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ABSTRACT
                This manual was developed to provide school systems
with information useful in identifying and responding to crises in
their schools and communities. It provi.?es a framework for school
systems to use in establishing procedures and guidelines to react
appropriately to crisis situations. It consists of general
information to guide school systems in developing specific programs,
policies, and procedures to handle crisis situations. The manual
consists of four sections. The first section provides a brief
introduction and overview of various crises that could have an impact
on an entire school and community. The second section presents
suggested guidelines and procedures to follow when a school system
responds to a crisis situation. It includes a sample format for a
crisis plan and sample forms for a school's central office plan,
school crisis plan, communication with the central office, and an
illness crisis. The third section consists of programs and services
that can be developed and implemented with a focus on prevention. The
final section suggests resources which may help school systems
develop preventive programs and manage crisis situations. This
document is intended as a resource guide and is not meant to provide
specific skills for intervening during crisis situations. A
bibliography of 46 items is included. (NB)

GUIDELINES

FOR HANDLING
...SIS SITUATIONS

IN THE SCHOOLS
1988

SUPPORT SERVICES AREA

DIVISION OF STUDENT SERVICES ● DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION ● RALEIGH, NC 27603-1712

CRISIS INTERVENTION MANUAL

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CRISIS INTERVENTION MANUAL

PURPOSE

This manual has been developed to provide school systems (LEAs) with information to identify and respond to crises in their schools and communities. It provides a framework for LEAs to establish procedures and guidelines to react appropriately to crisis situations that have the potential for major impact on a school or the school system. The manual consists of general information to guide school systems in developing specific programs, policies, and procedures to handle crisis situations and to prepare school populations in the event that crises occur.

The manual consists of four sections. The first section provides a brief introduction and overview of various crises that could have an impact on an entire school and community. The second section presents suggested guidelines and procedures to follow when a school system responds to a crisis situation. A third section consists of programs and services that can be developed and implemented with a focus on prevention. The manual concludes with suggested resources, which may help LEAs develop preventive programs and manage crisis situations.

A cautionary note is necessary. This manual is intended as a resource/reference guide, and is designed to help LEAs develop policies, procedures, and programs for their schools and communities. It is not intended to provide specific skills for intervening during crisis situations. Such skills would need to be identified among appropriate professional groups within the school system and community. In addition, training would be needed for school personnel to handle crisis situations.

The appropriate use of this manual is therefore predicated by the identification of skilled helping professionals, staff development activities, and community awareness programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

A crisis can be defined as an intolerable situation, unstable condition, or sudden change that disrupts the normal operation of an individual, group, organization, or community, and demands immediate attention and resolution. School populations are often affected by crises that occur within the school as well as in the community at large. Tragic deaths, natural disasters, and violent assaults among other situations can have a devastating impact on students, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community.

In preparing guidelines and procedures to develop preventive measures as well as intervention strategies, school systems will want to become aware of the common characteristics of crises. They will also want to prepare guidelines and procedures to address a variety of crises that could possibly affect school populations.

Common Characteristics

Regardless of their unique differences, most crises have some common characteristics. For example, in all crises immediate needs can be identified and must be addressed to resolve the situation. These needs encompass the concerns of individuals and the school population, and revolve around issues that include physical welfare, emotional stability, security, and protection of personal and institutional integrity.

Crisis situations usually consist of abnormal, uncommon, and extraordinary conditions that elicit strong reactions from affected populations. Such reactions include high levels of anxiety, stress, and fear, a preoccupation with the situation, and a state of disequilibrium that exists for most victims. In addition, confrontations are unavoidable in most crisis situations because of the high stress levels.

Types of Crises

There are many crises that have the potential to affect entire school communities. Some are so traumatic that they alter the consciousness of a school and community for many years. The explosion of the Challenger spacecraft in 1986, witnessed by thousands of school children across the country, is one tragic example.

The death of a student, school employee, or a community or national leader weighs heavily on colleagues, friends, and family members who identify with the school. These crisis situations are compounded by the role that tragedy and violence play in an untimely death. For example, suicides, homicides, and automobile accidents have a critical impact on school and community populations. The feelings of loss, hurt, and anger frequently extend beyond immediate kin and close friends to others who identify with these feelings because of their association and involvement with the school.

Medical crises have an impact on school communities, particularly if illnesses are terminal, are a lengthy duration, change people physically, emotionally, or psychologically, or produce fear of contamination. Concern about AIDS, herpes, or infectious hepatitis provide a few examples of how some illnesses raise fears in communities.

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Other crises that also have an impact on the functions of a school are social events and issues, economic changes, natural disasters, and environmental crises. Examples of social events and issues which can be disruptive are: crimes, imprisonment, drug/alcohol abuse, and sexual deviance. Economic factors that produce crises are: widespread unemployment, foreclosures on homes, and the closing of major industries. Natural disasters, such as tornados, fires, floods, and hurricanes, frequently affect the use of school facilities and the normal operation of the school schedule. Environmental crises, such as chemical leaks and spills, industrial explosions, or nuclear related incidents, can also disrupt school.

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PROCEDURES

This section recommends procedures for school systems to use in helping administrators, teachers, student services professionals, parents, students and community resources cooperate during crisis situations. These recommendations include a list of general guidelines, a crisis plan, and procedures for forming crisis teams in schools.

General Guidelines

In crisis situations, the following procedures may be helpful:

1) Define the type and extent of the crisis as soon as possible.

2) Inform the staff about the situation as soon as possible and inform them of appropriate actions to be taken.

3) Contact the person(s) affected by the crisis and those needed to take corrective action.

4) Designate a central location as the communications center to coordinate information gathering and dissemination.

5) Instruct employees to refer all information and questions to the communications center.

6) Contact the superintendent or designee to inform him or her of the current situation and developments.

7) Take initiative with the news media and let them know what is or is not known about the situation.

8) Release information when facts are verified and the school's position about the crisis is clear.

9) Read all releases from prepared statements.

10) Assign staff members to handle phones and to seek additional inform- ation.

11) Maintain a record of all incoming and outgoing calls and personal contacts.

12) Relieve key people from their normal duties so they may focus on the crisis.

13) Provide refreshments for employees and news media representatives if the crisis is prolonged.

14) Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the crisis.

Crisis Plan

School systems are encouraged to develop a central office crisis plan and to have each school develop a plan for crisis intervention. Crisis plans should be updated each year as needed and shared with the school staff. Prior to the development of a school crisis plan, the following topics should be considered:

* The school staff should openly discuss the types of crises that have occurred in their community and identify those to which the staff, as a whole, will respond.

* At least one school staff member should be trained in CPR procedures. The American Red Cross representative can be contacted about training.

* In secondary schools, crisis teams should involve a student who can assist with communications to other students.

* Principals should have knowledge of, or be trained in, procedures for contacting rescue squads, fire departments, sheriff's department and other emergency agencies in the community. Training in identification of the emergency, directions to be given and authorization to inform appropriate persons should be discussed as part of the training.

* Principals should have knowledge of, or be trained in, procedures for dealing with the news media: what to say, how to say it, and to whom information should be given regarding the various crises described in the crisis plan for each school.

* Training of principals and other personnel should include information about legal and ethical implications of handling crises that involve staff, students, and student families.

* An assessment and follow-up of the crisis plan should be devised by a central office crisis team with the school and community when the immediate crisis is over and during the aftermath of the crisis.

The following outline is a sample plan that can be adapted by local school systems to meet their individual and unique needs.

A CRISIS PLAN
(Sample Format)

I. Requirements for the Crisis Plan (CP)

   1. A central office crisis team should be organized and a plan should be established and distributed to each school principal. (See Central Office Plan: Sample #1.)

   2. The school CP should be a written document on file in each principal's office and on file in the superintendent's office. (See School Crisis Plan: Sample #2.)

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3. Each school CP should be current as of the third day of the school year and will be revised as needed at the end of the year.

4. Each school CP should meet the criteria outlined in this plan.

II. <u>Criteria for the CP</u>

1. A CP team is appointed annually.

2. Each CP team should have at least four members including the principal. One member will act in the principal's stead when the principal is out of the building.

3. An audible signal should be devised to alert the school when appropriate about an impending crisis. The signal will be made known to the members of the school community.

4. Each CP team should be trained to take necessary steps to assist individuals and groups in crisis and to maintain an orderly school environment.

III. <u>Crisis Plan Procedures</u>

1. An individual who observes a crisis situation alerts the principal.

2. The principal sends the CP signal to CP team members and gives the location of the crisis.

3. The CP signal is followed by a code signal for type of crisis. Examples of codes:

Code A.   Hostage or attack or abuse

Code B.   Illness crisis (heart attack, severe fall)

Code C.   Suicide threat

Code D.   Evacuation of a group (tornado, gas leak)

Code E.   Social disturbance (drugs, alcohol)

Code F.   Accident

4. The CP team meets at the location, except for one member who supervises the communication center (usually in the principal's office with phone, communication capabilities, etc.).

5. The CP member who has responsibility for the communication center relays message (see Communication with Central Office: Sample Form #3) to the central office CP designee. If this designee is other than the superintendent, he or she informs the superintendent immediately.

6. Specific procedures to be followed by the school building CP Team for each individual type of crisis are outlined (See Code B Illness Crisis: Sample Form #4.).

7. Specific procedures regarding communication to others about the crisis are as follows:

   A. The school building CP Team member supervises the office communication center and relays the first message re: information to appropriate individual(s) affected by the crisis.

   B. The second message re: the crisis is to the central office CP designee who alerts the superintendent.

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Central Office Plan: Sample Form #1

19 __ - __ School Year

Names of Central Office Team: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Chairperson

Steps to be Taken:

1. Individual who receives the call from a local school and records
    message as given is responsible for contacting the central office designee
    for crisis situations.

    (Chairperson of Crisis Team) _____ (Name) _____

2. Central office designee gives instructions to local school CP designee
    including instructions re: communication to school personnel, family,
    media, personnel.

3. Central office designee informs superintendent of situation.

4. Superintendent meets with Crisis Team, if necessary, to determine
    additional steps to be taken.

Signed: _____
                    Superintendent

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School Crisis Plan: __Sample #2__   Date Filed:

for _____School

_____

19 __ - __ School Year

Names cf CP members: _____

                          _____

                          _____

                          _____
                                  Principal

1.   Auditory code for crisis is _____

2.   Personnel authorized to send code are _____

     _____

3.   Designated crisis team member to inform central office

     CP designee: _____

4.   Name of central office CP designee to be informed and telephone No.:

     _____   _____

-------------------------------- ---

                 Signed: _____
                                      Principal

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Communication with Central Office: Sample Form #3

COMMUNICATION WITH CENTRAL OFFICE FORM

Message from Local School to Central Office CP Designee

1.   Identify who you are and your school.

2.   Identify by Code A through F the type of crisis situation.

3.   Give facts re: any individual or service that has been called.

4.   Give facts re: any individual(s) involved in the crisis.

    a.   Name(s)

    b.   School relationship (student, teacher, parent, etc.)

5.   Follow the instructions of the central office CP designee re:

    a.   Information to parents and family members

    b.   Information to outsiders (press, neighbors, other media).

Code B
Illness Crisis: Sample Form #4

_____
         School

Code B - Assignments for Team

Principal's Instructions re: Steps to be Taken   Team Member
                                                        Responsible

                                                        _____

1st Call Rescue Squad or Ambulance

     Telephone Nos. _____.

     Say: _I am____(name)_____calling for the principal of_

     _____ School where we have a medical

     emergency. _Come to___(entrance to building)__ and

     _____ will meet you there and bring you
     to the patient as quickly as possible.

2nd Call next of kin (name listed on school record)   _____

     Say: _I am___(name)____calling for the principal.

     _____ appears ill (has fallen) and we
     have called for medical help. (If the next of kin
     comes to school, tell the individual where to come in
     the building or medical facility and for whom to ask).
     If the individual does not come to school, offer to call
     him or her back in a short time with more information.

3rd A CP Team Member is in charge of keeping order and calm-   _____
     ing rumors while the ill person is assisted.

4th CP Team Member who handles communication center in school   _____
     calls central office designee and gives appropriate
     information. This team member records instructions given
     re: release of information concerning the incident and
     referral of inquiries.

     For any crisis plan to be effective, school systems will need to select
the most capable and skilled team members from their administrative, teaching
and support staffs. In particular, school systems will want to include student
services professionals - counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses
in planning for and intervention of crises in the schools. These professionals
can also assist with preventive measures for teachers, students and the
community. The next section of this manual addresses the preventive focus.

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PREVENTION

Some crises cannot be prevented regardless of the procedures and policies implemented by school systems. Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, are an example. Nevertheless, school systems can prevent some crises and can minimize the effects of others by establishing programs and services that have a preventive and developmental focus. This section presents brief descriptions of several types of programs and activities that can help prevent crises from occurring, can minimize the impact of a crisis, or can serve to maintain order and stability during critical situations. Resources for establishing preventive programs are found in the last section of this manual.

Educational Programs

The following programs and services can be established in schools and school systems to focus on the developmental needs of school populations and provide coping skills that can be called upon during crisis situations. Addressing developmental needs and enhancing coping skills of school populations are two preventive measures that can have a positive effect on how school systems deal with crises.

(1) <u>Classroom Guidance</u>. Guidance activities are used by teachers, counselors, and other student services personnel to help students learn about themselves, their relationships with others, and the career, educational, social, and personal decisions to be made in their lives. In North Carolina, the Guidance Curriculum of the <u>Teacher Handbook</u> consists of specific instructional goals and objectives and suggested activities that can be integrated into daily classroom instruction. Through guidance activities, the classroom teacher is able to identify students who need assistance from a school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, or other trained professional.

2) <u>Developmental Counseling</u>. School counselors and other student services workers, such as psychologists, nurses, and social workers, provide counseling services to help students with developmental concerns. Often, these counseling services are provided in group settings. Developmental counseling helps students deal with a variety of issues including: learning decision-making skills, improving attitudes about school, handling stress, learning coping skills, improving peer relationships, expressing feelings, being assertive, handling loss and grief, controlling substance abuse, and many others. The aim of developmental counseling is to help students acquire appropriate coping and decision-making skills to deal with problems before they become serious enough to require more intense, remedial counseling.

3) <u>Parent Education</u>. Another way that schools can maintain a preventive focus is by offering parent education programs. These informational/instructional services can be facilitated by student services personnel with assistance, if needed, by outside consultants. The topics of such programs could include: child behavior and development, parenting skills, parent-child communications, home-school relationships, health/nutrition information, and others.

4) **Peer Helper Programs.** Many schools in North Carolina have established peer helper programs designed to train students to work with other students who have concerns. Typically these peer helper programs are led by a counselor and/or teachers. Selected students are trained in helping skills and they schedule time during the school day to assist other students. Peer helpers provide assistance in a number of ways. They can be peer tutors, assistants to teachers and counselors in providing classroom guidance, "welcome guides" for new students, and peer counselors. They can also be "barometers" of the overall school climate to help the school staff stay on top of critical issues affecting the student population.

5) **Community Awareness.** An additional preventive focus for school systems is community awareness programs. A crisis that affects the entire school is often closely related to the community as a whole. For that reason, the school system should work with community leaders to assess community needs, establish services, and develop community resources. Cooperative efforts between the school and community can assist with recreational needs, support services, the availability of health/medical resources, the establishment of cooperative media relationships, and a healthy working relationship between the business/industry sector and the educational institutions.

Staff Inservice

Another area of preventive focus for school systems is that of staff inservice and training. Just as student, parent, and community education can help prevent crises or minimize the impact of crises, training for school staff is also an important preventive measure.

1) **Teaching the Whole Child.** One major preventive measure that school systems can take is to assure that all teachers develop a sensitivity to "teaching the whole child." Inservice training that helps teachers develop this sensitivity includes: information about student development and learning styles; skills to coordinate and collaborate with other teachers; introduction to the Guidance Curriculum and ways to integrate guidance activities into daily instruction; development of helping relationship skills; and information about student self-concept development.

2) **Observing and Monitoring.** Crises can be prevented if school staff observe and monitor indicators that point to a potential crisis situation. School systems can provide inservice to help teachers, administrators, student services personnel and other staff members recognize changes in student behaviors, attitudes, emotions, or their physical well-being.

3) **Listening and Responding Skills.** Teachers are frequently the first professionals to whom students turn when seeking help. For that reason, teachers need assistance with developing initial helping relationship skills. Such skills include appropriate listening and attending to the student's concern, as well as accurate and helpful responses. Inservice activities presented by school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and others can help classroom teachers develop these helping skills as one preventive measure.

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4) <u>Referral Processes</u>. Inservice for school staff should also include the appropriate processes and procedures for referring students and families to receive additional services. This type of inservice is important so that students and their families receive consistent and reliable information that avoids confusion and duplication of services. In addition to information about referral processes, the school system should provide information about available resources and services in the school and community.

5) <u>Policies and Procedures</u>. When crises occur, they can be magnified or minimized depending how well the school staff follows appropriate policies and procedures. For that reason, the school system should have annual inservice about the policies and procedures that relate to various crisis situations. While not all crises can be averted, school systems can prevent them from being compounded due to carelessness, negligence, or lack of information.

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RESOURCES

Local school systems and communities have many resources that are available and can be called on prior to, during, and immediately following a crisis. These include free and for-a-fee resources; services from profit and non-profit organizations; public and private agencies and service providers; sectarian and non-sectarian alliances; and printed and audio-visual materials.

The following list includes resources that are readily available and accessible in most communities. It is intended that this list be used to stimulate inter-agency discussion of what resources are needed by the school system and community, so that a local resource listing can be generated if one is not already available.

The first section of this resource list consists of community agencies and services. The second is a bibliography of printed and audio-visual materials.

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PREVENTION

Programs and Services

CRISIS TYPE	RESOURCE	NATURE OF SERVICE	HOW TO ACCESS	COST
Suicide attempt/ other medical crisis	American Assoc. of Suicidology	Clearing house, referrals, education, information research	Call or write: 2459 S. Ash Denver, CO 80222 (303) 692-0985	None
Natural Disaster	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U. S. Dept.	Weather warnings, reporting, and protection procedures; printed materials for students and adults; listings of radio weather stations	For printed material Superintendent of Document, U. S. Gov't Printing Office, Wash., DC 20402	Varies
Environmental crises (nuclear accident, chemical leaks)	Emergency Management Office	Education, planning, emergency procedures	See local directory under city/county government	None
	American Red Cross	First Aid Training	See local directory	None
General	School counselors, psychologists, and social workers, nurses	Developmental counseling consultation, referrals, and training	See directory for local school	None
	Information & Referral Directory	Referral service and description of agencies	County United Way Agency	Nominal for annual updates
	Local Public Library	Information	See local directory	None

INTERVENTION

Programs and Services

CRISIS TYPE	RESOURCE	NATURE OF SERVICE	HOW TO ACCESS	COST
Natural Disasters	Salvation Army	Shelter, food, clothes	Local directory	None
	American Red Cross	Food, shelter, clothes, medical care	Local directory	None
	Local Churches, Civic Clubs	Food, clothes, etc.	Local directory	None
	YM/YWCA	Temporary shelter	Local directory	None
Acts of Violence	Law Enforcement	Crowd control, communications,	Call 911 or other emergency number(s)	None
	Battered Women's Shelter/Crisis Center	Temporary shelter, counseling	Local directory	None
	Rape Crisis Center	Counseling, guidance, legal assistance	Local directory	None
	Dept. of Social Services	Child placement services, counsel-ing, legal assistance, child protection	Local directory	None
Substance Abuse	Local Council on Alcoholism	Treatment, counseling, referral	Local directory	None
	Alcoholics Anonymous	Support, counseling, referral	Local directory	None
	Narcotics Anonymous	Support, counseling, referral	Local directory	None
	Mental Health Center	Support, counseling, referral	Local directory	Varies
	Hospital	Detoxification, medical assistance	Local directory	Varies

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CRISIS TYPE	RESOURCE	NATURE OF SERVICE	HOW TO ACCESS	COST
Death	Hospice	Support, counseling	Local directory	None
	Grief Counseling Agencies (Kinder-mourn, Compassionate Friends, To Life, etc.)	Support, counseling	Local directory	Varies
	Mental Health	Counseling, therapy	Local directory	Sliding scale
	Churches, ministers	Pastoral counseling	Local directory	None
	School counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses	Counseling, consultation, referrals	Call local school	None
Family	Dept. of Social Services	Financial assistance, housing	Local directory	None
	United Way Services	Family counseling	Local directory	Varies
	Legal aid	Legal assistance	Local directory	Ability to pay
	Mental health center	Counseling, therapy	Local directory	Sliding scale
	School counselors, social workers, psychologists	Counseling, consultation, referrals	Call local school	None
	Churches, ministers	Counseling, support	Local directory	None
	Information referral directory	Information, descriptive listing of community services	Call United Way	Nominal fee for annual update
	Group homes	Emergency placement for persons in crisis	Call local mental health authority	Varies
	Tough Love	Parent support group	Local directory	None

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