
4. Regional level

Identify variables that help to estimate the number of individuals traumatized by a crisis.
Background Knowledge

School Mental Health Crisis Intervention Levels

- Predictability: Staff prepared for injuries
- Consequences: Nonfatal injury
- Duration: Minutes
- Intensity: Students exposed to the accident and another's pain

Background Knowledge

Crisis Reactions: The Personal Consequences of Crisis Event Exposure

- Crisis
- Threat perception
- Coping failure
- Distress, disorganization, impairment
- Coping efforts

Adaptive: Healthy coping
Maladaptive: Unhealthy coping

Opportunity: Danger

Background Knowledge

Crisis Reactions: The Personal Consequences of Crisis Event Exposure (cont.)

- Mental illnesses
  - Trauma- and stressor-related disorders
  - Depressive disorders
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Dissociative disorders
  - Sleep-wake disorders
- All have symptom duration requirements

Recognize the difference between common crisis reactions and mental illness.
Background Knowledge

Crisis Reactions: The Personal Consequences of Crisis Event Exposure (cont.)

- School adjustment difficulties
  - Behavioral challenges
  - Absenteeism
  - Academic decline
  - Poor performance
  - Decreased verbal IQ
  - Exacerbation of preexisting difficulties

Activity: Crisis Reactions

- Crisis event opportunities
  - In small groups, identify some of the opportunities (or positive outcomes) that may result from crisis exposure.
  - Identify potential opportunities for both (a) individual students and (b) the school or school systems.

A crisis can...
- Destroy you
- Define you
- Make you stronger

Background Knowledge

Crisis Preparedness and Disaster Phases

- School crisis preparedness levels
  - Five emergency management mission areas
    1. Prevention: Avoid, prevent, or stop crises
    2. Protection: Safeguard against crises
    3. Mitigation: Reduce losses by lessening impact
    4. Response: Reduce traumatic stress and meet basic needs
    5. Recovery: Return to precrisis functioning
Background Knowledge

Crisis Preparedness and Disaster Phases (cont.)

• Disaster phases
  1. Preimpact: Period before crisis
  2. Impact: During crisis
  3. Recoil: Immediately after crisis
  4. Postimpact: Days to weeks after crisis
  5. Recovery/reconstruction: Months to years after crisis

Background Knowledge

Crisis Response

• The Incident Command System and the multidisciplinary crisis response team

• PREPaRE advocates placing a Mental Health Officer in the Command Staff

The PREPaRE Model

| P | Prevent and prepare for crises |
| R | Reaffirm physical health & welfare and perceptions of safety & security |
| E | Evaluate psychological trauma risk |
| P | Provide crisis interventions and respond to mental health needs |
| E | Examine the effectiveness of crisis preparedness |

Identify the elements of school crisis preparedness specified by the PREPaRE acronym.
Background Knowledge

The PREPaRE Model (cont.)

1. Workshop 1: Comprehensive School Safety Planning
   - P = Prevent and prepare for psychological trauma
     1. Promote school safety
     2. Develop crisis plans and functional annexes
     3. Develop crisis intervention resources
     4. Develop psychotherapeutic resources
     5. Promote student resiliency
     6. Minimize crisis exposure

The PREPaRE Model (cont.)

1. Workshop 1: Comprehensive School Safety Planning
   - R = Reaffirm physical health and welfare
     1. Activate functional annexes
       - Examples: Evacuation, Lockdown, Reunification
     2. Address “special needs”
     3. Address acute distress
     4. Ensure physical comfort

The PREPaRE Model (cont.)

1. Workshop 1: Comprehensive School Safety Planning
   - R = Reaffirm perceptions of safety and security
     1. Monitor adult reactions
     2. Minimize exposure
     3. Locate and reunite significant others
     4. Provide facts and adaptive interpretations
     5. Return to school
     6. Take action
Background Knowledge

The PREPaRE Model (cont.)

• Workshop 1: Comprehensive School Safety Planning
  • R = Reaffirm perceptions of safety and security
  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)

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” To this day, especially in times of ‘disaster,’ I remember my mother’s words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers – so many caring people in the world.

Fred “Mr. Rodgers”

Background Knowledge

The PREPaRE Model (cont.)

• Workshop 2: Crisis Recovery
  A successful recovery process addresses the full range of psychological and emotional needs of the community as it recovers from the disaster through the provision of support, counseling, screening and treatment when needed. These needs range from helping individuals to handle the shock and stress associated with the disaster’s impact and recovery challenges, to addressing the potential for and consequences of individuals harming themselves or others through substance, physical and emotional abuse. Successful recovery acknowledges the linkages between the recovery of individuals, families and communities.

Background Knowledge

The PREPaRE Model (cont.)

• Workshop 2: Mental Health Crisis Interventions
  • E = Evaluate
  • PaR = Provide and Respond
  • Facilitate adaptive coping
  • E = Examine

Crisis Intervention Tips

Advice
Support
Guidance
Help
Assistance

Next Meeting

• Read:
  • Brock et al. (2016), Chapters 13 & 14

• Activity:
  • Conducting Psychological Triage