

# School Safety Monthly

May 2015

## Mental Health



Photo: Rachel Wilson

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## Message from the Editor

In this month's issue of *School Safety Monthly*, we focus on mental health recovery after crises that take place in or around our schools. It is in our best interest to help school systems provide effective emotional health services to all individuals recovering from a crisis. Children, just as much as adults, can be victims of emotional trauma after traumatic events. "How to Help Children through Traumatic Events" sheds light on how to not only help children cope with emotional stress but also how to recognize a child affected by trauma both physically and emotionally.

Implementing a solid recovery plan is an important stage

in crisis and emergency planning. Mental health responders must actively seek individuals with emotional stress to give the proper treatment needed to help those overcome trauma.

"When Disaster Strikes: A Primer for Understanding Emergency Declarations" provides information about local, state and federal emergency declarations and proclamations that typically, but not always, follow a disaster.

If you have any comments or suggestions on *School Safety Monthly*, contact us at [our website](#) or on our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/SafeHavensIntl](#) or on Twitter via [@SafeHavensIntl](#).

-Morgan



Photo: Rachel Wilson



## School Safety Tools Highlight

### Safe Topics: Crisis Recovery

Mental Health Recovery is a critical component of emergency readiness. Without it, even the best plans can fall apart during a crisis as the emergency subsides and the long process of returning to normalcy begins. This video was developed for public and private schools in the early stages of recovery planning as well as educational organizations that are in the advanced stages of planning and looking for ways to create a more robust safety net for the emotional trauma that can occur after any crisis event that takes place on or relates to the school campus. Portions of this award winning video have been used in districts across the country and a customized version was chosen for distribution by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Watch a video preview here:

<http://safehavensinternational.org/safe-topics-crisis-recovery/>

SAFE HAVENS INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS  
**SAFETOPICS**  
CRISIS RECOVERY

Mental Health Recovery



# How to Help Children through Traumatic Events

Psychiatric trauma, or emotional harm, is essentially a normal response to an extreme event. It involves the creation of emotional memories about a distressful event that are stored in structures deep within the brain. In general, it is believed that the more direct the exposure to the traumatic event, the higher the risk for emotional harm. Thus in a school shooting, for example, the student who is injured will probably be most severely affected emotionally; and the student who sees a classmate shot is likely to be more emotionally affected than the student who was in another part of the school when the violence occurred. But even second-hand exposure to violence can be traumatic. For this reason, all children and adolescents exposed to violence or a disaster, even if only through graphic media reports, should be watched for signs of emotional distress.

Children are highly influenced by the emotional state of their caretakers. When the parents or other caretakers of a child are psychologically harmed by the events around them, it is likely to affect the psychological well-being of the child. Therefore, after a traumatic event, it is important for caretakers and teachers to be present, poised, and focus on calm interactions with children.

Please note that reactions to trauma may appear immediately after the event for days and even weeks after it is over. Loss of trust in adults and fear of the event reoccurring are common responses seen in children and adolescents who have been exposed to traumatic events. Other reactions vary according to age.

## What you can do to support children through a traumatic event

Make sure that recovery activities are age appropriate and are creative. Coping activities should allow the child to express their feelings either through writing, artwork or class discussion. Here are some specific things you can do to help children cope:

- Recognize actions and put them into words:
  - Use phrases like “It makes us angry that \_\_\_\_\_ happened.” Or “I can see in your face that you are really sad about...”
  - Reiterate to children that they are safe.
  - **Do not use euphemisms - children take words very literally!**
- If students are able to talk about the incident, allow time for them to talk and share feelings.

by

**Dr. Sonayia Shepherd**

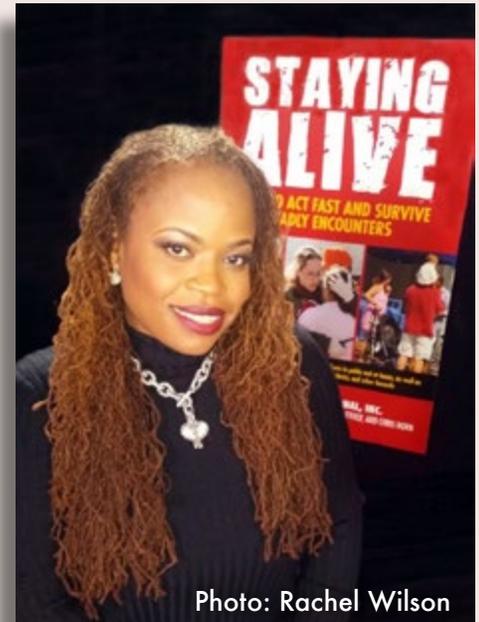


Photo: Rachel Wilson

A popular and animated keynote speaker at major professional conferences, Dr. Sony Shepherd has authored and co-authored more than sixteen books on school safety and emergency management, including four books for Jane’s, the highly regarded British defense, intelligence and school safety publisher. Her latest book [\*Staying Alive – How to Act Fast and Survive Deadly Encounters\*](#) was released in bookstores by Barron’s last May. Dr. Shepherd currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer and Senior Safety Analyst of Safe Havens International, a non-profit campus safety center.



### What to look for in children 5 years of age and younger:

- ◆ Typical reactions can include: a fear of being separated from the parent; crying, whimpering, screaming, immobility and/or aimless motion; trembling, frightened facial expressions and excessive clinging.
- ◆ Parents may also notice regressive behaviors, such as thumb-sucking, bedwetting, and fear of darkness. Children in this age bracket tend to be strongly affected by the parents' reactions to the traumatic event.

### What to look for in children 6 to 11 years old:

- ◆ May show extreme withdrawal, disruptive behavior, and/or inability to pay attention. Regressive behaviors, nightmares, sleep problems, irrational fears, irritability, refusal to attend school, outbursts of anger and fighting are also common in traumatized children of this age.
- ◆ Also the child may complain of stomachaches or other bodily symptoms that have no apparent medical basis. Schoolwork often suffers. Depression, anxiety, feelings of guilt and emotional numbing or "flatness" are often present as well.



Photo: Rachel Wilson

- Ensure that students are not allowed to leave the classroom alone or left unattended and unsupervised.
- Get back to routines as soon as possible after students have had an

opportunity to express feelings.

- Ensure that students most impacted do not go home to an empty house after school. Make sure that your crisis team members are aware of those students so arrangements may be made.

### Physical manifestaions of traumatic stress reactions may include:

- Chills
- Dizziness
- Thirst
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Chest Pains
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Fainting
- Elevated Blood Pressure
- Vomiting
- Muscle Tremors

## Recovery Planning for Educational Facilities

A recovery plan is an integral part of the crisis planning process. The Crisis Recovery Plan can assist the school system in providing effective emotional health services that can be used to help individuals recover from a crisis event, provide procedures to handle emergency situations that may have an emotional impact on people, and to accomplish the following objectives:

- Prepare crisis team members to respond effectively in a crisis situation.
- Manage the crisis recovery activities in an organized and effective manner.
- Limit the emotional impact of any crisis situation.

View our Recovery Planning for Educational Facilities Guide [here](#)



# When Disaster Strikes: A Primer for Understanding Emergency Declarations

by Dr. Sonayia Shepherd

When disaster strikes, an array of services and activities occur, and it can sometimes appear confusing. Have you ever wondered who is doing what, and why? Who decides how much aid is provided? How come some communities seem to get more help than others? Why are the news anchors standing in the middle of the hurricane reporting that there is rain? Actually, we cannot answer that last question, but there is certainly a flurry of actions and programs that take place after a disaster that are aimed at literally putting the pieces back together. The following are typical events that may happen after a disaster. Not all programs mentioned may be applicable or will need to be activated in response to every disaster. However, in general, you could see some or all of these disaster relief activities implemented as a particular situation warrants.

## Local Emergency Proclamation

Most states have enacted legislation that authorizes the director of the local office of emergency services to administer a financial assistance program from the state for costs incurred by local governments as a result of a disaster. These programs can:

- Provide public schools a certain percentage of the eligible costs to repair,

restore, reconstruct or replace disaster-related damage to buildings;

- Cover direct and indirect costs of grant administration;
- Cover the cost of overtime and supplies used for the response.

It is a good idea to ask your emergency management agency about this assistance for your district/school system.

## Governor's State of Emergency Proclamation

With a governor's proclamation, a local agency may receive reimbursement for permanent repair, replacement and restoration costs for disaster-damaged facilities. As part of the

request, the governor should take appropriate action under state law and direct execution of the state's emergency plan. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should be contacted for appropriate updated forms to use for disaster recovery documentation and requests. The process and requirements for this type of request can be found in this [FEMA Fact Sheet](#). School districts should coordinate needed services with state emergency management officials to learn more about how it will impact them.

## Presidential Emergency Declaration

With an emergency declaration, a local agency, state agency, tribe or certain nonprofit agencies



Photo: Rachel Wilson



may receive reimbursement for emergency work up to specific limits per event. It is important to note that based on the governor's request, the president may declare that a major disaster or emergency exists, which will put into motion a range of federal programs to aid in the response and recovery effort. The specific programs that are activated and the magnitude of the resources deployed are based on the needs of each disaster, which is based on the damage assessment and any subsequent information that may be discovered. Some declarations will provide only individual assistance or only public assistance.

### Presidential Major Disaster Declaration

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and amendments make federal funds available to K-12 schools, colleges and universities when the president declares a

major disaster. Under this act, the president is authorized to:

- Direct federal agencies to provide assistance essential to meeting immediate threats to life and property resulting from a major disaster including search and rescue, emergency medical care, emergency mass care, debris removal, demolition of unsafe structures which endanger the public and provision of temporary facilities for schools;
- Direct any federal agency to provide resources (personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and managerial, technical, and advisory services) in support of state and local assistance efforts;
- Assist state and local governments in the distribution of medicine, food, and other consumable supplies, and

emergency assistance;

- Contribute to the hazard mitigation measures which substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in any area affected by a major disaster

## Presentation



Photo: Rachel Wilson

### Economy of Emotions Crisis Response and Recovery

Crisis response and recovery training will help prepare school and community partner agency personnel to effectively deliver mental health recovery services in the event of school, community and regional disasters. Using a highly interactive and humorous presentation style, Dr. Shepherd will walk attendees through a powerful exploration of the strategies to help students, staff, parents and emergency response officials cope with the emotional trauma of major school crisis events involving death and serious injury. Click [here](#) for more information about this presentation.



Photo: Rachel Wilson



- Make grants to states, upon their request, for the development of plans and programs for disaster preparedness and prevention. Specific amounts and percentages vary with each disaster and are negotiated between the federal and state governments at the time of the disaster.
- Provide temporary public transportation service in an area affected by a major disaster to meet emergency needs and to provide transportation to governmental offices, schools, major employment centers, and other places to enable the community to resume its activities as soon possible.

This list is not designed to be an exhaustive description - for more information refer to the full text of [The Stafford Act](#).

As you can see, there are a myriad of activities that can occur before, during and after a disaster. It is always recommended that emergency planners understand the enormous amount of collaboration and coordination with local, state and sometimes federal agencies needed in order to make sound decisions to handle the emergency event no matter how small or large. The alphabet soup of terms can appear muddy, but knowing the basics can significantly improve your plans and enhance any school's emergency response efforts.

Dr. Sony Shepherd has authored and co-authored sixteen books on school safety and emergency management. Her latest book [Staying Alive - How to Act Fast and Survive Deadly Encounters](#) was released in bookstores by Barron's last May. Dr. Shepherd serves as the Chief Operating Officer of Safe Havens International where she is also a Senior Analyst. She has held full time positions with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Georgia Department of Homeland Security and the Centers for Disease Control and has deployed to natural disasters and other crises in a dozen countries. She also served in the multi-agency command center for the international G-8 Summit held in Georgia.



Photo: Rachel Wilson



## What Are You Doing This Summer? Training Opportunities Abound!

By Chris Dorn, Editor-in-Cheif and Senior Analyst with Safe Havens International

With the end of school already here or fast approaching for most educators, many of us are thinking ahead to our summer vacations. For most of us in the safety and security field, that also means thinking about what we are doing to bolster our capabilities and expand our skill sets in preparation for the coming school year. If you are like me, you love dual purpose solutions – and there is no better way to have a great summer vacation than by attending a training conference where you can get a little bit of rest and relaxation while you learn. When you add the ability to meet and swap stories with those who are facing the same challenges as you are, you can have a very productive “summer vacation” - as if those existed in the safety & security field! At Safe Havens the summer is often one of our busiest times since we are presenting and training at the huge variety of summer conferences and school safety events available each year. Here are a few events where you can expand your knowledge while also networking and visiting some great destinations.

### *Campus Safety Magazine Conferences*

Safe Havens International Executive Director Michael Dorn has been selected to deliver a keynote presentation at the National Campus Safety Forum in Washington D.C. taking place June 24th-26th. More than 500 campus safety professionals are expected to attend the event. Michael will also be keynoting at the Campus Safety Chicago Conference on July 13th-14th along with Safe Havens analyst Stephen Satterly, Jr., who will be presenting a session titled “How to Teach Tactical Thinking in Non-Tactical Environments”. For more information on these two events, visit: [www.campussafetyconference.com](http://www.campussafetyconference.com)

### *Crisis Prevention Institute Annual Instructor’s Conference*

Another great event in July is the 2015 Annual Instructor’s conference for Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). This year’s conference will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana and will feature a variety of specific topics geared towards expanding and enhancing skill sets for CPI instructors. Safe Havens Senior Analyst Chris Dorn will be presenting three powerful sessions on crisis preparedness, emergency operations planning and school bus security. This conference is also a great chance to get your CPI instructor certification as well as renew existing certification. For more information on this conference visit: <https://goo.gl/dMyOzF>

In addition to these conferences, we are going to be presenting at a huge variety of state, regional and national conferences over the summer and fall. Take a look at our packed training schedule on the next page – there really is something for everyone!



Photo: Rachel Wilson



## Safe Havens Training Opportunities: Summer 2015

- June 9, 2015: Michael Dorn will serve as a keynote speaker for the Oklahoma School Resource Officer’s Association Annual Conference. For information on attending the conference visit: <https://goo.gl/pzmVU2>
  - June 15th, 2015: Michael Dorn will keynote the Tennessee School Resource Officer’s Association Annual Conference. For more information on attending the conference, visit: <http://goo.gl/4zik1c>
  - June 24th-26th, 2015: National Campus Safety Forum with keynote by Michael Dorn, Washington D.C.: <http://goo.gl/LsoG63>
  - June 26th-29th, 2015: Steve Satterly presents “Relative Risks of Death in K-12 Schools” at the National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officers” conference, Grand Rapids, MI. For information & registration: <https://goo.gl/QFMSTa>
  - July 13th-14th, 2015: Campus Safety Chicago Conference with keynote by Michael Dorn and breakout session by SHI Analyst Stephen Satterly, Jr. For information and registration: <http://goo.gl/dnIXg5>
  - July 19th-24th, 2015: Chris Dorn presents several sessions at the annual Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Instructor’s Conference in New Orleans, LA. This is also a chance to become certified as a CPI instructor and update certification for current instructors. For conference information & registration, visit: <https://goo.gl/dMyOzF>
  - July 20th, 2015: Michael Dorn will present at the School Resource Officer Training Program for the Indiana Association of Chief’s of Police. For more information on attending the training program visit: <http://goo.gl/zgm4d8>
  - July 22nd, 2015: Michael Dorn will serve as a keynote speaker for the Washington School Safety Organization Annual Conference. For more information on attending the conference visit: <http://goo.gl/Tvx16t>
  - July 24th, 2015: Michael Dorn will serve as a keynote speaker for the Maine Pupil Transportation Annual Conference. For more information on attending the conference visit: <http://goo.gl/iHm4XY>
  - August 28th, 2015: Michael Dorn will serve as a keynote speaker for the FBI National Academy Associates Rocky Mountain Chapter Annual Conference. For information on attending the conference visit: <http://goo.gl/Dbx2LR>
- Fall training preview:*
- November 17th, 2015: Michael Dorn will keynote the Indiana School Safety Specialist’s Academy Basic Academy. Out of state attendees are welcome on a limited basis. For more information visit: <http://goo.gl/zo6nTU>

### School Safety Monthly

[Chris Dorn](#).....Editor-In-Chief

Morgan Billinger.....Editor

Rachel Wilson.....Photography

[Michael Dorn](#).....Executive Director

[Dr. Sonayia Shepherd](#).....Contributing Author

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