

SPECIAL ENEWS

From: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Re: TODAY'S UPDATE (9/16/05) — Hurricane Aftermath

REQUESTS

>> “I am working with a team of volunteers on a new hurricane relief project, *Project Reassure*. We are editors, mental health specialists, special educators, school administrators, teachers, healthcare professionals, photographers, designers, students, and writers who are volunteering to create resources for those caring for the young victims of the Katrina disaster. *We are especially concerned about those with disabilities, whose needs often are overlooked.* Our brand-new website is www.projectreassure.org where you can view the press release, our first resources, and information on how you can help.

We are compiling suggestions in easy-to-use handouts written for volunteers, parents, and professionals. *If you would like to contribute ideas for the resource sheets or skills such as editing and writing, we would be grateful for the help.*

If you know of schools or other youth-serving organizations receiving displaced children and teens, please let us know. We will add them to our list of recipients. We are raising funds for some print distribution and will be e-mailing resources to those who can access e-mail. All resources will be available for download from our web site.

Thank you for your support. Mary Margaret Kerr, on behalf of the volunteers of Project Reassure at the University of Pittsburgh, 3811 O'Hara Street/128 North Craig Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 – Tel. 412-687-2580/2495 Fax. 412-687-2943

>>Dear Friends of Education -- This is an important time for the entire education community. Thank you for everything that you and your organization are doing to help displaced students, teachers, and families. As we collectively work to help impacted communities, we must also think about next steps and recovery. I'm interested in learning more about what your organization is working on related to the recovery efforts. If your organization develops a legislative package or request related to the Katrina recovery efforts, I would appreciate hearing your views.

Joan Wodiska, Director, Education, Early Childhood and Workforce Committee, National Governors Association, Washington, DC 20001 – (202) 624-5361 (202) 624-5313 (fax)
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MORE RESOURCES

>> “Helping Children in the Wake of Disaster” – the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence has a guide for providers and one for parents – at

[http://www.ncccv.org/docs/Providers%20Guide%20\(Sept.%202005\).pdf](http://www.ncccv.org/docs/Providers%20Guide%20(Sept.%202005).pdf) (provider guide)

[http://www.ncccv.org/docs/Parents%20Guide%20\(Sept.%202005\).pdf](http://www.ncccv.org/docs/Parents%20Guide%20(Sept.%202005).pdf) (parent guide)

>>Connect For Kids has online resources divided into three sections: (1) Emergency Guidelines for Helping Victims -- looks at how government agencies are developing procedures for helping the displaced; (2) Giving & Getting Help -- is a compilation of information on donating and volunteering, also on help available to those affected; and (3) Help with Healing -- offers information on supporting kids and families dealing with trauma related to Katrina.

<http://www.connectforkids.org/node/3372>

ONLINE DISCUSSION

>> *Talktime Live!* Coping & Support Strategies for Kids in Katrina's Aftermath – On **Wednesday, Sept. 21 from 1 to 2 p.m.**, Connect For Kid's *TalkTime Live!* will host two experts -- one with insight into emotional support for traumatized kids, and one to look at how government programs can best be shaped to help those displaced. Join the chat live next Wednesday and submit pre-questions ahead of time at: <http://www.connectforkids.org/node/3389>

NEWS RELEASES FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES

>> NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) <http://www.nih.gov/icd/od/>
NIH Opens up Medical Consultation Line to Patients Affected by Hurricane Katrina – The National Institutes of Health today announced that it is expanding its round-the-clock telephone medical consultation service previously available to health care providers to all patients affected by Hurricane Katrina. Medical experts at NIH, academic medical centers and the nation's medical professional societies are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide medical consultations on a wide array of medical problems. The toll-free number is 1-866-887-2842. "Our goal is to match national experts with care providers dealing with difficult or complicated medical cases. We also want to help patients in the affected area who were on clinical trials and receiving treatment." Consultations are available in environmental/toxic concerns, infectious diseases, tropical/geographical medicine, ophthalmology, oral medicine, psychiatry, cardiac/pulmonary diseases, genetic diseases, pediatric endocrinology, pediatric metabolism, obstetrics/gynecology, cancer and adult endocrinology. "If a consultation is needed in other areas, we'll make the connections." "Our partners at the nation's academic medical centers have generously volunteered their expertise in this initiative, and many medical societies have mobilized their membership to provide clinical advice as needed."

Physicians caring for patients on NIH-sponsored clinical trials that have been interrupted because of the Katrina disaster-or clinical trial patients themselves-can call the consultation line for options on continuing therapy under a clinical trial. "Our commitment is to do what we can to help protect the lives and health of patients."

For more information about NIH responses to the Katrina disaster, go to the NIH website, <http://www.nih.gov>. More details for cancer patients, their families, and physicians are on the National Cancer Institute's website, <http://www.cancer.gov/katrina>.

NEWS BRIEFS

>> EDUCATION WEEK -- "Forced Out by Storm, Teachers Seek News of Job Openings, Pay -- Thousands of displaced teachers from Louisiana and Mississippi struggled to put their lives back together last week, anxiously awaiting news of jobs and paychecks disrupted by the deadly Gulf Coast storm. States offered the evacuees pay and benefits, but faced a logistical nightmare in finding the scattered teachers and retrieving payroll and employment records. Other states made arrangements to hire those teachers on a provisional basis. Meanwhile, the two major teachers' unions, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, set up phone lines for their members to call for information about their school districts and advice on union benefits such as supplemental health insurance, loans and disaster aid.

>> WALL STREET JOURNAL – "Separate but Equal? Schooling of Evacuees Provokes Debate – The 372,000 schoolchildren displaced by Hurricane Katrina are stirring up an old debate ...A number of states, including Utah and Texas, want to teach some of the dispersed ...students in shelters instead of in local public schools, a stance supported by the Bush administration and some private education providers. But advocates for homeless families and civil rights oppose

that approach. At the center of the dispute is whether the McKinney-Vento Act [which bans the educational segregation of homeless children] should apply to the evacuees. In addition, because many of the stranded students are black, holding classes for them at military bases, convention centers or other emergency housing sites could run afoul of racial desegregation plans still operating in some school districts.”

REPORT FROM THOSE ON THE LINE

>>In Dallas Independent School District, we interviewed all Katrina students (now about 1700) and are triaging into services. We have a good plan and are taking care of our students and their families. We also are offering Care for the Caregivers led by a team of psychiatrists.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO LOSS

Some Basic Questions and Answers

Q. Why should schools play a role in addressing psychological reactions to loss?

A. As the Carnegie Task Force on Education has stressed:

*School systems are not responsible, for meeting every need of their students.
But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.*

Q. What makes the current disaster a high priority mental health concern?

A. Unprecedented dislocation and devastation

Q. What is the range of events that create a sense of loss?

A. Frequent and common events —→ severe and infrequent events

Q. What is the range of responses to loss?

A. Normal developmental responses —→ troublesome psychological reactions —→ mental health disorders

Q. What are some of the immediate roles for a school to play?

A. Welcoming relocated students and providing a range of supports; not adding stressors; providing special assistance when individuals can't cope

Q. What can I do to help schools, districts, organizations, communities in responding to students who need assistance in dealing with loss?

A. Share what you are learning about this matter and direct them to resources.

Download resources available from the Center for Mental Health in Schools and use the Center website as a gateway to a world of resources - <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Go to the Quick Find online clearinghouse and access topics such as:

- Crisis Prevention and Response
- Depression
- Environments that support learning
- Grief and bereavement
- Homeless Children and Youth
- Peer relationships and peer counseling
- Post-traumatic stress
- Resilience/protective factors
- Support for Transitions

For each of these topics you will see links to Center materials, to other online resources, and to others centers that focus on the topic.

Please keep sending us information to share with others.

What do you need? What is helpful? (What is not?)

Your input is essential and is greatly appreciated by other across the country.