

Floods. These events are among the most common natural disasters. Flash floods are the most dangerous as they occur without warning; move at intense speeds; and can cause extensive destruction to landscapes, roads, bridges, and buildings. Most floods do not recede overnight, and residents may

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A NATURAL DISASTER: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A NATURAL DISASTER: SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

Identify children and youth who are high-risk and plan interventions. Risk factors are outlined in the above section on children's reactions. Interventions may include classroom discussions, individual counseling, small-group counseling, or family therapy. From classroom discussions, and by maintaining close contact with teachers and parents, the school crisis response team can help determine which students need counseling services. A mechanism also needs to be in place for self-referral and parent referral of students.

Provide time for students to discuss the disaster. Depending on the situation, teachers may be able to guide this discussion in class, or students can meet with the school psychologist or other mental health professional for a group crisis intervention. Classroom discussions help children to make some sense of the disaster. They also encourage students to develop effective means of coping, discover that their classmates share similar questions, and develop peer support networks. Teachers should not be expected to conduct such discussions if children are severely affected or if they are distressed themselves. A crisis team member should be made available to facilitate the discussion.

Allow time for staff to discuss their feelings and share their experiences. Members of your crisis team should also have the opportunity to receive support from a trained mental health professional. Providing crisis intervention is emotionally draining. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Emergency Management, 13(o)-10.9868(v)8.127

Consider the developmental level and unique experiences of each child; it is important to remember that as children vary, so will their responses to the disruption of relocation.

In addition, school personnel should:

If possible, determine the status of every child in the school, particularly those who have not returned after the disaster incident. Develop an outreach strategy for children who are displaced and living in shelters or temporary housing.

Identify ways for students to stay in contact with displaced classmates.

Utilize an advisory committee of students to help identify ways that students might prioritize positive school activities in order to help them regain a sense of normalcy.

Permit survivors to retell their stories in a safe environment that avoids vicarious traumatiz928(r)-6.64519(a)5.24