

**Title of Session:** Resources for School Counselors - Crisis Management and Mental Health

**Moderator:** Barbara Muller-Ackerman

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Room: School Counselors Corner Group

**BjB** waves hi to Barbara

**BarbaraMu:** Hi BJ-didn't know where I was supposed to show up!

**BjB** smiles...no problem. I figured you would want to be where you've placed most of your resources

**BarbaraMu:** That would make sense!

**BjB:** Let's start, Barbara. I'm really looking forward to seeing what information you have on the topic

**BarbaraMu:** Are you wanting to be a part of the discussion on mental health issues for students, teachers and counselors after the hurricane?

**BjB:** then let's start with introductions, if you don't mind, Barbara?

**EmilyW** joined the room.

**BarbaraMu:** I am a licensed professional counselor in NJ/ I was a school counselor at the elementary level for 13 years and am now in private practice.

**BjB:** Hi, Emily. We're just starting introductions

**BarbaraMu:** Hi Emily!

**EmilyW:** Hi, I can only stay for a few minutes

**BarbaraMu:** Is there anything you were hoping we would talk about specifically while you are here?

**EmilyW:** no, I was just checking it out

**BjB:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania. I'm hoping to learn about resources that will help me with my own students who often suffer post traumatic stress syndrome from a variety of experiences

**BjB:** I recently read that the displaced teachers and students from the gulf hurricanes are just starting to display the PTSS symptoms

**BarbaraMu:** I was thinking about that too

**YutingL:** What is PTSS symptom?

**BarbaraMu:** They are just starting to talk about how the hurricane season is fast approaching

**BarbaraMu:** For people who have lived through the experience, or escaped it, this brings all the memories to the forefront

**BjB . o O ( PTSS is post traumatic stress syndrome )**

**BjB** nods to Barbara...pretty scary

**BarbaraMu:** children are skittish just when there is a prediction of rain

**BarbaraMu:** so the fact that weather forecasters are already predicting a very bad hurricane season does not bode wells for those who are traumatized

**BjB:** how can we support these kids and teachers?

**BarbaraMu:** One of the biggest things is what you are already doing here- research says that creating a supportive community us really critical to help healing

**BarbaraMu:** There are building level and classroom level suggestions as well as personal and community strategies

**EmilyW:** I don't feel like the ones that need support are actually coming here to Tapped In

**BarbaraMu:** Sometimes, when in crisis, people are least able to reach out because they are immersed where they are

**BjB:** Emily, you're probably right...but I'm not sure what the reason is.

**BjB** nods to Barbara. Hopefully, the transcript will be available when they are ready

**EmilyW:** that's what has bothered me the most about doing all this

**BarbaraMu:** It is easier for someone to show up and give them the information than think that they will come to get it

**BarbaraMu:** in the beginning, we were posting like mad and listing resources for people who had no electricity and no hope of using the computer

**BarbaraMu:** the more immediate needs of food and shelter were there

**BjB** nods...but we were thinking of the future ....like now

**EmilyW:** right

**BjB** . o O ( at least I was. )

**EmilyW:** I know some in those areas came

**BarbaraMu:** Right now teachers and students and parents alike are at differing levels of resilience

**EmilyW:** even at the beginning, we had overcrowding issues

**BarbaraMu:** and huge issues of cultural difference

**EmilyW:** I just wonder how to reach these people

**BjB:** patience, Emily...when they are ready, they will seek out the resources

**EmilyW:** the resources in the group room and in here will still be there

**EmilyW:** ok well I have to go

**EmilyW:** I was just sharing my thoughts

**BarbaraMu:** OK- thank you for stopping by

**BjB:** thanks for stopping in, Emily

**EmilyW** left the room (signed off).

**BarbaraMu:** I think that the discussion of what will bring people to the resources is one that will be on-going

**BjB:** Yuting, this information applies to any community that has experienced a disaster of some kind

**BjB** . o O ( including West Virginia )

**BarbaraMu:** I wanted to say something about trauma that you had raised BJ

**BjB** listens

**BarbaraMu**: Trauma surfaces over time

**BarbaraMu**: It surfaces when we are more ready to deal with it....or when we start coming out of the shock or denial that helped to protect us when the trauma happened

**BjB** nods. Each person deals with the issues in their own time...like grief

**BarbaraMu**: What's important for us is to keep routines, be there to listen and to talk, help people find a sense of belonging

**BarbaraMu**: Paramount is providing a sense of safety

**BjB** hugs Barbara. Thanks...you're validating what we've worked so hard to provide here in Tapped In.

**BarbaraMu**: Right

**BarbaraMu**: The problem with any trauma or disaster is that there are no hard and fast rules...the best we can hope for are guidelines

**BarbaraMu**: One we know is to limit tv time

**BjB**: why is that?

**BarbaraMu**: Fear----

**BjB**: you mean like watching the news TV?

**BjB** . o O ( or TV in general? )

**BarbaraMu**: length of exposure and proximity to exposure are big determinants of trauma

**BjB**: so people at ground zero are the most effected?

**BarbaraMu**: to watch and re-watch an event played out on the television is to invite that the length of exposure worsens the degree of trauma experienced

**BjB** nods..gotcha

**BjB** . o O ( I had to stop listening to NPR news because it was so depressing )

**BarbaraMu**: and all the associated losses- pets, friends, routine, neighborhood

**BarbaraMu:** Are we wanting to talk about more guidelines?

**BjB:** stuff we take so for granted in our everyday lives

**BarbaraMu:** Is there something more important that someone wants discuss...what trauma would tend to look like? symptoms? how it might play out in school?

**BjB:** I would like to hear more guidelines, please

**BjB:** oh...and definitely the symptoms and how a child will behave in school

**BarbaraMu:** Encourage children to help Children recover better when they feel they are helping and can contribute so look for opportunities for them to do so.

**BarbaraMu:** Give support at bedtime if you are a parent. This is a time of separation and so children can be more anxious.

**BarbaraMu:** Ok- in school

**BjB:** interesting about engaging kids in helping

**BarbaraMu:** Building level suggestions- build trust with the families and be aware of cultural considerations

**BarbaraMu:** cut red tape to get things done!!!

**BjB** loves that suggestion!

**BjB** . o O ( anything that reduces red tape is good )

**BarbaraMu:** Create buddy systems and student recognition programs

**YutingL:** what is "cut red tape to get thing done"?

**BjB:** good question, YuTing.

**BarbaraMu:** Keep discipline clear--- this is a biggie at school at home. Its really important, in order to feel secure. to know what is expected and allowed. Don't relax the expectation of respectful and caring behavior because of the trauma

**YutingL:** thanks

**BjB:** red tape is filling out forms and doing all the silly paperwork that school administration thrives on

**BarbaraMu:** Schools are bureaucracies...there is a chain of command which slows the process of getting things accomplished.

**BjB** grins...or you can say that more diplomatically like Barbara did

**BarbaraMu:** There are so many services- social services, mental health services that people need NOW...not after a long line of waiting to get signatures

**BarbaraMu:** There are a lot of unknowns for displaced families- unemployment- family issues- inequity for resident homeless

**YutingL:** I see, thank you

**BarbaraMu:** We need to address those needs as quickly and with as much compassion as possible

**BarbaraMu:** What you might see in kids- They could be anxious and withdrawn....or acting out and aggressive. They could use anger as a way to feel some sense of control.

**BjB** nods to Barbara...this is the part I usually see with my kids

**BarbaraMu:** There may be tremendous absenteeism and illness (stress related)

**BarbaraMu:** and with older kids, self-medication for pain

**BjB** . o O ( or drugs )

**SusanKl:** this is an awesome topic/room!

**BarbaraMu:** One specific function which is impacted is short term memory..and you will see the ability to concentrate really decline

**BarbaraMu:** Yes, BJ, that's what I meant....increased drug use

**SusanKl:** bye all, thank you for letting me peek at all that you are doing! Good job!

**BarbaraMu:** There are also some interesting challenges on a building level you may not have thought about with displaced student... new students having a lot of new possessions

**BarbaraMu:** and neighborhood kids not making sports teams they were used to getting on

**BarbaraMu:** or "losing out" to someone they might perceive as an outsider

**BjB:** hmmm...I can see where this would cause hard feelings

**BjB** . o O ( or at least conflict )

**BarbaraMu**: There is such a tremendous need for community building- for while we have a huge obligation to create a sense of belonging and trust in the new students and families, we need to foster dialogues about respect and tolerance for the host community as well

**BarbaraMu**: We need to be patient with kids at this time. They may need more reminders. They may regress and we need to be tolerant of that regression.

**BjB** hopes that that would be something that would always be in place in a school...values of respect and tolerance

**BarbaraMu**: Adults need to monitor their conversations...be aware of what is being said in front of the children as it may be misinterpreted by the children

**BarbaraMu**: Finally, we need to keep things hopeful...identify some positive aspect and stay hopeful about the future

**BjB** nods

**BarbaraMu**: Having a positive outlook helps kids see the good things in the world around them even in the most challenging times

**BjB**: thanks for that reminder, Barbara...I think I sometimes lose sight of that attitude under the daily pressures

**BarbaraMu**: I think the best information, even with all the many resources here and in the hurricane room, is Crisis Management Online. Cheri Lovre, the director, has specific handouts from 9/11. from the war, from Katrina.

**BarbaraMu**: She always has specific tips for administrators, for teachers, for parents

**BjB**: do you have a url?

**BarbaraMu**: Her website is [www.cmionline.org](http://www.cmionline.org) and she did a webcast on Helping Hurricane Displaced Students Adjust at [www.indiana.edu/~radiotv/solutiontree/solutiontree.aspx](http://www.indiana.edu/~radiotv/solutiontree/solutiontree.aspx)

**BjB**: great!

**BarbaraMu**: The last url, to the Univ. of Indiana webcast gives wonderful information over the hour broadcast and is the best link I can give you.

**BjB**: is that link here in the group room, Barbara?

**BarbaraMu:** Crisis Management Online is listed in the links in the room- when you go to the download section, you will see the link to all her tips for those disasters and the first link is to the webcast

**BjB:** thanks

**BjB:** whew! That hour flew...

**BarbaraMu:** There is no doubt there are many wonderful informative sites, but Cheri always seems to be right on target for the immediate needs of what people in schools need to have.

**BjB:** thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to share all that information with us.

**BarbaraMu:** OK- well then, I am going to say goodnight.....

**JeffC:** thanks Barbara

**BjB** hugs...take care.

**BarbaraMu:** Thanks BJ- Bye Jeff