Crisis Response in Schools

Facilitator: Cheri Lovre

Notetaker: Sarah Knipper

Scenarios and Events

* Discussion from perspective of parent at King School & the shooting that occurred in February at that school. There was no protocol, no teacher response, no safe room or flight team. Kids showed up at school the next day to find yellow police tape around the school, parents had no communication about it. PPS refused to issue surveillance cameras to King out of “equity” concerns
  + Cheri: PPS has a response plan – tons of energy went into developing that after Kyron Horman incident at Skyline. But obviously they are not implementing it across the board.
* Cheri gave example of a landslide in Washington State almost 10 years ago that caused several deaths – community never really healed and now there are major problems
  + There should be a community meeting immediately after the crisis which will set the tone of “Be here for the safety of kids” – this helps get everyone on the same page

SBHC infrastructure for crisis response

* Washington County – flight team is very robust, including SBHCs – lots of training opportunities
* Lincoln County – not participating in crisis response/flight teams
  + If you can’t bill (which often can’t for crisis), then it is not a priority
  + If there is a crisis event in school, they don’t call the SBHC MH therapist because they don’t want to disrupt his (billable, scheduled) therapy appointments
  + But often the therapy appts don’t show up because all the kids want to be with their peers in the aftermath of crisis, so he is sitting in his office doing nothing and not allowed to be part of response
  + Cheri asked if you could bill for crisis services if kids are in the safe room. Because of confidentiality, you could only do group work, not individual work. But you can only bill for kids you’ve done an assessment for already, so you couldn’t see kids you hadn’t already assessed.
* ESDs run flight teams (discussion of Marion-Polk-Yamhill ESD)

Questions and Recommendations

* How do you realign staffing in the face of a crisis response? Doesn’t always jive with billing guidelines
  + Idea is to tackle groups first in the initial post-crisis response, then move to individuals
* Discussion of the relationship between chronic stress (frequent shootings) and disruptive behavior. Even for kids who are not “in crisis”, there is a lot of background stress – poverty, violence, etc. The background stress becomes normalized for them, and can lead to health & behavior issues
* Kids start to “front” in the face of violence by upping their own swagger and threats of violence themselves
  + Recommend keep kids in smaller groups in the face/aftermath of crisis
* SBHCs should ask schools what their plan is to institutionalize crisis knowledge. If the counselor changes jobs, make sure they don’t take all their resources with them without leaving copies and notes for the new person.
* Consistent and long-term follow-up is crucial to mitigating or preventing long-term fall-out.
* Cheri is available for a wide range of consulting services and encouraged people at table to email her. She can help develop media messages over email, brainstorm how to tackle bringing a community together for discussion, in-person school meetings, etc.
* Huge gap in post-shooting/crisis response. People make lots of lists of things to do, but could use Cheri’s grid to identify holes.