

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SAFE AND HEALTHY STUDENTS
Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS)
Technical Assistance (TA) Center
<http://rems.ed.gov>

***Recommendations and Resources Helping Youth and Children Recover from
Traumatic Events & School Emergency Management Planning***

Children and youth rely on and find great comfort in the adults who protect them. Teachers and staff need to know how to help their students through a crisis before one occurs, and they need to be prepared to lead their students during a crisis event. To help ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff, schools and school districts nationwide are encouraged to create comprehensive, multi-hazard emergency management plans. All-inclusive plans and well-executed processes will help to ensure the continuity of school and school districts' learning environment and daily business operations in the face of natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies.

In the aftermath of a crisis, teachers and staff must also be able to assist children and youth in their recovery processes, including coping with the emotional impact of traumatic events. For more information on how to help youth cope with this process, visit:

[Helping Youth and Children Recover from Traumatic Events](http://rems.ed.gov/HelpingYouthandChildrenRecoverFromTraumaticEvents.aspx)

<http://rems.ed.gov/HelpingYouthandChildrenRecoverFromTraumaticEvents.aspx>

Important resources to inform adults on how to better address the emotional needs of children and youth include the following:

The National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center offers recommendations for adults on how to talk to children and youth about the Connecticut School Shooting.

<http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Tips for Adults on How to Talk with Children About Connecticut School Shooting.pdf>

SAMHSA also provides guidance for parents, caregivers, and teachers on talking with and helping children and youth cope after a disaster or traumatic event.

http://rems.ed.gov/docs/SAMHSA_TipsTalkingChildrenYouthTraumaticEvents.pdf

A REMS TA Center Helpful Hints publication describes the value of Psychological First Aid (PFA) for Students and Teachers: Listen, Protect, Connect—Model & Teach for providing early, brief and focused intervention in the aftermath of a crisis to help reduce social and emotional distress of children and adults after a traumatic event.

http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol3Issue3.pdf

To help ensure the best foundation for all school emergency management planning efforts, the Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) recommends the following:

- All plans are to incorporate the four phases of school emergency management (prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery)
- All plans are to use an all-hazards approach, and are to be based upon the following ED tenets:
 - Work from a multidisciplinary team approach, i.e., include school-based specialists from a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to school nurses, facilities, transportation, and food personnel, administrators, educators, and family services representatives;
 - Customize school emergency management plans based on vulnerability assessments and the unique resources of the district and school as well as its community partners;
 - Collaborate, coordinate, and communicate with community partners (including, but not limited to law enforcement and fire personnel, health, public and mental health practitioners, and EMS);
 - Integrate students and staff with disabilities and other access and functional needs including communication;
 - Support the implementation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS); and
 - Train and practice with both tabletop and full-scale exercises with school and community partners on responses to hazards facing the school based on assessment.

To further explain these recommendations, the following two newsletters, developed by the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center, provide a thorough overview on the components recommended for the creation of a comprehensive school and district emergency management plan, as well as recommended steps for developing a school emergency management plan.

Helpful Hints

Vol. 2, Issue 1 (2007) "Steps for Developing a School Emergency Management Plan"

http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue1.pdf

Vol. 2, Issue 2 (2007) "Components of Comprehensive School and School District Emergency Management" Plans

http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue2.pdf

Crisis Planning Guide

The following guidebook provides a more detailed explanation of the components and process of school emergency management planning.

Practical Information on Crisis Planning Guide

For additional resources on creating and updating your school emergency management plans, visit:

[Creating and Updating School Emergency Management Plans](#)

<http://rems.ed.gov/CreatingAndUpdatingSchoolEmergencyManagementPlans.aspx>

Schools and districts need to be ready to handle crises, large and small, to keep our children and staff out of harm's way and ready to learn and teach. The time to plan is now. If your school or district does not have a crisis plan in place, develop one. If you do have a plan in place, review, update and practice that plan regularly.