

HOW TO RIDE OUT A HURRICANE

What your school can do to be prepared:

- A. Have a crisis management plan
- B. Have a well organized and prepared crisis management/intervention team in place
- C. Have procedures for obtaining crisis information: phone tree, radio, television, etc.
- D. Designate a spokesperson
- E. Gain community cooperation for the crisis plan
- F. Interface with other groups

Suggested activities:

- A. Set up emergency counseling stations at your school
- B. Assist in centers for dropping food, water, medication, clothing, bedding, and personal hygiene supplies.
- C. Assist in securing supplies for babies
- D. Assist in seeking housing
- E. Be involved in rebuilding efforts
- F. Assist in organizing centers for pets.

Remember – you never know when disaster is going to strike. A crisis management plan and policy that has been developed and renewed annually is a plan worth having. It is always better to be safe than sorry!

Here are some additional tips for helping students:

- ✧ Encourage students to ask questions. Address their fears and reassure them that they are normal. When you don't know the answer to a question – admit it!
- ✧ Validate their feelings. Don't tell them "don't worry about it" because a natural disaster is something to worry about. Instead communicate with them and help them to understand what is happening
- ✧ Don't go into details about storm specifics – keep the focus on their feelings and how to help
- ✧ Don't falsify information. Try to be as honest as possible. Don't tell students that it is not a big deal because what if it turns out to be? You may lose their trust
- ✧ Don't dwell on the disaster aspect. Try to focus on rebuilding the community and the unity this may provide. Encourage the importance of sticking together

- ◇ Pay attention to the children's reaction. Some children may need more attention than others. Notice changes in behavior
- ◇ Have an action plan. If anything – it will make the children feel more safe and certain of their safety and;
- ◇ Try to remain calm. If students see you panicking, they will mimic. Refocus. Breathe. Count to ten.

The links below have specific information for teachers, counselors, and parents about helping children with storm disasters:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

http://www.aacap.org/publications/DisasterResponse/cp_disas.htm

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

FEMA for Kids

<http://www.fema.gov/kids/teacher.htm>

National Association of School Psychologists

<http://nasponline.org/NEAT/naturaldisasters.html>

National Organization for Victim Assistance

<http://www.try-nova.org/>

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

<http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/disasters/default.asp>

School Activities for Helping Children Cope with Feelings

<http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~disaster/teacher/csndact2.html>