

His most recent publication, *Coping with Crisis: Lessons Learned*, and the video tape series with a teacher's workbook, *Take Back Your Schools* is available for loan through the CFISD Professional Media Center.

## TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

- Review crisis plan with all school staff.
- Verify the facts and communicate them to all staff (utilize calling tree, memorandums, faculty meetings)
- Provide update information to all staff.
- Increase visibility of all staff in hallways. Meet and greet all students at building entrances and at buses as they arrive. The visibility of school personnel will be comforting to parents when they bring their children to school and to students when they get off the buses.
- Provide extra security.
- Provide direction to all teachers on how to implement lessons, etc.
- Communicate to all staff the need to take all threats of violence seriously and report them to administrators.
- Do not hesitate to hold a well-planned parent meeting to reassure parents of their children's safety and to outline all school safety procedures.
- Expect parents to express concern. Provide them with information about the Teachable Moment lesson plan and specific activities being implemented in your school. Parents want to know how to assist their children; therefore, administrators are encouraged to send helpful information home to parents.
- Set the tone with carefully prepared and rehearsed PA messages to reassure students of their safety and encourage their participation in the lesson.
- Monitor implementation of the lesson plan in all classrooms.
- Guide school/student activities to prevent violence and to assist affected communities.
- Utilize all school and community mental health resources such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, hospital workers, clinics and churches.
- Establish a school safety task force that includes students, teachers, and parents.
- Recognize that issues surrounding school safety may conflict with American Civil Liberties Union viewpoints about the constitutional rights of students. Central office personnel and school attorneys should be consulted of these issues. The A.C.L.U. has commented that school safety does not come before the rights of students.

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Recognize the importance of providing students with the facts; give them opportunities and permission to express a range of emotions.
- Implement Teachable Moment lesson.
- Refer any students with extreme emotions to counselors. Refer any students who threaten violence or condone it to assistant principals!
- Teachers should view themselves as the facilitator rather than the expert and should ask open-ended questions after they briefly review the facts. Maintain classroom control and guide the discussion. It is recommended that all participants be in a circle. There is no answer, but each student should have the opportunity to share his/her views. Emphasis should be placed primarily on your students' reactions and what can we do as a class and society - not on analyzing the suspected perpetrators.
- Utilize age appropriate language and recognize developmental differences such as the following:
  - **Early elementary** children need reassurance that they are safe, as are adults who care for them. They need assurance that the daily structures of their lives will not change. Play activities and drawings/artwork are especially helpful to express emotions at this age level.
  - **Upper elementary and early middle school** will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Group or classroom discussion should work well with this age group.
  - **Upper middle school and high school** will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. They will be more committed to doing something to help the victims and affected community. Group discussion and writing projects will be very affective. Some students may feel the need to express themselves through dramatic role-play, art, music and video projects, and community service.
- Monitor and guide student projects to assist affected families and focus on violence prevention activities.
- Keep administration informed of results of lesson as well as follow-up activities.