Developing a State-Wide Crisis Response Network

Phyllis N. Weatherly, M.Ed., LPC
Southern Polytechnic State University

Maggie Martin, Ph.D., L.P.C., N.C.C., M.C.C., M.C.D.P., B.C.U.C.R.
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Ruperto M. Perez, Ph.D.
Georgia Institute of Technology

Program presented at the 2009 annual American College Personnel Convention

Program sponsored by:
ACPA Commission for College Counseling and Psychological Services
In the News…

Hurricane victims blow into ABAC

Bill O'Neal, left, hands a small file cabinet to Kim Baldwin as they salvage records Friday from Baldwin Insurance Co. on the corner of Lamar and Reese streets in Americus, Ga., where storms that spawned tornadoes Thursday night reportedly claimed the lives of two people.
Objectives

- To learn the rationale for creating a system-wide crisis response network;

- To learn the process used to develop protocols for responding to crisis situations within a state-wide system and fostering collaboration;

- To offer a model for ongoing training including the securing of funding including the development of Crisis Response credentialing;

- To identify practice implications for emergency preparedness planning on college/university campuses;

- To explore where the Crisis Response Network fits into the individual universities’ crisis management plan.
Introduction to CDA

The Counseling Directors Association (CDA) is a standing committee of the Regents Administrative Committee on Student Affairs (RACSA).

Membership is comprised of the counseling center directors from each of the USG institutions.

Purpose: “To promote the exchange of information and ideas; to improve the efficiency and expertise of its membership; to improve communication and coordination among the units of the University System; and to make any studies and reports that would benefit the membership or that are directed by the Chancellor or his/her authorized representative.”
Introduction to CDA

- Meetings held regularly throughout the academic year
- Some activities:
  - Examine counseling needs across the USG institutions
  - Establishing counseling center standards
  - Crisis response network
Defining the Need

- **Rationale**
  - Request from RACSA
  - Acknowledgment of increase crises and emergencies on college/university campuses nationwide

- **Process of developing CRN**
  - Subsequent discussions during CDA meetings
  - Submitting request for funding
Crisis Response Network

- CRN plan as an integral part of institutional crisis management plan.

- Description of CRN
  - What it is
  - How it works
  - Memorandum of Understanding
  - Network Debriefing (purpose and intention)

- Highlights of important aspects:
  - Theoretical models of crisis response
  - Collaboration with USG institutions
  - Collaboration with Board of Regents
  - Training to meet the needs of CRN
Training

- Developing training to fit needs of CRN

- Training offered:
  - American Red Cross training
  - Acute traumatic stress management
  - Crisis response training
  - Psychological first aid
  - Trauma treatment

- Types of Training
- Training Resources
Lessons Learned

Benefits:
- System in place
- Shared resources and expertise across USG institutions
- Cost-effective

Implications for campus emergency preparedness:
- Issues for smaller institutions and commuter campuses?
- When is the best time to respond?
- Resources for the responder’s campus if responder is away?
- Budget?

Shortcomings:
- Communications (e.g., telephone call vs. e-mail)
- Limits to responding (e.g., timing, available persons, type of campus)
- “Reading the cookbook, but never cooking,” (i.e., exposed to training but no actual experience).
- No after-hours contact numbers for responders
Next Steps

- Ongoing evaluation and assessment of CRN model.
- Ongoing evaluation and assessment of training/professional development.
- Need to revisit/renew table-top exercise.
- Allow observers to demystify the process crisis response.
- Responding to requests from non-USG institutions.
- To collaborate with private institutions and technical schools.
Contact Information

- Phyllis N. Weatherly  
  Director, Career and Counseling Center  
  Southern Polytechnic State University  
  678-915-7391  
  pweather@spsu.edu

- Maggie Martin  
  Director, Student Development Center  
  Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
  229-391-5135  
  mmartin@abac.edu

- Ruperto M. Perez  
  Director, Counseling Center  
  Georgia Institute of Technology  
  404-894-2575  
  ruperto.perez@vpss.gatech.edu