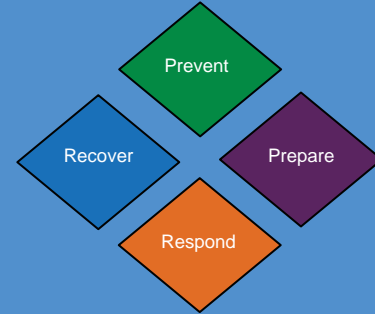


Colorado Safe Schools

A joint publication of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center, Colorado Department of Public Safety and The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado-Boulder



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Recovery: Returning to the Business of Learning

This is the final in our series highlighting the U.S. Department of Education's four phases of emergency planning for schools: Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response and Recovery.

After a safety related incident occurs, the goals of recovery are to restore the infrastructure of the building as quickly as possible, and to safely return to the business of learning. The focus should be on the students, staff, and the physical plant, so all can return to learning in a caring, supportive environment. In order to achieve these goals, the school safety team will need to consider the four aspects of recovery to determine needs after an event occurs:

• Physical/Structural Recovery

Can education safely resume in the building or will the students need to be moved to an alternative site until necessary repairs can be made? These determinations will require assembling a team of school/district personnel to inventory assets and assess possible structural damage or working with outside experts to make the assessment. Tasks will include estimating the cost of repairs, scheduling the completion of the repairs, and identifying contractors. Contacting the school's insurance carrier and legal counsel will be important first steps. Documenting any damage with photographs will be helpful for making claims and also for any possible reimbursement from state and federal agencies. Retain all receipts for work done. If there is physical damage, questions of access to private property belonging to staff and students will also need to be addressed. Restoring a safe and secure building will reassure students and staff of their personal safety and facilitate recovery.

• Academic Recovery

Academic recovery is often closely linked to physical recovery. If physical recovery will take time, how best can education be delivered to the students? The goal after any school emergency is always to resume education in a safe environment as quickly as possible. This not only returns the school to its primary mission of educating students, but returning to a normal routine goes a long way in assisting students and staff in steps toward psychological recovery. Resumption of classes or securing alternative sites is important. Communicating these procedures or assignment changes to staff, parents and students in a timely way is essential.

• Psychological/Emotional Recovery

What is the level of trauma and upset, and what services are needed? When schools have a Psychological Recovery Team identified and trained as part of their incident command structure, personnel are already in place to begin facilitating the immediate psychological recovery of students and staff. Limiting everyone's exposure to trauma, as well as communicating often and appropriately with staff, students, parents, and the media will help to lessen the negative impact.

Psychological recovery team members should begin conducting psychological triage during an emergency and the process will continue for days and perhaps weeks. The possible use of appropriately trained community mental health professionals

should be considered in the Preparedness phase with MOUs, provisions for parent permission, and joint trainings conducted before an event.

Providing resources at the school and information on community supports is another task for the team. Decisions on recommended and allowed memorials are best made prior to emergencies, with the goal of minimizing future trauma and providing consistency in the wake of all tragedies. Assessing student and staff needs and providing resources and/or referrals for psychological recovery may need to continue long after academics and the physical structure have been restored.

• Business/Fiscal Recovery

Besides being a place of learning, the school is an employer and recovery planning must include provisions for the continuity of operations. Has the emergency or event caused such damage that business operations are interrupted? The disruption of administrative and fiscal systems may be the result of some types of emergencies. Depending on the type and impact of events, alternative processes may be necessary for payroll, accounting, and student record keeping, along with other record systems. Safeguarding records stored on computers with back up contingency plans are vital today.

• Capture Lessons Learned and Make Revisions as Needed

After an event, it is important to review needs periodically, so that plans can be adjusted as ongoing issues arise. It is also important to debrief as a team and complete After Action Reports. This is an opportunity to document the successful actions taken, as well as to identify areas in need of improvement. Every emergency or school crisis event affords your team the opportunity to fine tune your school crisis plan by strengthening the other phases of emergency planning. These considerations will help maintain our schools as the safest places in which children spend their time.

References:

Reeves, M., Kanan, L. and Plog, A. (2010). Comprehensive planning for safe learning environments: A school professional's guide to integrating physical and psychological safety. New York: Routledge.

U.S. Department of Education, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center. (2010). The four phases of school emergency management online training: Recovering from school emergencies. Available at <http://rems.ed.gov/>.

University of Colorado at Boulder
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Campus Box 483
Boulder, CO 80309

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Colorado Safe Schools Newsletter is produced by the Colorado School Safety Resource Center in collaboration with the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado-Boulder.



Contact CSSRC:
303-239-4435
schoolsafetycenter@cdps.state.co.us
www.safeschools.state.co.us



Contact CSPV:
303-492-1032 or 1-866-SAFE790
safeschools@colorado.edu
www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools

CSPV To Host Safe Schools Learning Event You're invited to attend

Safe Schools: Planning for Success
Thursday, September 16
CU-Boulder Law School
8:30 - 4:00

Topics will include:

- school safety
- information sharing
- school liability
- and intervention strategies.

Register online and find more info at
www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools.

School Climate 2010-2011

Colorado schools are invited to measure school climate by taking a free survey this school year:

- Staff, student, and parent surveys
- Offered online
- Completed in less than 1 hour
- Instant results
- Confidential and reliable
- Provide a comprehensive view of school life:
 - safety
 - relationships
 - teaching and learning
 - physical environment

Call or email CSPV to get started:
303-492-1032 or 1-866-SAFE790
SafeSchools@colorado.edu



Is Your School Using
Safe2Tell®?

Anonymous tip line makes it easy
and safe for students or teachers
to report concerns.

1-877-542-7233
safe2tell.org

Colorado Safe Schools Regional Training Pueblo, October 20-21, 2010

Hosted by CSSRC and CSPV

Pueblo Convention Center, 320 Central Main St, Pueblo

October 20th, 12:00-4:00 p.m. - pre-conference

1. Emergency Management 101 for Schools
Presented by the U.S. Department of Education
2. Planning and Conducting Table Top Exercises

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 8:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Featured Speakers:

Kevin Jennings, Assistant Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools;
Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D., Co-Director, Cyberbullying Research Center.

No cost, lunch included on October 21

Registration opens *August 16, 2010* for Teams;
September 7, 2010 for Individuals
See www.safeschools.state.co.us
for registration details

Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Symposium, October 1, 2010, Highlands Ranch

*Hosted by CSSRC, CDE, Office of Suicide Prevention (CDPHE)
with support from Douglas County Sheriff's Office*

8:00 - 9:30 am Overview of Youth Suicide Issues for Schools.

Training designed for **School Administrators** and their teams

9:45 - 4:00 pm Panel Presentations and Group Discussion
Training designed for **suicide intervention teams** from your schools, including school psychologists, school social workers, counselors, SROs, nurses, special educators, teachers, **community partners**, and crisis response teams.

No cost to participants
Registration opens August 12, 2010

See www.safeschools.state.co.us
for registration details