School Crisis Preparedness and Response

School Processing Session

Guidance Procedures:
- Small Group format when possible
- Administrators should model sharing thoughts/worries
- Administrators should serve to facilitate, but not direct the conversation
- Goals:
  - Recognize that every person has a story to tell.
  - Facilitate feelings of "normalcy" while reinforcing resiliency, problem-solving, and coping
  - Gauge an understanding of common reactions
  - Triage individuals who may need more support
    - Support as staff (what additional supports might staff need to address personal risk)
    - Support in delivering response interventions to students (which staff are able and comfortable to lead student response efforts)
- Keep the following in mind with students:
  - Use language that is developmentally appropriate
  - Be culturally and linguistically appropriate
  - Be aware of and prepared to alter the delivery for students with disabilities
  - Do not force participation. Do not require language participation
    - Art, play, and even memes can be appropriate communication tools
  - This process is a Crisis Response intervention - *not counseling.*
    - Triage tool for risk assessment
    - Guides short- and long-term recovery efforts
- Additional Tips:
  - Often important to have one facilitator and one person ready to address acute needs that arise
  - Model calmness, empathy, and optimism
  - Emphasize existing procedures that schools have in place (safety procedures, student supports, employee assistance programs, etc.)
  - Leaders should debrief together and use information to help guide recovery efforts

Common Developmental Reactions for Students Post-Crisis:

Preschoolers: toileting problems, sleeping problems, bed wetting, decreased appetite, increased temper tantrums, more clingy or whiny, and fearful of being alone. Older preschoolers may understand the effects of the outbreak and will look to adults to see how upset to be.

Elementary School Age: increased need for adult attention, increased aggression and irritability, somatic complaints, sleeping problems, and concentration problems with school work.

Middle School and High School: increased somatic complaints, agitation or apathy, concentration problems with school work, increased substance abuse, and withdrawal from others.

Questions to Ask:
- "What has this experience been like for you and/or your family?"
- "What are your fears about school re-entry"
- "What would help you feel safer about being back at school?"
- "What are some things that we can do to help ourselves and each other cope?"

References

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