

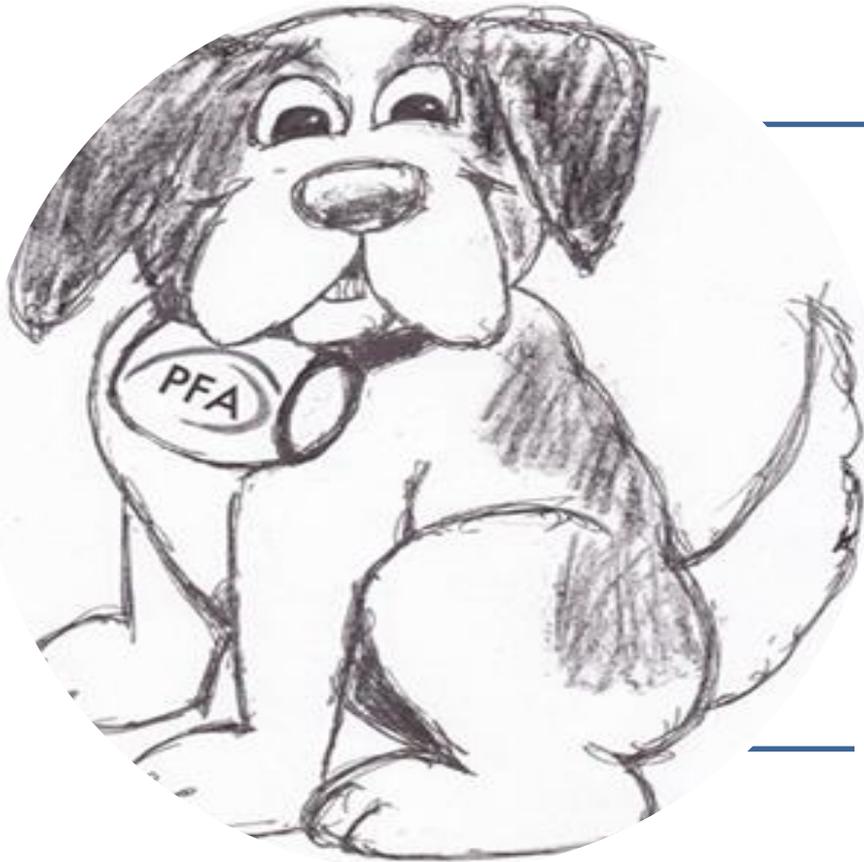
PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID FOR SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



FEMA



Psychological First Aid for Schools

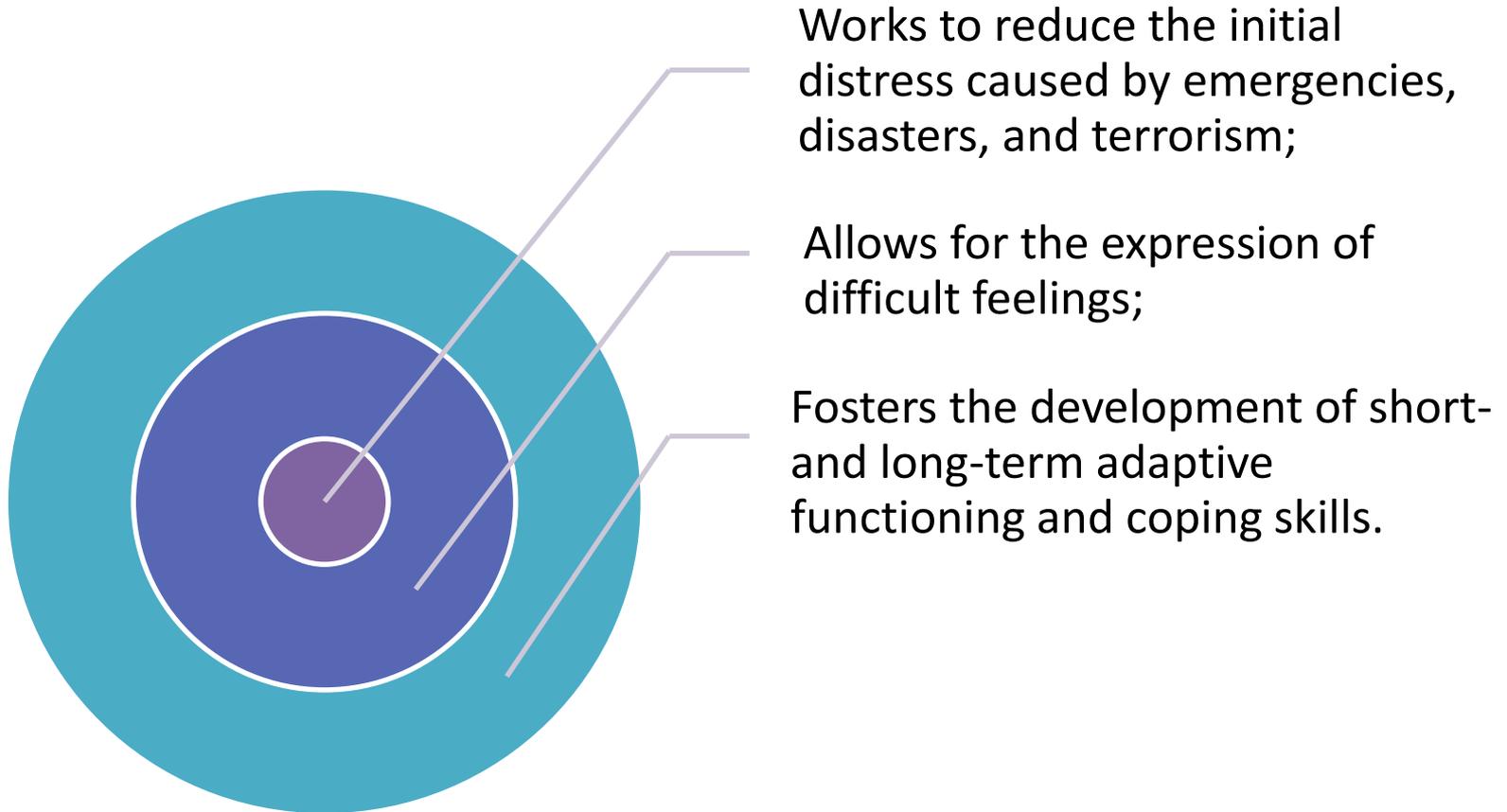


————— Evidence-informed intervention model

————— Supporting the school community

————— Used in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy

What is Psychological First Aid



Basic Standards



Five Basic Standards

1. Consistent with research evidence on risk and resilience following a trauma
2. Respectful of and consistent with the school administration of the academic setting, school culture, and the behavior of students (PFA-S)
3. Applicable and practical in field settings
4. Appropriate for developmental levels across the lifespan
5. Delivered in a culturally-informed and flexible manner

Guiding Principles

Physical

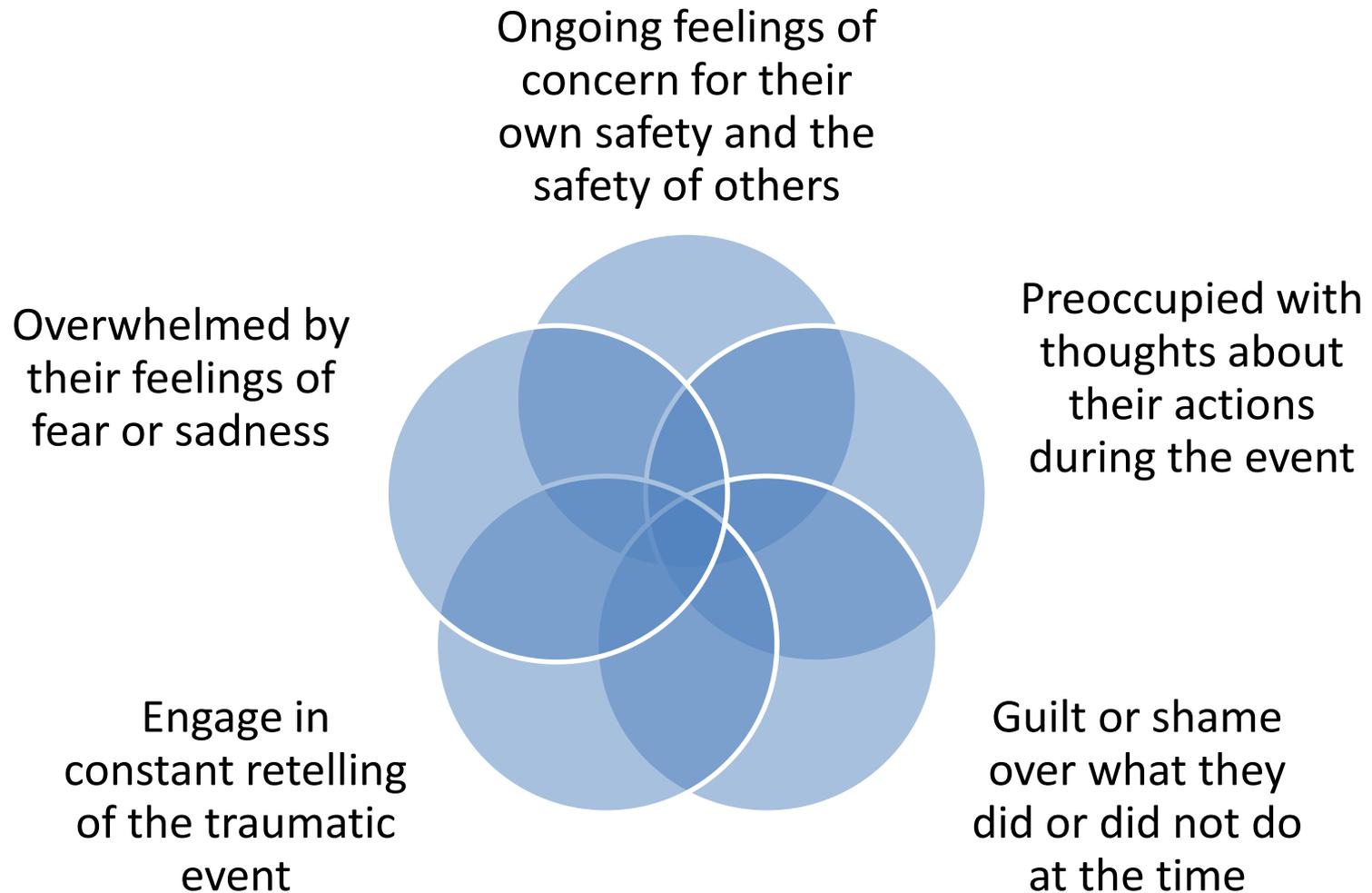
Psychological

Based on understanding that disaster survivors and others affected will experience a broad range of early reactions

Behavioral

Spiritual

Effects of Trauma on Students



Effects of Trauma on Learning

- 
- Serious interruptions to the school routine and the processes of teaching and learning

- 
- High levels of emotional upset
 - Potential for disruptive behavior, or
 - Loss of student attendance

- 
- Increased difficulties concentrating and learning at school

- 
- Increased potential to engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behavior

Effects on Elementary School Students



- ◆ Change in school performance and have impaired attention and concentration and more school absence
- ◆ Change in behavior, such as increase irritability, aggression, and anger. Their behaviors may be inconsistent



- ◆ May show signs of distress through somatic complaints such as stomachaches, headaches, and pains
- ◆ Late elementary students may excessively talk and ask persistent questions about the event

Effects on Middle and High School Students



Change in school performance, attendance, and behavior



Expressions of fantasies of revenge and retribution



Potential to engage in self-destructive, reckless, or accident-prone behaviors



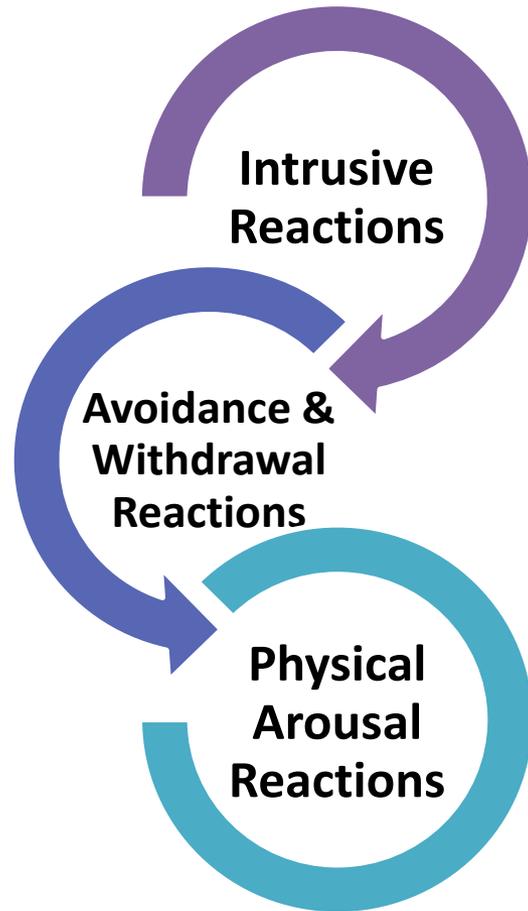
Feelings of shame and guilt about the event



Feelings of self-consciousness about their own emotional responses

The trauma may foster a radical shift in the way these students think about the world. And, the shift may be in their interpersonal relationships with family members, teachers, and classmates.

Effects on College Age Students



- Recurrent upsetting dreams, thoughts or images, and strong emotional and physical reactions to reminders of the event.
- Avoidance of people, places and things that are reminders of the event;
- Feelings of emotional numbness, detachment and loss interest in usual pleasurable activities.
- Difficulties sleeping, poor attention and concentration, irritability, jumpiness, nervousness, and being on the lookout for danger.

Following an Emergency

PFA-S is most effective immediately following the incident
(from one hour to a couple of weeks after an event)



PFA-S can be initiated while an incident is still occurring, such as in sheltered-in-place or lockdown situations

Use in K-12 and IHE Settings

- 
- Any staff member, regardless of whether he/she has had mental health training, can deliver aspects of PFA/PFA-S

- 
- Trained members of community emergency response agencies and mental health professionals may provide PFA/PFA-S

- 
- During and after an emergency, teachers and other staff are critical link in promoting resilience, in recognizing the signs of traumatic stress, and in helping students and their families regain a sense of normalcy

Basic Objectives

To establish a positive connection

To enhance immediate and ongoing safety

To calm and orient

To help identify immediate needs and concerns

To offer practical assistance and information

To connect to social support networks

To empower to take an active role in recovery

To make clear availability and linkage to school/community resources



Why Provide PFA in Schools

Mental health services and PFA are critical components of School emergency management.

Schools are typically the first service agencies to resume operations after a disaster/emergency

Emergencies affect students' academic and social achievement

Preparing for emergencies is critical for all school staff

Trauma-related distress can have a long-term impact if left untreated

Brief interventions can produce positive results that last

Five Preparedness Missions



Mental Health, PFA & the Six Steps



Preparing to Deliver PFA/-S

Personal and Professional Requirements

Coordinate in advance with appropriate school officials

Learn about the school community

Identify the distinguishing features of the event

Be aware of at-risk populations

Be sensitive to racial and cultural diversity

Adapt for students with disabilities and other functional and access needs

Delivering PFA/-S At a School Assembly



- Provide information about the event
- Describe available resources
- Give psychoeducation about potential reactions
- Describe the basic elements of PFA-S, then apply techniques in smaller follow-up groups

Delivering PFA/-S in the classroom

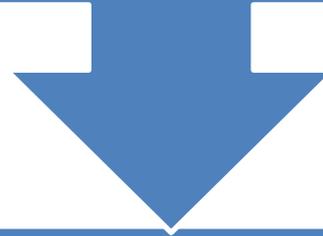


“Even though you all are part of the same class and you all went through the event, you each had a different experience. Because the group is time limited, we won’t be able to hear in detail what happened to each of you. What’s actually more helpful is for you to problem-solve with each other and to learn helpful ways to cope with the feelings and thoughts you are having. We will update you about what has been happening and about the kinds of resources available to help you during this difficult time.”

Classroom Intervention

Scenario: A school shooting at a high school.

On the day of the shooting, a student came into the building with a backpack that contained a loaded gun. The student went into a boy's bathroom and began shooting in the bathroom, and later in the hallway. As students were between classes, many students were in these areas. Two students were killed, seven injured, and hundreds of students witnessed the incident and its aftermath.



Key Teaching Points:

Impact of School
Violence

Guidelines for School-
Based Intervention

Goals of the
Classroom
Intervention

Delivering PFA/-S

Guidelines for Small Groups (Students/Staff with Varied Experiences)

- You can introduce and structure the group by saying something like:
 - “Members of this group had very different experiences during the event. Because of this and the limited time we have, we will not talk in detail about what happened to each of you. Instead, we’ll do what will be most helpful: update you about what has been happening, teach you practical ways to cope with the feelings you are having, and tell you about the support services that are available to help you during this difficult time.”

Delivering PFA/-S

PFA Guidelines for Small Groups (Students/Staff with Similar Experiences)

Introduce the group by explaining its purpose:

“We are going to find helpful ways to cope with the terrible thing that has happened and to help each other solve the immediate problems you face. You may want to talk about what happened to you – what you saw, heard, and felt. Right now, however, what will help you the most is to learn how to deal with the intense feelings and thoughts, rather than dwell on them. Today we want each of you to leave the group with some specific tools to help you cope with these intense feelings and thoughts. Also, we will update you about what has been happening and what support services are available. By the way, it is common for people in a group like this to feel emotional or need to take a break. If this happens to you, just signal a group leader, and one of us will show you where to go. You can come back to the group when you’re ready.”

PFA-S Core Actions

Core Action 1:

Contact and Engagement

- Provide Leadership & Be Visible to the School Community
- Reach out to Those Affected Including Family Members
- Consider Consultation From Disaster Mental Health Experts

Core Action 2:

Safety and Comfort

- Provide Regular Updates to the school and campus communities
- Assess & Address Identified Safety Concerns
 - Consider a Threat Assessment Team
 - Consider an anonymous reporting system
- Limit Media Access
- Help Manage Grief

PFA-S Core Actions

Core Action 3: Stabilization

- Stabilize the School Environment
- Identify Possible Reminders
- Identify Students at Risk

Core Action 4: Information Gathering

- Become Fully Informed About the Incident and Those Who Are Affected
- Actively Reach out to Students

PFA-S Core Actions

Core Action 5: Practical Assistance

- Coordinate Donations
- Coordinate Volunteers

Core Action 6: Connection with Social Supports

- Integrate New Students
- Establish Peer-to-Peer Programs
- Maintain School Community Connections

PFA-S Core Actions

Core Action 7: Information on Coping

- Provide Psychoeducation and Information
- Promote Your School as an Environment for Recovery
- Maintain Campus, School, and Academic Routines

Core Action 8: Link with Collaborative Services

- Activate Mutual Aid Agreements
- Seek and Apply for Technical Assistance and or Funding

Questions



Resources



<http://www.nctsn.org/>



<http://learn.nctsn.org/>



<http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid-schoolspfa>



<http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid>



<http://rems.ed.gov>

Contact

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REMS TA Center

<http://rems.ed.gov>

For additional information, resources, training, and technical assistance, please contact the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center.

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REMS TA Center: Additional Resources



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General Recovery and Mental Health Resources

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE):

- McKinney-Vento State Coordinators for the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
Accessible at http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php#map
- The National Center for Homeless Education
Accessible at <http://center.serve.org/nche/dis/dis.php>
- A McKinney-Vento Toolbox: Constructing a Robust and Rigorous Homeless Education Program, In Case of Disaster and Every Day
Accessible at http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/mv_dis_toolbox.php

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

- [Benign Neglect Imperils Children After a Disaster, The Dialogue](#) [PDF, 1.8 MB]
- [Helping Children and Youth Who Have Experienced Traumatic Events](#) [PDF, 6.2 MB]
- [Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents after Disasters](#) [PDF, 246 KB]
[Spanish](#) [PDF, 328 KB] [Japanese](#) [PDF, 254 KB] [Chinese](#) [PDF, 975 KB]
- [Parent Tips for Helping Infants and Toddlers after Disasters](#) [PDF, 700 KB]
[Spanish](#) [PDF, 328 KB] [Japanese](#) [PDF, 254 KB] [Chinese](#) [PDF, 975 KB]
- [Parent Tips for Helping Preschool-Age Children after Disasters](#) [PDF, 246 KB]
[Spanish](#) [PDF, 328 KB] [Japanese](#) [PDF, 254 KB] [Chinese](#) [PDF, 975 KB]
- [Parent Tips for Helping School-Age Children after Disasters](#) [PDF, 246 KB]

Guides for Developing High-Quality EOPs



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General ED Publications

Success Stories

REMSE^{Express}

Helpful Hints

Lessons Learned



Guides for Developing Emergency Operations Plans

On June 18, 2013, the White House released guides for developing high-quality emergency operations plans for schools, institutions of higher education (IHEs) and Houses of Worship. These guides align and build upon years of emergency planning work by the Federal government and are the first joint product of DHS, DOJ, ED and HHS on this critical topic. The guides are customized to each type of community, incorporate lessons learned from recent incidents, and respond to the needs and concerns voiced by stakeholders following the recent shootings in Newtown and Oak Creek and the recent tornadoes in Oklahoma. Schools, IHEs and Houses of Worship can use them to create new plans as well as to revise and update existing plans and align their emergency planning practices with those at the national, state, and local levels.

Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans

The Guide is accessible here: http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf [PDF, 1.78 MB]

A Resource List is accessible [here](#) [PDF, .41 MB]

Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Institutions of Higher Education

The Guide is accessible here: http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_IHE_Guide_508.pdf [PDF, 2.15 MB]

A Resource List is accessible [here](#) [PDF, .47 MB]

REMS TA Center Webinars



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REMS Webinars feature a web conference presentation (using your telephone and an Internet connection) from experts in the field of emergency management, along with downloadable PowerPoint slides, supplemental reading, and other online materials that enhance the presentation's key learnings. The REMS TA Center will be conducting several of these trainings each year. To receive notifications on upcoming events, please send an email to info@remstacenter.org.

Upcoming Webinars

We are working on developing and hosting new and exciting training webinars. Please continue to check back for updates and opportunities to participate.

Webinars

The following webinars and accompanying presentation materials and resources are available for download and review at any time.

The REMS TA Center

For additional information, resources, training, and technical assistance, please contact the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center:

Phone: (855) 781-7367 (REMS)

Email: info@remstacenter.org

Website: <http://rems.ed.gov>