In Search of Safer Communities:

Emerging Practices for Student Affairs in Addressing Campus Violence

NASPA
Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

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Emerging Practices for Student Affairs in Addressing Campus Violence

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Executive Summary

The tragic shootings at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007 shocked the nation, and in particular touched deeply those of us who work in Student Affairs. In the fall of 2007, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) President Jan Walbert convened a working group of Student Affairs colleagues with senior leadership experience (see membership list Appendix A) to identify the critical issues Student Affairs colleagues should consider related to violent incidents on college campuses. This group was charged with (a) examining the various reports in the past several months and best practices in this area and (b) developing guiding principles for practice from a Student Affairs perspective for the NASPA membership.

This paper is a working draft with the intent to collaborate with colleagues and solicit feedback that will further refine our work. We provide some examples of emerging or best practices for consideration and seek input to create a resource database of these.

In this paper we will discuss a framework of planning for, and responding to, emergencies such as incidents of violence using a Crisis Management Model. This model provides four phases in which to discuss issues of violence: (a) Prevention and Mitigation, (b) Preparedness, (c) Response, and (d) Recovery. The following topics are presented in bulleted summary format with the intent to lead you to the full discussion that follows in the paper.

I. Prevention and Mitigation

   a. Campus Climate and Culture: Emerging practices to consider

      i. Place more focus on programs regarding men and violence.

      ii. Continue to develop innovative discipline sanctions.

      iii. Explore conflict resolution processes such as healing circles and bullying theory.

      iv. Map incidents of violence on campus and use information to inform decision making.

      v. Explore creating a national clearinghouse for data on incidents of violence on K-12 and college campuses.

b. Training and Awareness

i. Student Affairs must play a lead role in developing and presenting training opportunities related to campus violence for students, families, faculty and staff.

ii. Students should be considered part of prevention and trained to recognize signs of distress.

iii. Campus security/police should be accredited whenever possible.

iv. Graduate preparation programs should address issues of campus violence.

v. Update training for all staff on FERPA and HIPPA guidelines.

c. Mental and Behavioral Interventions

i. Use a model, such as the Assessment Intervention of Student Problems, as a framework to address behavior.

ii. Train all staff in using the model.

iii. Establish a threat assessment team that uses a behavior intervention model.

d. Infrastructure and Policy

i. Consider background checks in the admissions process.

ii. Err on the side of sharing more information rather than less when it relates to a matter of campus safety.

iii. Advocate for clarification of local or state policy/laws which impede campus safety.

iv. Do not permit guns on campus with the exception of those being carried by law enforcement officers.

II. Preparedness

Develop plans, assemble the teams and train personnel to respond to a variety of crisis events.

a. Role of the President: Clarify if President or other senior leader will lead the response team and what his/her role will be in communications.

b. Campus Police/Security

i. Establish perimeters, secure buildings as quickly as possible.

ii. Develop mutual aid agreements and practice active shooter and other large scale emergency scenarios.

iii. Participate in NIMS training on a regular basis.

c. Communications Plan

i. Move ability to issue campus warning to the most appropriate level in the organization to be operationally effective.

ii. Message systems need to be multi-modal with built in redundancy.

iii. Prepare in advance basic, clear and concise template messages.

d. Special Considerations in Mass Casualties

i. Carefully consider establishing a private family room for university personnel and family members only.

ii. Identify an individual liaison for each family and provide training in advance for this pool of staff.

iii. Establish an emergency call center in advance and train staff to operate.

e. Media

i. Determine institutional and divisional spokespersons in advance and provide media relations training.

ii. Identify others, including student leaders, in advance and provide training.

iii. Determine appropriate areas for media to operate and manage them.

iv. Set appropriate boundaries for the media, including the residence halls, to enable some privacy for the campus community.

f. Academic Affairs and Faculty

i. Use new faculty orientation to clarify roles and expectations.

ii. Identify specific resources for faculty to identify troubled students and refer appropriately.

iii. Involve faculty in developing crisis response procedures.

g. Training

i. Team members need to be trained on all plans and protocols to understand their roles and responsibilities.

ii. Table top exercises and actual simulations should both be utilized.

III. Response

Responding to high stress situations will place enormous demands upon all levels of staff in Student Affairs and across the institution.

a. Timely notification of students

i. Err on the side of sending brief, factual messages early on.

ii. Follow-up messages are essential; website must be kept up to date.

b. Responding to the needs of students

i. Must respond to the varying needs of all our constituents.

ii. Consider consortium agreements with other colleges in your local area or state to provide immediate emergency personnel.

iii. Utilize the local clergy as additional resources.

c. International – Crisis abroad

i. It may be necessary for a representative of the college to travel immediately.

ii. One or more office members of the Dean of Students should be prepared with proper passport and other information for immediate travel abroad.

IV. Recovery

a. Moving Forward

i. Solicit the involvement of alumni in response and recovery.

ii. Pay particular attention to student leaders and groups connected to the event.

b. Psychological first aid

i. Pay attention to our own team and our counterparts on campus – the psychological/emotional trauma associ-

ated with dealing with these events will need to be addressed.

ii. Use community resources and other colleges to augment and assist in providing for care for your own team.

c. Process/Learning from incident

i. Each situation provides opportunities for leaning – we must critique ourselves and be open to listening to others.

ii. Be mindful of how we conduct vigils and construct memorials, etc.

iii. Have a variety of ongoing support mechanisms to assist community members in finding what is right for themselves.

iv. Provide extra/relief staff to allow those who have dealt with the crisis time off to move on.

v. Remember it is possible to take a tragic situation and create a new tradition or a new cultural norm.

vi. Remember our students and campuses are resilient.

Introduction

Violence is pervasive throughout history, including the current culture in which our students live. Violence is unfortunately part of the context of higher education, and those of us who work in Student Affairs experience its manifestations frequently on our college campuses. In recent years weapons have become more dangerous and more readily available; the media is more invasive, persuasive, and immediate; expectations from parents demand that we again act *in loco parentis*; and overlapping federal and state laws on health and privacy are confusing.

The tragic shootings at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007 shocked the nation, and touched particularly deeply those of us who work in Student Affairs. We understand what it is like to lose one student, but the magnitude of this situation had not been experienced before. From the initial response, to dealing with the media and families, to managing the campus and beyond, thousands of decisions needed to be made and executed. Over the subsequent months, the President of the United States, the Governor of Virginia and the President of Virginia Tech would all commission reports on what happened and what could

be learned from this incident. The United States Congress as well as many states held hearings on this issue, making recommendations around campus safety, mental health issues, and emergency response. Throughout the course of 2007, several other campuses would experience shootings (Delaware State, University of Chicago, Louisiana State University to name a few), and each time campuses would be criticized for their actions. Indeed, the Virginia Tech incident can be viewed as a "tipping point" in higher education, whereby a serious tragedy focused attention on mental health issues and campus safety.

In the fall of 2007, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) President Jan Walbert convened a working group of Student Affairs colleagues with senior leadership experience (see membership list Appendix A) to identify the critical issues Student Affairs colleagues should consider related to violent incidents on their campuses. This group was charged with (a) examining the various reports in the past several months and best practices in this area and (b) developing guiding principles for practice from a Student Affairs perspective for the NASPA membership.

Recognizing the diversity of the NASPA membership, the participants of the working group included representatives of small and community colleges as well as large universities. The NASPA liaison to the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission attended as well as a director of a large counseling center. One member was present at the 1970 Kent State shootings; another at the 1999 Texas A & M bonfire tragedy. The group had a significant level of experience planning for and managing incidents of violence on college campuses. The group read various reports and documents as references[1], including the full Report of the Review Panel (August 2007) from Virginia Tech and information on The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). *Dealing with the Behavioral and Psychological Problems of Students* (Delworth, 1989) we found to have continued profound connections to our work today.

The working group met in Chicago in early December 2007 for discussions and to outline the key issues involved and suggest recommendations for best practices in Student Affairs. We focused on emerging trends in Student Affairs practice and not on providing an exhaustive emergency planning document. Further, to add continuity between this

[1] NOTE: When you come to a place in the paper that provides a model or a reference we inserted a ** and ask that you refer to Appendix B: Resources.

document and other emergency planning documents, we decided to place our recommendations within a crisis management model used by the United States Department of Education (2007)** and the United States Department of Homeland Security (2003) .** Three group members drafted the paper that follows and received feedback from the group. We continue to be interested in collecting and highlighting examples of best practices related to the topics presented here. We provide some examples of emerging or best practice for consideration and we seek your input to create a resource database. We envision a link at the NASPA website whereby examples of best practices in each of the areas can be submitted and available for NASPA members. We look forward to your comments and discussion.

The audience for this paper is the approximately 11,000 NASPA members. In particular, we write to address the senior Student Affairs officers as they work with their staffs and campus constituents in recognition that it takes a coalition to address the issues outlined here.

When our group of Student Affairs colleagues met in December 2007, we established a set of guiding principles for our work together. We share them with you to help you understand the context through which we present our ideas.

Principles that guided our discussions

(1) We recognize that all situations are unique and all campuses are unique. Certainly there are some commonalities in events and issues that can be planned for within a model.

(2) There is no single best answer to a problem or emergency; there are various possibilities. Decision making at the local level will come with practice, based on guidance from professional associations, best practice, and state and federal agencies.

(3) We can work hard to take care of each other, but we cannot prevent every act of violent behavior on our campuses. We need to keep reminding ourselves and others that we are doing the best that we can. And, we will continue to learn from one another.

(4) We recognize that a variety of roles exists within Student Affairs, sometimes in conflict with each other. We need to continue to work toward a greater understanding of laws and norms or ways of practice (i.e. how we implement

FERPA) to further clarify roles and expectations for the future.

(5) Throughout our discussions we found confusion about terminology and suggest we be as clear about definitions as we can be, for example, campus closed vs. classes cancelled, or suspension vs. involuntary withdrawal.

(6) We know there is a link between alcohol and campus violence. Therefore, any consideration about best practices for managing violence must also address the issue of alcohol use.

(7) We know there is a link between guns and campus violence. As an organization, we believe NASPA should advocate that guns be prohibited from the general population on the campus.

(8) The work around violence must start in the K-12 school environment, and we need to partner with secondary educators to understand K-12 research and practice around issues such as bullying and peer mediation.

(9) The vast majority of people with mental health issues are not violent. The ADA has enabled more students to be successful on campus. We have expanded our support services for students with disabilities and welcome their full participation in all aspects of the academic community.

This work is not an exhaustive list of recommendations or resources. However, we hope it provides a helpful discussion point with the Student Affairs team. We chose to write in a less 'academic' style and did not provide exhaustive citations throughout the paper. Instead, we created an annotated resource list** (Appendix B) that directs you to more information and sources.

Please forward examples of best practices related to any topic in this paper to:

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In this paper we will discuss a framework of planning for and responding to emergencies such as incidents of violence: the Crisis Management Model. We will then highlight some of the key issues related to the particular situations of interpersonal violence experienced in the past year, some of the lessons learned, and the emerging trends for practice in Student Affairs. Topics will include communications, mental health issues, training and awareness, roles of various personnel and policy changes. We will provide recommendations and suggestions, recognizing that each campus has a unique culture and governance structure and a recommendation may not fit every particular context. Finally, we will acknowledge issues that need future exploration.

Crisis Management Model

It is important to remember that campus crisis management is not a singular set of actions after which a campus can be declared prepared. Instead, crisis management is an ongoing, cyclical and adaptive process through which a campus seeks to continuously improve its ability to either avoid or manage the impact of a crisis event. In reviewing the literature, the crisis management process is often described in terms of a series of stages or phases in which actions taken in one phase build on actions taken in the previous phase. A common phased model of crisis management adopted by the United States Department of Homeland Security (2003)** and the United States Department of Education (2007)** is depicted in Figure 1. The model includes four phases: (a) Prevention/Mitigation; (b) Preparedness; (c) Response; and (d) Recovery.

In the prevention and mitigation phase, a campus seeks to identify actions or strategies to prevent potential crisis events from occurring or at least mitigate the impact of such events if they do occur. This is an important yet often overlooked phase of the crisis management process. Campuses must constantly monitor their environment for potential situations or events that could threaten the campus community.

Recognizing that not all crisis events can be prevented, campuses must also prepare for crisis events that could likely occur. It is during the preparedness phase that campuses develop plans and train personnel to respond to a variety of potential crisis events. If a crisis event occurs, the plans and protocols campuses have developed in the preparedness phase are implemented.

The response phase consists of the actions taken and decisions made during the actual crisis event. While the response phase may happen during the course of a few hours or perhaps a few days, the recovery

phase may last for weeks, months or even years. The recovery phase consists of the actions and decisions made in the aftermath of the crisis that are focused on returning the campus community to a sense of normalcy. As part of the recovery process, a campus will take a critical look at its response efforts and use this information to improve its future prevention and mitigation efforts. In this way crisis management becomes a cyclical process in which one phase leads to the next and creates a continuous improvement process.

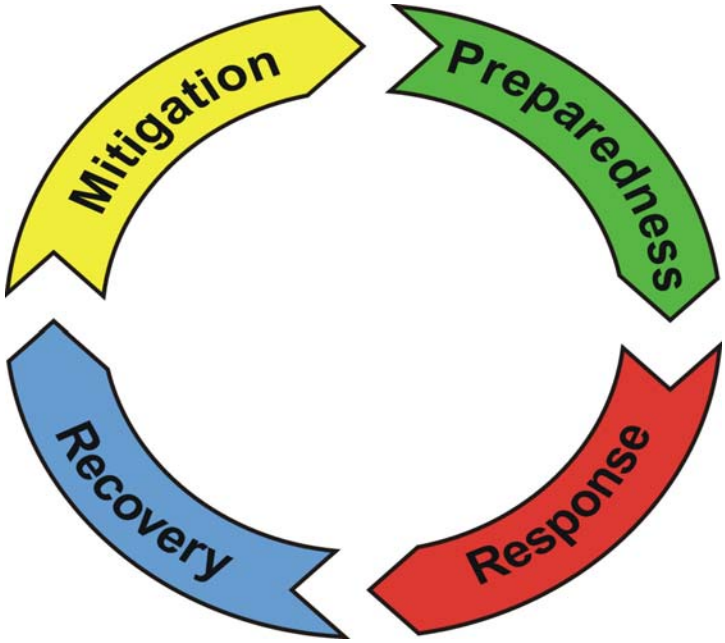

Figure 1: Crisis Management Model

Campus violence is a particular type of crisis event. In presenting what we see as emerging practices and recommendations for addressing campus violence we believe it is useful to present them within the framework of this model. In this way we hope to provide campus administrators with information that fits within a structure consistent to what other experts and governmental agencies are communicating to campus leaders.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

Just as Alfred Hitchcock observed that the perfect crime is one that no one knows has been committed, the best practice of campus crisis management is evidenced by the violence that is averted or minimized. While there is a role for Student Affairs professionals to play in all phases of crisis management on campus, none is more important than the role Student Affairs can and should play in the prevention and mitigation phase. We have identified four foci for Student Affairs professional practice as it relates to the prevention and mitigation of campus violence: campus climate and culture; training and awareness; mental health and behavioral interventions; and infrastructure and policy. This section of the paper addresses those elements of a comprehensive campus plan.

Campus Climate and Culture

While there is much still to be learned with regard to the environmental and individual circumstances that contribute to acts of campus violence, it appears clear that fostering a caring campus community is a powerful strategy for the prevention and mitigation of such acts. This is not to say that those communities where incidents of campus violence have taken place were not caring communities or that caring communities are immune to violence. We argue, however, that a caring community is less likely to experience such violence and is better able to respond and recover to an incident of violence should one occur. The UNCG Cares** program at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro is one simple and elegant example of how Student Affairs can take the lead in fostering a caring campus community.

Emerging theoretical perspectives may offer promise in informing efforts to promote campus cultures and climates that reduce the risk of occurrences of violence. The work being done by Jason Laker (2003) and others focusing on better understanding and addressing constructions of masculinities is particularly salient given that much of the violence perpetrated on our campuses and in our communities is perpetrated by men. Programs that focus on men and violence delivered by men can be very effective. Innovative approaches to conduct and discipline such as James Madison University's Civic Learning program might be helpful in engaging isolated or alienated students in the campus community in ways that reduce the potential for future incidences of antisocial behavior, including acts of campus violence. Similarly, alternative approaches to conflict resolution such as healing circles and efforts drawing on the work being done on bullying can be incorpo-

rated by Student Affairs into programs and services designed to help prevent or mitigate campus violence.**

In addition to fostering a campus culture of care and making use of emerging theoretical perspectives, it is critically important that Student Affairs continue to provide leadership in addressing the use of alcohol and other drugs in our communities. There is ample evidence of the link between alcohol and drug use and individual incidents of campus violence. We argue that a campus susceptible to individual acts of violence and where such acts are seen as a part of community life are more vulnerable to critical acts of violence. In addition, there is an established co-morbidity between the misuse or abuse of alcohol and other drugs and the types of mental health problems that appear to be associated with the perpetration of critical acts of violence. Student Affairs can provide leadership in assuring that nexus between alcohol and substance misuse and abuse and campus violence is addressed. Practical examples of leadership in this area include assuring that concerns regarding student behavior related to substance use are shared with campus threat assessment teams (see below for more on such teams) and campus education materials are disseminated that specifically identify acts of violence as unwelcome and unacceptable consequences of the misuse of alcohol and other drugs.

Case Example

Staff in Colorado State University's (CSU) counseling center and Student Affairs have implemented a creative program called Drugs, Alcohol and You (Day IV). DAY IV is a treatment program for students with chronic substance abuse problems and involves a team approach to assessing treating, and tracking students of concern. Based upon a model called Back on TRAC (Treatment, Responsibility, and Accountability on Campus) introduced by Monchick and Gehring (2006), the program at CSU has shown great promise and effectiveness and has been well received on campus. Readers can learn more about CSU's program by visiting their website at: http://day.colostate.edu/

Prevention and mitigation efforts need to be informed by existing research and the scholarship of practice. We ought to draw on the lessons learned from colleagues in K-12 education who have also been forced to deal with violence, in particular by focusing on depression. We can also look to the work of colleagues in higher education. One interesting example is the work of Tom Workman (2007) and colleagues at the University of Houston in mapping incidences of violence on campus as a means to understanding violence on that campus and informing efforts to prevent or mitigate future incidences. Another example can be found in the remarkable example being offered by our colleagues at Virginia Tech who have committed themselves to critical reflection and candor as they engage in the scholarship of practice by sharing their lessons learned. The willingness of these colleagues to share, while still in their recovery, is invaluable to our profession in informing our thinking about how we can be leaders in the prevention and mitigation of violence on our campuses.

While some information is available and helpful insights are emerging, we still have many more questions than we do answers when it comes to individual or environmental variables that may influence the commission of violent acts on campus. Student Affairs professionals should collaborate with colleagues on campus (e.g., faculty in public health, psychology, or sociology) in addressing these questions. Similarly, NASPA and other Student Affairs professional associations should collaborate with higher education associations, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and foundations to promote research agendas related to campus violence and to make available funding for those agendas. Discussion should also be undertaken regarding the need and feasibility for a national clearinghouse for data on incidents of violence on K-12 and college campuses.

Training and Awareness

Promoting a caring campus culture, making use of emerging perspectives, reducing the likelihood of violence through minimizing alcohol and substance use, and taking advantage of research and the scholarship of practice require that all members of our campus communities undertake appropriate training to develop the requisite knowledge and skills that can be drawn upon in a crisis. All members of the campus community must become more aware of and vigilant regarding potential individual or environmental circumstances that might indicate a heightened propensity for violence. Here again, Student Affairs can and should play a lead role in organizing and presenting training opportunities and in promoting the community responsibility of height-

ened awareness. Training and awareness programming related to campus violence should be offered to students, families of students, staff, faculty and parents beginning at orientation/welcome and repeated and reinforced regularly. Such training should include information on conflict management and the recognition of behavior that may indicate an individual presents a risk to themselves or others. Many campuses have redesigned programs already in place.

Case Example

Many counseling centers have extensive liaison programs wherein counselors are assigned to various parts of the campus community, including residence halls, other Student Affairs offices, and academic programs. Northwestern University's Counseling and Psychological Services (NUCAPS), for example, has a liaison program. Staff members are assigned to a campus constituency and reach out to the areas to identify themselves and conduct needs assessments. The needs assessment may result in the development of programming for a specific area in identifying students in need, for example. NUCAPS liaisons are also heavily involved in various "gatekeeper" training programs, including, but not limited to, residence hall assistant training, new faculty and staff orientations, and new student week orientation programs. The premise behind gatekeeper training is that it is impossible to reach all students; therefore, training should focus on individuals in leadership or other roles who may come in contact with many students. NUCAPS liaisons are also "go-to" people for campus constituencies when there is concern about a specific student. To learn more about NUCAPS liaison system: http://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/

Students are often the victims of violence on campus; they are also in a unique position to prevent and mitigate violence. Students interact with their peers more often and in more ways than do either staff or faculty. Student Affairs professionals need to offer training opportunities to help students recognize troubling behaviors in fellow students and in themselves that may indicate mental health issues that are potentially harmful to self and others. Training for students should include practical examples and clear advice. This can be done through a variety of formats including workshops, first-year seminars, web-based

materials, newspaper articles, printed materials and other formats. Students need to be encouraged to share concerns regarding troubling behavior by peers and provided information on resources to contact to share those concerns.

Faculty may encounter troubling behavior in the classroom or evidence of troubled thinking in work submitted for assignments. Student Affairs professionals can partner with colleagues in academic affairs, including those in teaching resource centers, to present workshop information for faculty in addressing troubling behavior in the classroom or troubling thinking in submitted assignments.

While it is important to make training available to members of the campus community to help them be more aware of and prepared for situations involving troubling behavior, it is equally important that resources are available at the time such behavior is encountered. The use of multiple media (e.g., pamphlets, quick help books, web pages) helps assure information is available when needed.

Campus security or police departments ought to be accredited wherever possible. Such accreditation provides a helpful framework for assuring appropriate training and helps assure the officers in the department have access to the latest information related to responding to incidents of violence on campus. The International Association of Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) is one source for accreditation of campus safety and police departments. In addition, NASPA and IACLEA should continue to co-sponsor joint conferences and trainings to enhance the knowledge and skill development of both associations' members.

Graduate preparation programs in Student Affairs or higher education should address issues of campus violence as well. Information on models of crisis management, grief and grieving, and ethical and legal dimensions of confidentiality as it relates to working with students who may be a risk to themselves or others are among the topics that need to be included in the training of future Student Affairs professionals. In addition, interdisciplinary courses that are team taught by mental health professionals and deans of student affairs could explore case studies of psychological and safety issues on campus.

Training is needed for staff, faculty, and graduate students working in higher education on the implications of FERPA and HIPAA concerning the well-being of students. While it is essential that our work be conducted consistent with the intent and letter of both pieces of legislation, neither prohibits well-informed professionals engaged in legiti-

mate university business from sharing information related to protecting the health and safety of a student or members of the campus community. The recent clarification offered by the United States Department of Education has been particularly helpful in making this clear with regard to FERPA.** Similar training should be developed related to the Clery Act *(see pg. 24 for further information)*. Staff, faculty, and graduate students in preparation programs should receive training on broader legal issues of negligence and liability as they relate to working with students whose behavior is troubling.

Mental and Behavioral Interventions

Those of us who are privileged to serve students on college campuses know that student behavior can raise our hopes and our hackles, sometimes all in the same moment. Students do not always behave in ways we would hope they would or that we believe they should. The unusual or poor behavior may be indicative of a learning opportunity in waiting, or it could be a sign of an underlying mental health issue. This section of the paper highlights a model for considering the latter type of behavior and a mechanism for addressing such behavior.

AISP model. Ursula Delworth's (1989) Assessment-Intervention of Student Problems (AISP) model offers a particularly useful framework for considering student behavior. The AISP suggests that student behaviors that have raised campus safety concerns be located on a continuum from disturbed to disturbing. Examples of disturbed behavior might include a student muttering to him/herself as he walks across campus, a student whose hygiene had noticeably declined in recent weeks, or a student who quickly becomes frustrated and agitated when encountering innocuous questions as part of a routine process. These behaviors move toward disturbing when the muttering includes threats to self or others, the hygiene indicates a lack of cleanliness that presents a health threat to roommates, or agitation results in a member of the campus community feeling harassed or unsafe in some way.

How can and should a campus handle reports of troubling student behavior? Who should be charged with making a determination whether such behavior is indicative of immaturity, idiosyncrasy, or illness? Who will monitor behavior with an eye toward distinguishing between disturbed and disturbing? These issues can be address through the establishment of behavioral intervention or threat assessment teams.

Case Example

Dunkle, Hollingsworth, Barr, Crady and Duncan conducted a pre-conference workshop at the NASPA conference in Tampa (2005) that focused on dealing with disturbed/disturbing students. The presenters recommended that institutions conduct a thorough assessment of their campus resources to determine what they have to aid in managing these types of situations. Resources that were offered to attendees include the two flow charts in Appendix C.

Threat assessment teams. While many campuses have long had in place an informal network of colleagues who work together to identify and address troubling situations involving students, the time for informal systems has passed. Colleges and universities should implement formal "threat assessment teams" to identify and address situations in which the behavior of students (or other members of the campus community) indicates they may be experiencing difficulty in functioning or may be a threat to self or others. Please note that the team can have many different names (behavior intervention team, etc.), and we chose this name to reflect current common practice.

A threat assessment team should include, at a minimum, professionals in Student Affairs, mental health, law enforcement, and legal affairs. Other representatives from a particular academic area and other offices (e.g., health services, campus clergy, campus library, registrar's office) might join the team for a particular case where troubling behavior may have been observed. The team should meet on a regular basis, perhaps once a month, and additionally as needed.

Reports of troubling behavior should be reviewed by the threat assessment team. The team's discussion might include: (a) developing a more complete understanding of how an individual is interacting with the university community; (b) identifying existing points of communication and support; and, (c) developing an action plan for following through to determine whether additional steps (consistent with ethical and legal practices) should be taken to respond to the situation.

Throughout, the distinction between disturbed and disturbing behavior ought to guide the committee's discussion. As the assessment of the behavior moves along the continuum from disturbed to disturbing, the courses of action and the role played by various members of the threat assessment team will vary. A preoccupation with violent imagery may

be disturbed behavior, and additional information and appropriate follow through may be required. Residence hall staff, members of the faculty, ministerial colleagues, and others may be enlisted for their assistance in additional conversation with the student and monitoring of the student's behavior. Activity indicating the capacity or interest in engaging in violence lies further along the continuum between disturbed and disturbing behavior, and a more aggressive assessment and appropriate intervention might immediately be necessary. Mental health professionals and staff in the office of the Dean of Students might take more of a leading role at this point. Any indication of an intent to commit violence is clearly disturbing behavior, and an urgent response (consistent with ethical practice, institutional policy, and guiding legal precedent) is imperative. Law enforcement officials, legal counsel, and more senior Student Affairs officers will most likely take on prominent roles in such situations.

An individualized assessment of each situation and student needs to take place. We cannot base our actions on the generalizations, fears, hearsay or prejudices that exist on the campus or in the larger society. We must focus on the conduct/behavior that is being exhibited by the particular student.

When there is significant concern regarding troubling student behavior, contact with parents and family members should be made as early in the process as possible to enhance their ability to be partners in working with their student and the institution. The United States Department of Education clarified FERPA guidelines in October 2007,** highlighting that FERPA does permit officials in an emergency situation to disclose information to protect the health and safety of students. This may include disclosing information to parents and family members.

The goal in developing a threat assessment is early intervention to help assure the health, safety, and success of the individual and of members of the university community. As such, the development of a team is an act of caring as are the activities of that team, including the team's decision to share information with appropriate members of the campus community on a need-to-know basis or with a student's family.

Case Example

An extensive and detailed model of a campus Threat Assessment Team is provided by Concordia University. A copy of the Threat Assessment Team can be downloaded at: http://www.cuw.edu/

Infrastructure and Policy

Campuses should undertake a discussion of whether or not they wish to implement background checks in admissions or hiring decisions to help assure campus safety. Many campuses currently use some form of background check, for example Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI).** Consideration should be given in such discussions to the ethical, legal, and moral dimensions of the question. There appears to be no one guiding legal principle at the time this paper is being developed to guide colleges in making their choice as to whether or not to conduct such checks. Issues to consider here include whether or not institutions should adopt reference checks and how the information gleaned should be used.

Regarding the admissions' process, colleges interested in implementing background checks should develop the program in ways that reflect care for the applicant's interest in pursuing education and in receiving appropriate support in pursuing that goal with the safety and security interests of the other members of the campus community. The focus in such checks as part of the admissions process should be on previous behavior rather than on a conviction per se, whether misdemeanor or felony. Colleges may also wish to explore adding a question to the application regarding behavior at the high school level for which the applicant was suspended or expelled.

Institutions should not seek mental health information from applicants for pre-admission; as such a process may invite the possibility of claims of discrimination based on disability. However, colleges may be able to collect such information from admitted students as part of health records information. Caution should be taken to ensure information collected for health records is handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws.

Policies should be put in place addressing how situations involving members of the campus community in distress will be handled, and those policies should be reviewed regularly to assure compliance with effective models of practice and emerging legal guidance. Examples include policies on administrative withdrawals for students in crisis, refunds for students who are administratively withdrawn, and conditions and processes under which such students may return to campus.

Campuses should make it a matter of policy that staff and faculty members acting in good faith, and in an effort to comply with applicable law and policy, should err on the side of caution by sharing more information rather than less when it relates to a matter of campus

safety. Further, it should be a matter of policy that staff and faculty members doing so will be supported by the institution in the event of legal action.

While FERPA and HIPAA do not inhibit Student Affairs professionals and others in higher education from sharing information in the interest of individual or community safety, some local and state mental health laws have had that unintended consequence. While most state mental health laws are restrictive for very good reasons, most do provide for and even require breaching confidentiality to protect individuals from harming themselves or others. Student Affairs administrators need training about their state mental health laws. While it is important to maintain confidentiality to gain students' trust, it is equally important to protect the community. Furthermore, while mental health professionals may have their hands tied in terms of what they can share, there is a great deal that they can share and offer within the parameters of state laws and professional ethics. Colleges and universities should advocate for clarification or revision of local or state legislation which serves as an impediment to campus safety.

We recognize that there are divergent and strongly held opinions in the United States when it comes to guns; nonetheless, we do not find any legitimate educational purpose for the presence of guns on campus with the exception of those being carried by law enforcement officers. If a college or university has a safety or sworn police force, the decision as to whether or not those officers are armed ought to include the opportunity across campus to comment on the question.

Campuses should clarify their authority to restrict guns on campus and, wherever possible, they should do so. Institutions finding their authority to restrict guns on campus limited should seek that authority. Campuses should encourage students who believe they need to have a hunting rifle available to them to store those weapons at secure, off-campus locations. With the exception of law enforcement offices, campuses where guns are permitted should ban concealed guns. Whatever their policy regarding guns, institutions should review how campus gun policies are communicated and enforced with the goal of maximizing compliance.

The first phase of the crisis management process is to attempt prevention of a potential crisis or to mitigate the impact of a crisis should it occur. In order to prevent or mitigate the impact of campus violence, administrators need to address the campus climate and culture around violence and provide appropriate training and educational programs for students, faculty, and staff. In addition, behavioral intervention sys-

tems, such as a threat assessment team, need to be established for early identification and intervention of individuals who could pose a threat to the campus community. Lastly, institutional infrastructure and policy, including the use of background checks and clear restrictions of guns from campus, help to build a solid foundation from which institutions can prevent or mitigate campus violence.

PREPAREDNESS

Unfortunately, not all acts of campus violence can be prevented. Therefore, we must take care to properly prepare ourselves and our campus communities to respond to campus violence. The second stage of an emergency planning model involves being prepared – thinking through contingencies, preparing for various types of situations, and practicing with campus partners. Student Affairs staff must play a lead role in preparing the campus to avoid acts of violence or to respond appropriately if they do occur. During the preparedness phase of crisis management, campuses develop plans, assemble teams, and train personnel to respond to a variety of crisis events. As we look at managing campus crisis, and, in particular, campus violence, there are several key considerations.

Role of the President

In times of crisis, it is important to have a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations. This is particularly true as it relates to the expectations of the President/Chancellor (we use President here). How does the President see his or her role in responding to a campus crisis? What are the President's expectations of you and others within the administrative structure of the campus community? Any campus crisis management plan that is developed needs to carefully consider the expectations of the President and the roles and responsibilities s/he will assume in an actual crisis event. This is a conversation that needs to take place early in the preparedness phase of the crisis management process.

While the President, as the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, is going to play a central role in any campus crisis, the President's actual level of involvement may differ based on the size and type of institution, the particular nature of the crisis and his/her individual personality. Depending on the campus, it might be logical for the President to chair the campus crisis management team and coordinate the specific actions taken to respond to a crisis event. If the President does not chair the crisis management team, he/she should be at the table. The President will have to make some critical and major decisions during a

crisis and, if he/she is involved in the planning, the possibility that he/she will decide something that does damage to the plan or the university will be minimized. On another campus, however, the direction of the crisis management team and the responsibility for implementing particular action steps to a crisis event may be delegated to another individual within the institution. This individual would have the appropriate level of authority to act on behalf of the President, but would also inform, consult, and advise the President on significant decision issues within the response process.

In either situation it is important that the chair of the crisis management team be available to participate regularly in training sessions and campus crisis exercises. Efficient and effective operations in times of crises require considerable time be devoted to training and practice.

Another aspect that frequently influences the President's level of involvement in the campus crisis management team is that of institutional spokesperson. In extreme crisis situations, the President is the primary spokesperson for the institution. S/he must be accessible and visible to the media, campus community, and institutional constituents. Successfully performing this role can often conflict with the responsibilities of coordinating the specific actions of the crisis management team.

Senior Student Affairs officers, as well as other senior campus administrators, would be wise to explore these issues with their president well in advance and ensure these expectations are factored into any plans or protocols that are developed.

Campus Police / Security

In addition to the President and other senior-level administrators, the Chief of Police or Director of Campus Security needs to be a key player in the hierarchy of institutional decision-making during a campus violence incident. It is specifically these types of situations for which campus security trains and, therefore, they need to be integrally involved in the process.

After the Virginia Tech tragedy, one of the primary foci of criticism was that campus police did not "lock down" the campus immediately after the initial incident in West Ambler Johnston residence hall. While "lock downs" may be standard practice in high school and other secondary education facilities, such an approach is not necessarily feasible on a college campus. First, it is important to recognize that college campuses consist of individuals of majority age and not minors. People

come and go freely from college campuses. They do not need a hall pass, and no one takes attendance every morning to see which students are on campus. Second, college campuses are open environments; guests to campus do not sign in and out at the office and receive a visitor's pass. Many campuses are open to the public and offer public forums for dialogue and debate on societal issues. Third, the size of many campuses simply makes the idea of a "lock down" impractical. With acres of land; hundreds of buildings; and thousands of students, faculty, and staff, many campuses are like small cities. Law enforcement typically does not attempt to lock down a city when a shooting or violent act occurs. Instead, police establish appropriate perimeters and secure specific buildings and sections of the city. Individuals within residential and office buildings are told to "shelter in place." This is the approach that campus police need to take with college campuses and the rest of the members of the campus community needs to be properly trained in such an approach.

Even without locking down a campus, the resources of most campus security departments will be stretched when perimeters are established and buildings or sections of campus are secured. It is for these reasons that campus police must develop partnerships and cooperative agreements with other agencies. Whether a campus has a security department or a licensed law enforcement agency, an important part of the preparedness phase will be the development of mutual aid agreements with city, county, and state police agencies. These agreements define the types of situations in which aid will be rendered, the level of response to be provided, and any compensation that is to be provided for these services. In addition to local law enforcement agencies, it is also important to establish lines of communication with area representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

In addition to significantly increasing an institution's response capabilities to incidents of campus violence, developing cooperative relationships with other agencies will also provide campus personnel with opportunities for enhanced training. Participating in joint exercises and drills is a valuable training tool that will help to ensure a coordinated response in the event of a real campus emergency. Further, participation in such training exercises may assist institutions in obtaining compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) – a nationwide template to coordinate governmental and non-governmental entities during domestic emergencies. State, territory, tribal, and local governments must comply with all NIMS requirements. Colleges and universities receiving federal preparedness grants or having law en-

forcement personnel who would play a direct role in emergency response are required to participate in NIMS training (FEMA, 2007). Additional information concerning NIMS and NIMS Training is available in the Resource section** of this document.

Communications Plan

Under the Clery Act, campus administrators have a legal duty to provide the campus community with a timely warning when they believe a situation poses a threat to students and/or employees. The two most difficult questions that must first be answered are: (a) when does a situation pose a threat; and (b) what is considered "timely"? In the aftermath of the Virginia Tech tragedy, there has been much debate about the concept of a "timely warning." Recent incidents at Delaware State, University of Chicago, and Louisiana State University have continued to fuel this debate.

Identifying the criteria that a campus will use to determine whether or not a situation poses a significant and imminent threat is something that administrators must define well in advance of an actual crisis situation. If such a warning is to be timely, there is typically not the opportunity to bring together a variety of stakeholders to evaluate the situation. Instead basic criteria should be identified that would trigger issuing such a warning. Then, authority for making the decision to issue such warning needs to be assigned within the institution. Such authority needs to be high enough within the institutional hierarchy to consider all of the institutional concerns, yet at an appropriate level to be operationally effective. For a large university campus with its own police agency this might be the Chief of Police, while at a smaller institution lacking a law enforcement component it might be the Dean of Students.

The manner in which such warnings are communicated to the campus community is also something which must be thought through in advance. In the past year, a considerable amount of attention has been devoted to text messaging systems. Yet campus administrators need to be careful not to be lulled into thinking that there is one magic solution for effectively communicating warnings to the campus community. Communication systems need to be multi-modal and can include mechanisms such as e-mail; websites; fax transmissions; radio and television broadcasts; public address systems; sirens and horns; reverse 911 systems; phone trees; and word-of-mouth in addition to text messaging. It is crucial that administrators understand both the benefits and limitations of each mechanism and build in redundancy in whatever system they choose for their campus. For example, although

text messaging has the benefit of delivering messages in a very short period of time, the system may be severely limited if the system only has accurate cell phone numbers for a fraction of the campus. Depending on the nature of the message, time of day, and circumstances surrounding the incident, some mechanisms may have advantages over others for communicating a warning in an effective and timely manner.

In addition to how the warning will be communicated, it is also essential to spend time planning what the warning will say. It is essential that warnings be clear and concise. In addition to notifying the campus community that a situation exists, communicated messages should offer constituents a suggested course of action, without creating a panic situation. Depending on the mechanism used to communicate the warning, there may be limitations in the content and length of the message that can be issued. Developing some templates for campus warnings appropriate for each mechanism in your communications system is an important task to be completed in the preparedness phase of the crisis management process.

Special Consideration in Mass Casualty Situations

Campus violence is always a difficult situation to deal with, but it is even more so when you are dealing with mass casualties. The communications issues and challenges increase exponentially. From identification of victims to notification of next of kin, Student Affairs professionals may play a key role in assisting emergency personnel and supporting the friends and family of those who are affected, directly and indirectly, by the incident. With this in mind, there are several special considerations concerning communications that we encourage Student Affairs professionals to prepare for in the event of a mass casualty incident.

One key consideration is communication with the family members of the individuals who may be affected by the incident. A successful strategy used by some institutions was to establish a “Family Room” on campus. This is a designated location on campus where family members of the individuals involved in the particular incident can gather with appropriate university personnel and receive information, assistance, and support. In selecting this location it is important that the room be easy to find for individuals who may not be familiar with campus. In addition, the room needs to be an area to which access can be easily controlled so that family members can interact with personnel in relative privacy and away from the media.

In mass casualty events, some institutions have found it helpful to assign a specific university staff member who is *not* a department head to each family. This individual serves as a liaison between the university and the family and a primary conduit for communication. This approach tends to personalize the university's response to the crisis and allows the institution to address individual family needs and concerns. Individuals assigned to these roles should be carefully selected and should receive specific training for this role. The family room may be staffed by family liaisons as well as counselors and clergy of several different denominations, if possible, to provide assistance and support for family members. Another possibility involves the local Red Cross chapter assuming primary or partial responsibility for handling the family response. Determining in advance what combination of resources is available to your campus is an important step in being prepared to respond appropriately.

Another key consideration is the university's information hotline or "rumor control center." While university operators and switchboards will be overwhelmed in many types of crisis events, the need to respond in a coordinated manner and provide accurate and informed information is significantly heightened in mass casualty situations. Family and parents will typically seek out information from offices and individuals with whom they are used to communicating such as orientation offices, parent programs, the Dean of Students and/or the Division of Student Affairs. Often in such situations, call volumes can overload traditional communication systems within buildings or whole segments of a campus. It is for this reason that an information hotline should be housed independent of the institution's emergency operations center. Identification of such communication centers and a toll-free telephone number provide the opportunity to communicate information to parents and family through orientation and newsletters well in advance of any crisis situation.

Case Example

The University of Florida created a wallet-size Emergency Notifications card that is distributed to student and family members at orientation. The card provides students and their families with the main university web address, a toll-free emergency hotline number, as well as local television and radio stations used to broadcast emergency announcements. An example of the card can be viewed at http://dso.ufl.edu/CRT/

Many campuses have established call centers in admissions or development offices. These facilities are well equipped to manage large call volume as well as to coordinate and share information within the unit. With advanced planning these call centers can be adapted quickly to serve as the information hotlines during a crisis. With some additional training, Student Affairs personnel may be ideal individuals to assist in staffing these centers.

Media

Few things generate the level of media attention that campus violence can attract. Regardless of whether the campus location is in a metropolitan or rural area, the satellite trucks, helicopters, and other mobile media units can descend in an unbelievably short period of time. It is for this reason that an important part of any communications plan needs to address the media. Some campuses may have specific personnel such as a University Relations Office charged with coordinating the institution's response to the media. Even if this is the case, there are a number of media issues with which Student Affairs professionals should be familiar.

The most significant issue is determining who will be your institutional spokesperson. Often this is the President, but it may also be a Vice President or a Director of University Relations. If the incident is primarily a student matter, then the senior Student Affairs officer might be designated as the primary spokesperson. Each of these options need to be explored during the preparedness phase, and a clear understanding of who will represent the university in what types of situations needs to be developed.

In addition to the primary institutional spokesperson, media personnel will want to speak to other individuals who can provide additional perspectives to a story. If these individuals can be provided to the media on the front end, it gives you the opportunity to select people whom you believe can best tell the institution's story rather than having the media identify these people on their own. Specifically who the media will be interested in talking to will vary depending on the situation, but some common spokespersons can be identified as you are developing your communications plan. Examples might include police or security personnel, housing personnel, activities staff, counseling staff and students. Media personnel will be extremely interested in getting student reactions to campus violence and institutional responses. Discussing who might serve as a spokesperson in times of crisis with key student leaders, such as the student body president and residence hall and Greek letter organization leaders, is an important part of crisis prepar-

edness. Once identified, all of the various spokespersons should be provided appropriate media training.

In addition to identifying spokespersons, it is important to determine appropriate areas in which media may operate. In some situations you may wish to designate a particular area as a press/media room. This could be a location in which you provide regular press briefings, and media personnel can congregate and prepare their stories. With regular and frequent press briefings, media personnel will want to stay close by so as not to miss any important information released by the university. In establishing such a press/media room, administrators will want to give consideration to where the emergency response center, family room, and other key offices are located so as to facilitate necessary communication and avoid interference or distractions. It is also important to identify media-free zones and set appropriate boundaries for the media so that members of the campus community are not constantly under the scrutiny of the cameras. The Family Room, residence hall facilities, dining halls, classrooms, and staff break rooms are typical areas that could be designated as media-free areas.

Academic Affairs & Faculty

Although sometimes overlooked in campus crisis management, faculty members are key constituents and need to be included in the planning process. A portion of new faculty orientation and on-going faculty development programs needs to be devoted to clarifying faculty roles, responsibilities, and expectations in crisis situations. For example, faculty members need to be instructed in what steps or actions they should take in the classroom during an active shooter situation. What are the best options for protecting themselves and their students in such situations?

As discussed previously in the prevention and mitigation phase, faculty members are often the first to identify students who are troubled or in distress. Specific information and resources should be provided to faculty concerning the identification of troubled and distressed students, who to contact, and how to make referrals.

Case Example

Staff at the University of Central Florida created a useful and popular resource called the “Faculty 911 Guide.” This resource is a red folder that serves as a handy reference guide for faculty and includes important phone numbers, a process flowchart, relevant University policies, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions concerning students in distress. A copy of the Guide can be downloaded at http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/Faculty%20911%20Guide/BinderFaculty911Combined.pdf

It is also important to request faculty input when developing crisis response procedures. For example, we have discussed the use of text messaging as part of our communications plan for issuing timely warnings. Yet it is not uncommon for faculty to request students to turn off and put away their cell phones during class. As Student Affairs professionals, we often recommend this approach as a best practice during tests and exams to reduce the likelihood of cheating. While this example reinforces the notion that warnings need to be delivered through multiple mechanisms, it also illustrates the importance of obtaining faculty perspectives on the plans and procedures being developed.

Faculty need to be brought into the crisis management process at all levels. Not only should their input be sought in the planning process, but they should also be a key component of communications plans. Careful consideration should be given as to how communication with them in times of crisis will take place and what messages need to be conveyed.

Training

Of all aspects of the preparedness phase, training is perhaps the most important component. While plans and protocols may be developed and well thought out, they are of little benefit if training is lacking. Team members need to be trained in detail on all plans and protocols and have a clear understanding of their particular roles and responsibilities in a crisis event. While lectures and discussions can be useful in training staff and faculty, the most effective way to prepare is to practice.

A table-top exercise can be a simple yet effective way for team members to practice the plan. In this process, team members are assembled and presented with a set of facts about a crisis event. Beginning with the team leader, each member of the team describes what actions or steps s/he would take. At the beginning of such an exercise, the facts are usually very basic and may prompt more questions than answers. Once everyone has shared his or her initial action steps, additional information is shared about the crisis event, and team members again describe additional actions or steps they would take. The process of gradually providing more information and having team members respond is typically repeated two or three times and attempts to mirror how a crisis unfolds. Once the process is completed, the team can debrief to identify what went well, as well as what aspects of the plan need further development. While it is not uncommon for such table-top exercises to be conducted related to natural disasters, such as hurricane or tornados, it is equally important for cam-

puses to use this training tool to prepare for potential types of campus violence including active shooter or terrorist threat scenarios.

Another effective means of team training is through simulation. A simulation is a full-scale reproduction or role play of a crisis event. Simulations require a significant amount of preplanning and preparation, as well as the involvement and cooperation of a variety of constituents across the campus and community. Typically, partnering can be done with local law enforcement agencies and/or other city or county agencies to participate in such exercises. Most agencies conduct a simulation exercise on at least an annual basis, including active shooter and terrorist threat scenarios.

Training should not be limited to your crisis management team members. It is important for the rest of the campus community to be familiar with the basics of the institution's crisis management plan and how to respond should an event occur. Each unit within the institution has a role and plays a part in how a campus responds in times of crisis. From the administrative assistant to the President, everyone should understand his or her part.

In Student Affairs there are a variety of units that will have significant roles in crisis events. Each of these units can carry out their own training sessions including table-top exercises. It is also important to be sure that students are included in these training sessions and exercises. Housing, Greek life, student activities, and recreational sports departments all rely on a large number of student staff who need appropriate training in crisis response.

Appropriate preparations to respond to an incident of campus violence require that all members of the campus community have a clear understanding of their roles and receive appropriate training. The President plays a key role in responding to campus crisis and having a solid understanding of how s/he will interact with the crisis management team and other units in the response effort is essential. Campus police/security needs the training, equipment, and resources to deal with active shooter and large-scale emergency scenarios. Likewise, each and every faculty member has a role to play in the response process and must be provided with the appropriate training and resources to respond should an incident take place. In addition to preparing personnel, campuses need well developed plans and protocols, particularly regarding communications and the media. Such plans need to be sure to address the difficult yet essential considerations that arise when there are mass casualties.

RESPONSE

Moving into response mode in the appropriate manner will be more easily accomplished with the preparation and planning already done. Responding to these high-stress situations will place enormous demands upon all levels of staff in Student Affairs and across the institution. Having practiced various scenarios will enable staff to be more comfortable with their various roles and to draw upon their experience and knowledge of resources. Responding in most situations will come naturally, and many incidents will demand rapid decision making and action.

Timely Notification

Tension exists between being timely in notifying the campus of a dangerous situation or an impending threat and getting the facts straight before putting out such an alert.

Students, their parents, and the general public, however, are demanding that we notify sooner of any danger on the college campus. Clearly, the emerging trend is early notification. While each situation is different and requires a unique response, we need to err on the side of sending a brief, factual message with as much information as possible and directing people to a website for more detailed updates. Another emerging trend is to have the message to the campus be crafted and sent out in the most timely way possible by the staff members who have access to the technology at the time of the day to complete the action. This will vary by campus and may be done through a variety of different mechanisms. Examples of such messages may include:

- "Shooting at library-please stay away from building. Check website for more information."
- "Tornado warning for Orange County. Shelter in place."

While a brief, factual message is appropriate for the initial notification, it is essential to follow up this message with additional and more detailed information as quickly as possible. When communicating with the campus community about a crisis event, administrators should not only explain what has taken place, but advise campus community members on what actions they should take. No single system should be relied upon for such communications. Instead, institutions should use multiple methods of notification *(see pg.24 for different methods)*.

Our responsibility in the response stage is to manage our communications as we prepare to supply our spokespersons with factual information; provide appropriate updates to families, the community, and the media in a timely way; and be as sensitive and caring as possible in all our communications. The sooner the most senior administrator can speak to the media, as well as the family members and victims involved, the better. In all cases, the senior Student Affairs officer should always be present with the president or other senior officer addressing the media.

The Student Affairs staff plays a critical role in responding to situations by providing a link between the threat assessment team and the student body. In responding to incidents of concern on campuses, the general practice of not involving parents has shifted as a result of October 2007 clarification** by the United States Department of Education that FERPA *does* allow officials to disclose information to parents in an emergency. The continuum has also moved to include sharing more information across campus administrative units on a "need-to-know" basis through a "threat assessment team," enabling senior administrative leaders to make decisions.

Student Affairs Team: In the emergency response plan, each Student Affairs staff member should know and understand his/her role in responding to an incident. In a major incident, particularly one of violence that would have wide impact on the campus, the Student Affairs leadership team should meet and talk as soon as possible (within a few hours) to assess the needs within the division, and in the student body. In addition, it is important to understand the emotional needs of the staff in the division.

In the age of instant communication, we in Student Affairs need to be much more comfortable with the pace of rapid response: decision making and communication in an era of on-demand information. We no longer have the luxury of taking hours or days to process every possible scenario before moving forward. We need to become more agile in our ability to move forward and have more confidence in ourselves and our colleagues even in the age of "talk-show criticism." We know we make reasonable decisions based on knowledge, experience, ethics, wisdom, laws, and policies.

Responding to the Needs of Students

One primary role of Student Affairs staff is to help manage the shock and pain of a tragic incident for affected individuals or groups. Our role is to pay attention to the psychological needs of everyone involved and

provide “mental health first aid” where necessary. We know from our experience with post-traumatic stress disorder on campus that people will exhibit varying types and degrees of reactions. Providing an array of options for community members seeking assistance around mental health issues is important.

Case Example

Grand Valley State University’s (GVSU) Counseling and Career Development Center offers Critical Incident Response Services to its campus in the aftermath of various types of crisis events. These services are based on Everly and Mitchell’s (1997) Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Model. CISM is a comprehensive and multi-modal system for crisis intervention. The beauty of this model is that staff and faculty at all levels can be trained to carry out the interventions and to serve on a critical incident response team. Periodic trainings are offered to colleges and universities. Readers can learn more about the approach and training opportunities at the following website for the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation: http://www.icisf.org/. Readers are also directed to GVSU’s Counseling and Career Development Center to learn more about its Critical Incident Response Services: http://www.gvsu.edu/counsel.

Many of us have agreements to assist another campus in an emergency. We should consider in advance the feasibility of immediate response to a significant tragedy that would require relocating some staff (housing, food, transportation). For counseling professionals, issues of practicing in another state may be an issue. However, we encourage consortium agreements to be worked out in advance by state or region of the country that can be activated immediately. Another source of support could be available from the Employee Assistance Program. This office may be able to redirect staff to serve the needs of students or other members of the campus community.

We should also review our relationships and agreements with local clergy and other religious organizations. For those public campuses without religious groups on campus, students and other community members may benefit from having the presence of faith-based organizations – in conjunction with our staff – in separate events and spaces throughout the response and recovery phases of an event .

International – Crisis Abroad

In this age of increased study abroad and personal travel, many of our students and faculty are participating in academic and personal experiences in other countries, which may lead to dangerous or violent situations while abroad. Student Affairs is often the point of contact to reach out to the student and family members involved and determine a course of action to assist in whatever ways are possible. It may be necessary for a representative of the college to travel immediately to the country to assess the situation. One or more staff members in the Dean of Students office should be prepared with proper passport and other information to immediately travel abroad.

The response phase of the crisis management process occurs when all the plans and training are put into action. Central to this phase is the importance of notifying the campus community in a timely manner that an incident has occurred and advising people on actions to take to protect themselves. While attention will be focused on responding to those who are directly involved in the incident, it is also important to address the needs of those indirectly impacted by the situation; this includes addressing the needs of staff as well as the students.

RECOVERY

The process of recovery from an issue of violence is long and complex. Many people will need various types of support to reach a "new normal." The campus community – and the micro community for those most affected – will be permanently changed by the experience.

Moving On

The Student Affairs staff needs to reach out to several other key groups in the aftermath of a serious incident on campus. Student leaders and student groups connected to the event need particular attention and perhaps coaching on how to interact with the media or other parties. Alumni must also be kept updated through their website, and some alumni may be useful in the response or recovery process, given their professional backgrounds. The college should consider soliciting their constructive involvement.

The timeliness of events to come together – realizing the symbolic nature of events – is critical to helping a community and individuals move through stages of grief. Memorials, vigils, and then the anniversaries of tragedies all must be thought of and planned for carefully. For example, by the opening of the fall semester 2007, Virginia Tech con-

structed a permanent memorial on the drill field to those who died They also sought to address the needs of incoming first-year students in the fall by providing a positive experience of their new life at college in spite of what happened the previous spring.

Psychological First-Aid

Attention should be given to the Student Affairs team, as well as counterparts from across campus, to deal with their own psychological/emotional trauma associated with any crisis event, but particularly campus violence. They should be encouraged to acknowledge their own emotions and obtain assistance, as well as learn how to support the staff/front-line people who have been pushed beyond their normal capacity. It may be necessary to draw upon significant resources in the community, such as victim advocates and other ongoing support groups.

Process/Learning from the Incident

Each situation provides opportunities for leaning. This can come from our own debriefing on campus, as well as from outside entities so that we can continue to improve our practice. Approaching these situations with transparency will enable everyone to move forward.

It will be important to continue to update information available to public/students, especially on the university website.

We all must pay attention to the differences in dealing with trauma. We all heal differently and on different schedules. Having a variety of ongoing support mechanisms and experiences in which people can participate will assist community members in finding what is right for themselves.

It is possible to take a tragic situation and turn it into an opportunity not to just rebuild what was there, but to create new traditions. It may be possible to build something better, or perhaps just different than what was part of the campus culture before.

In the aftermath of the tragedy at Virginia Tech, new staff members were added in Student Affairs, and a new office was created to assist with the ongoing recovery process. Most campuses will not need to create a new office after a violent incident, but the idea of assigning the responsibility of recovery to one or more staff people full time is a helpful way to move forward.

Designate recovery as part of a crisis management plan. The phases of the recovery process need to start back in the response mode so that people are thinking in parallel: “How will this look in a month or several months from now?” The counseling staff should be included in the recovery stage, both in terms of providing direct support and processing what is needed for others and themselves.

One of the most difficult parts of moving forward is to figure out how to balance remembering with living the daily life of a college campus that is filled with the opportunity for learning, fun, celebration, and sports. Everyone recovers in his or her own time and way. Many students will want to go back to their “normal” lives of going to class, attending games, being involved in campus groups, or just hanging out off campus. Others will remain fixed in the event or remembering people they have lost. It is our responsibility to care for all of these students and think about the specific needs they all might have, being sensitive to issues of space, timing of events, finishing classes, the need for information, etc. We must remember to address and include all constituents in our recovery plan (alumni, community members, faculty, staff, parents, etc.).

Debriefing

It is important to take time to review response activities in an open and non-judgmental way during post-crisis debriefings. Identifying what worked and what did not work needs to occur during these debriefings, and the information should be used to improve the protocols put into place for future incidents.

During the recovery phase of the crisis management process, the campus begins the long and difficult process of healing. Student Affairs plays a key role in helping and supporting students through this complex process. By providing psychological first aid, we help students to normalize their feelings and emotions as well as connect those who need additional assistance with appropriate campus resources. The recovery phase is also a time for us to review our response and identify what worked well and what needs improvement.

CONCLUSION

Incidents of violence on college campuses are not new. What is new is the immediacy of the visual and emotional impact of violent acts due to the media. Expectations have also changed from parents, legislative leaders, and society in general so that we now have more responsibility to care for our students and provide for their safety on our cam-

puses. Due to the expansion of the number of students on college campuses in the past few decades and the types of students who attend college, our jobs have become more challenging. The intersection of laws and policies such as ADA, HIPAA, FERPA, and our professional standards of practice have also caused confusion and concern. We have learned much, however, from the past few years of difficult situations on our campuses. Our emerging trends of professional practice in Student Affairs indicate that it will take a coalition of campus leaders on each campus to work through the various issues presented here and in the other reports of the past year. We have been leading in the planning for, responding to, and recovering from acts of violence on our college campuses. We have models, such as those referenced in this paper, that we can look to as examples in determining our standards of practice. And we have our experience through our own campus lessons and those of our colleagues to draw upon to continue to grow in our professional practice.

Our students and campuses are resilient. Each and every tragic situation has a learning experience that comes with it. The school year is built upon a cycle of movement from fall to winter to spring to summer, a positive movement forward. Each fall starts a new academic year with new students joining our ranks with their hopes and fears, and we start the cycle all over again. In any given year, we deal with thousands of successful, happy, and positive students for every one experiencing severe difficulty or in major distress. It is our privilege to work with both, and that is why we work in Student Affairs.

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Appendix A: Campus Violence Working Group Members

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University of Florida

Appendix B: Resources

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health. Bazelon. <www.bazelon.org>.

The homepage for the Bazelon Center for Mental Health is an advocacy group and resource for advancing community membership, promoting self determination and preserving the rights of those with mental health challenges.

Best Practices for Making College Campuses Safe. Edworkforce. <www.edworkforce.house.gov/hearings/fc051507.shtml>.

Campus Community Emergency Response Team Training. C-Cert.MSU. <www.c-cert.msu.edu>.

Information about the Campus Community Emergency Response train-the-trainer program for colleges and universities sponsored by the United States Department of Homeland security and developed by the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University.

Campus Violence. ACHA. <http://acha.org/infor resources/Campus Violence.pdf>.

Complying with the Clery Act. Security on Campus. <www.securityoncampus.org/schools/cleryact>.

An overview of the Jeanne Clery Act and information/ guidelines for campus compliance.

Criminal Offender Record Checks. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health. <www.mass.gov/dph/topics/cori2/reg105cmr950.htm>

CORI is a law is specific to Massachusetts regarding criminal record checks.

Faculty 911 Guide. University of Central Florida. <www.cohpa.ucf.edu/FacultyandStaff.htm>

A resource provided to faculty containing important phone numbers, a process flow chart, questions and answers concerning identifying and referring students and university policies.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Ed. <www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa>.

Information about the Family Education and Privacy Act, including links to questions about compliance and a variety of online resources.

Garrett, M.T., Garrett, J. T., Brotherton, D. (March 2001). Inner circle/outer circles: a group technique based on Native American healing circles. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, *26*(1), p17-30.

An article that explores healing circles.

Greenberg, S. F. (2007). Active Shooters on College Campuses: Conflicting Advice, Roles of the Individuals and First Responder, and the Need to Maintain Perspective. Editorial. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, s57-s61.

Article that discusses prevention of shooters on campus, what to do in the instance of a shooting, strategies for coping and different scenarios and dynamics for consideration.

The Handbook for Campus Crime Reporting. Security on Campus. <www.securityoncampus.org/schools/cleryact/handbook.pdf>.

A guidebook defining the processes for campus crime reporting and compliance.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). United States Department of Health and Human Services. <www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa>.

Home page for the Department of Health and Human Services which provides a variety of information relating to the details of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5. White House. <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030228-9.html>.

Memorandum from the White House which defines the establishment of a comprehensive national incident management system to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents.

Infofacts Resources: Interpersonal Violence and Alcohol and Other Drug Use. United States Department of Education. <www.higheredcenter.org/pubs/factsheets/fact_sheet4.html>

A report on an assessment of those most affected by various types of interpersonal violence and the identification of risk factors in the campus environment that foster or perpetuate violence, such as alcohol use, fraternity hazing practices, and intolerance of individual differences.

Investigation of April 16, 2007 Critical Incident At Virginia Tech. Virginia Office of the Inspector General For Mental Health, Mental Retardation & Substance Abuse Services. <www.oig.virginia.gov/documents/VATechRpt-140.pdf.>.

Report from the Inspector General for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for Virginia on the April 16, 2007 incident.

Leadership Exchange. (2008). 5(4).

- Threat Assessment on the College Campus, by Dewey Cornell
- Identifying and Responding to Students with Mental Health Needs, by Gregory T. Eells
- Managing the Media, by Nancy Grund
- Liabilities Column
- Public Policy Column
- Websites to Watch Column

National Association of College and University Attorneys FERPA Guidance and FERPA Resources. NACUA. <www.nacua.org/documents/ferpa1.pdf>.

Resources and guidance on FERPA from the National Association of College and University Attorneys.

National Incident Management System. FEMA. <www.fema.gov/emergency/nims>.

The home page of the FEMA National Integration Center for National Incident Management Systems. The site provides a variety of resources and links. NIMS benefits include a unified approach to incident management; standard command and management structures; and emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management.

None of Our Business. Wellstone. <www.wellstone.org/swinstitute/article_detail.aspx?itemID=4542&catID+3801>.

Noddings, N. (1995). Teaching themes of care. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *76*(9), 675. Retrieved January 21, 2008, from Academic One-File via Gale: <http://find.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>

A resource that explains the concept of caring communities.

The numbers count: Mental disorders in America. NIMH.NIH. <www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-numbers-count-mental-disorders-in-america.shtml>.

A comprehensive website detailing the number and nature of mental disorders in America.

Pavela, G. (2007). School shooting copycats. *The Pavela Report,* 10-12-07, <http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dfdpvzp9_388djps6c>

Insights and information about school shootings post Columbine. This article provides information about patterns of behavior as well as pertinent research.

Pavela, G. (2007). Focus on Columbine. *The Pavela Report,* 12-14-07, <http://docs.google.com/View?docid=dfdpvzp9_474cpszg3fp>

A follow-up article on the earlier *School Shooting Copycats* by Dr. Pavela. This article examines the value of threat assessment and factors that should be high on the list for intervention and evaluation.

Pavela, G. (2007). Memorandum to the faculty: Teaching troubled students after the Virginia Tech shootings. *Synfax Weekly Report*, Week of May 14, 2007, Report Number 07.17: Safety and Security.

Pollack, W. S. (2004). Male adolescent rites of passage: Positive visions of multiple developmental pathways. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences,* 1036: 141-150.

An article focusing on the development of males.

Report From the National Summit on Campus Public Safety. (2004). Cops. <www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/NationalSummitonCampusPublicSafety.pdf>.

Executive summary of the National Summit on Campus Public Safety held in 2004. The focus of the report is on

collaboration, operating a safe campus and strengthening operations and administrative functions that relate to campus safety.

Securing Your Campus. Paper-Clip. <www.paper-clip.com>.

A white paper designed to provide ideas and practical suggestions for creating and maintaining an effective emergency response.

Supporting Students: A Model Policy for Colleges and Universities. Bazelon. <www.bazelon.org/pdf/SupportingStudents.pdf>.

An article focusing on mental health issues.

Twelmlow, S. W., Fongay, P., and Sacco, F. C. (2004). The role of the bystander in the social architecture of bullying and violence in schools and communities. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences,* 1036: 215-232.

An article focusing on bullying and school violence.

ULifeline. Ulifeline. <www.ulifeline.com>.

An online resource center for college student mental health and information about emotional well being.

UNCG Cares. University of North Carolina at Greensboro. <http://deanofstudents.uncg.edu/uncgcares/>.

A program that exemplifies Student Affairs taking the lead in creating a caring campus community.

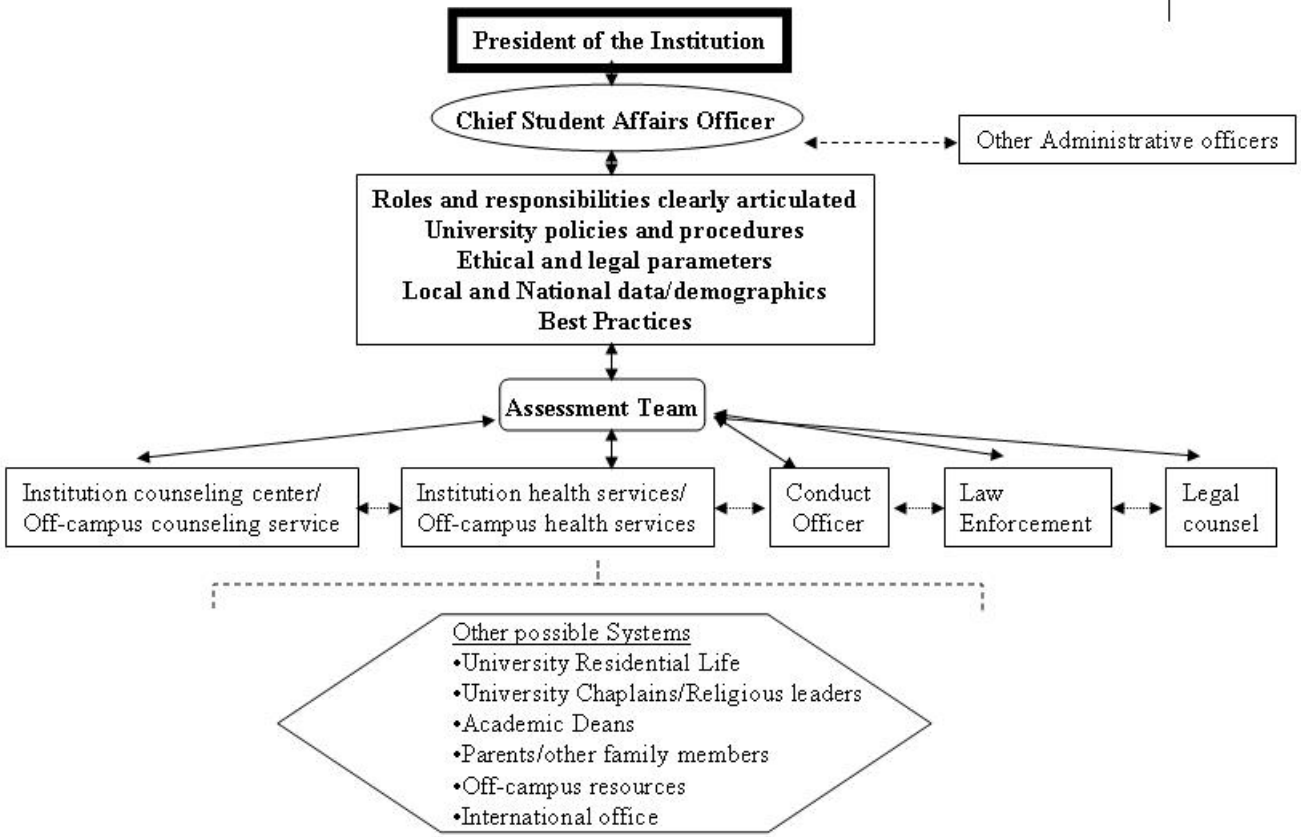
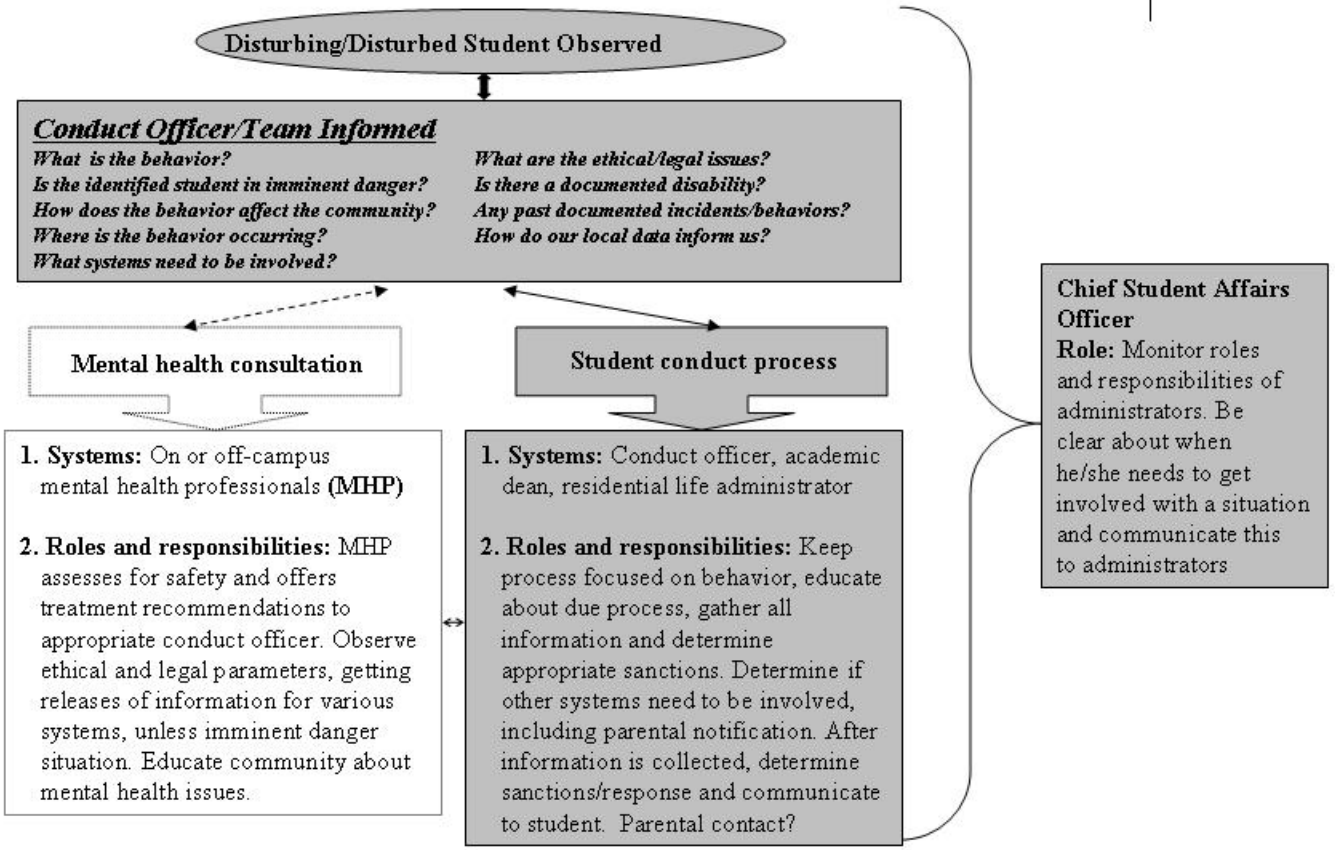
United States Department of Education. Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. (2007). *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*. Retrieved January 12, 2008, from <www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>.

Virginia Tech Report. Virginia Governor. <www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techPanelReport.cfm>.

Detailed full report from the Virginia Tech Review Panel of the Virginia Tech tragedy. Includes chronology of events, responses and summaries as well as a variety of supplementary documents.

Appendix C: Charts from Dunkle, Hollingsworth, Barr, Crady and Duncan Workshop (2007)

Team Approach: Managing Disturbed and Disturbing Students



Flow Chart for Managing Disturbing/Disturbed Students