Stories from the Trenches: Professional School Counselors Working in Crisis Situations

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危機
Danger  Opportunity
History of Crisis Management

1942 - Cocoanut Grove Fire
  Eric Lindemann
  Gerald Caplan

1960’s – Creations of suicide prevention clinics

1963 – Community Mental Health Centers Act
History of School Crisis Management

1851 – Greenwich Ave School fire alarm tragedy
1881 – Fire drills were mandated in New York
1927 – Bath Consolidated School bombing
1937 – New London School explosion
1976 – Chowchilla kidnapping
1990’s – School shootings – Pearl River, West Paducah, Jonesboro, Columbine
1986 – Space Shuttle Challenger explosion
2001 – 9/11 terrorist attacks
2005 – Hurricane Katrina
2006 – Amish school shooting
2012 – Superstorm Sandy
Role of the Professional School Counselor (PSC) in a Crisis

PSCs provide services other mental health providers are ill-equipped to perform due to the PSCs insight into the unique social structure and sense of community in schools.

(Allen, et al. 2002)
PSCs are called to be part of the response team that assesses the emotional needs of students, staff, families, and responders in a crisis. Once the assessment is completed, the PSC can determine who is in need of intervention services.
The role of the PSC is “an integral part of the prevention, intervention and post-incident support of school crisis/critical incident responses in both planning and implementation” (ASCA, 2007, p.1)
Role of the Professional School Counselor (PSC) in a Crisis

CACREP Standards
Counselors are trained in their “roles and responsibilities as members of an interdisciplinary emergency management response team during a local, regional, or national crisis, disaster or other trauma-causing event” (p. 10)
The professional counselor “knows school and community collaboration models for crisis/disaster preparedness and response” (p. 45)
Crisis Management Framework

U.S. Department of Education Model

Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities

Model is broken down into four areas of emphasis
Component Areas

Mitigation/Prevention

Actions that will decrease the need for a response by eliminating potential threats and providing actions that will decrease the acuity of any crisis that should occur
Component Areas

Preparedness

Focuses on planning for the worst-case scenario. This phase involves the development of a crisis plan to facilitate a rapid, coordinated, effective, response to a crisis.
Component Areas

Response

This phase involves the implementation of the crisis plan. Structure and flexibility are key to effective implementation.
Component Areas

Recovery

This phase involves the efforts to restore the learning and teaching environment after the crisis.
Active Shooter Response

- Training developed by Lubbock Police Department
- The training has been given to schools, churches, businesses, and civic groups
- Contact information:
  Officer Michael Matsik
  - Lubbock Police Gang Unit/SWAT Team
  Office: 806-775-2958
  Cell: 806-239-9906
  E-Mail: MMATSIK@MYLUBBOCK.US
Active Shooter Response

A.D.D. Campaign

AVOID
DENY
DEFEND
AVOID - RUN

*Each work location should identify at least two avenues of escape (if possible)

*Move away from the sound of gunfire, screaming, chaos

*Path may include evacuation of personnel and public into a secure area, regardless of their clearance status

*Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
DENY

- When evacuation is not possible:
  - Find a hiding place out of shooter’s sight
  - **Cover vs. concealment**
  - Find a room with a solid door - lock and barricade
  - Dial 911 from a land line – Leave line open
  - Remain silent
  - Turn off lights, silence cell phones
  - Stay out of sight – No peaking
  - Cover windows to interior doors
  - Remain calm and positive
DEFEND

**Actions to Consider**

- Act as aggressive as possible
  - Convince Yourself that you will survive!
- What improvised weapons are available?
- Yelling
- Commit to your actions
  - Once the fight has started do not stop
  - Help is on the way, KEEP FIGHTING!
  - If you are able, revert to Avoid/Deny
Interventions in the Aftermath of a Crisis

- Psychological First Aid (PFA)
- National Organization of Victims Assistance (NOVA) Model
- Critical Incidence Stress Management (CISM)
- Adapted Family Debriefing Model
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)
Education Code 37.202 (2001) states that the Texas School Safety Center is to provide information on school safety, including research, training, and technical assistance related to successful school safety programs. Education Code 37.205 requires the Center to conduct a safety training program, addressing the following issues: (1) development of a positive school environment and proactive safety measures, (2) school safety courses for law enforcement officials, (3) discussion of school safety issues with parents and community members, (4) assistance in developing a Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan.
Education Code 37.108 (2005) requires school districts to adopt and implement a Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan. The plan must address mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It must include emergency response training for all school district personnel and mandatory drills to prepare students and all personnel for emergency response. It also requires measures to ensure coordination between local emergency management agencies, law enforcement and fire departments in the event of an emergency. In addition, districts must perform security audits of facilities every three years, with results reported to the district's board of trustees.
Legal and Ethical Considerations

Code 37.109 (2009) requires each school district to establish a school safety and security committee. The committee shall participate on behalf of the district in developing and implementing emergency plans, provide the district with any campus, facility, or support services information required for the safety and security audit required by Code 37.108(b), and the audit report required in 37.108(c), and review the reports submitted to ensure accuracy.
Legal and Ethical Considerations

Education Code 37.020 (2003) requires each school district to report to the commissioner information, including name, race, sex, and date-of-birth, of all students placed in a disciplinary alternative program or who were expelled. This policy includes all violent offenses, and the information reported must also include whether the juvenile justice system was involved.
Legal and Ethical Considerations

Education Code 37.015 (2003) requires the principal of a public school to notify any school district police department and the police department if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the possession of a weapon occurred in school, on school property, or at school-sponsored activity on or off school property.
Legal and Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent
Confidentiality
Record keeping
Scope of practice
Self-care
Cross-Cultural concerns

(Sommers-Flanagan, 2007)
Research Study

Dissertation

Professional School Counselors Working in Crisis Situations: A Grounded Theory
Research Questions

- What are PSCs perceptions of their roles during a major campus level crisis? In addition, what are their perceptions of how they interacted with administration, students, faculty, parents, first responders, and the community?
- What are PSCs perceptions of the ways in which they have experienced a crisis physically, emotionally, and cognitively while the crisis is happening?
- What are PSCs perceptions of how they have been changed by working in a crisis event?
- What are PSCs perceptions of how their training prepared them for managing crisis situations?
Questions?