

Higher Education Crises

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## HIGHER EDUCATION CRISES

Although this article deals with crisis management in higher education, the same protocols and training are needed in K-12 schools around the globe. Crisis situations such as school shootings, weather disasters, bomb threats, rape, deaths, drugs and abuse are just some of issues that school leaders are facing. It is detrimental that all professionals be adequately trained to handle such situations.

The authors stated that the definition of campus crises includes three levels – disasters, crises and critical incidents. Disasters are situations that effect the community as well as the school. This could be a tornado, terrorist attack, etc. Crises are situations that cause disruption to the whole campus such as lock down because a student is suspected of having drugs on campus. Critical incidents are events that only effect a smaller area of the campus. This could be a fight breaking out, a student having a seizure, etc.

In order to properly handle the above-mentioned situations, professionals need to receive effective, quality training. However, some of the institutions run into problems such as limited funding and resources. In this case, safety committees should be formed. These members should receive training. They should then hold professional development sessions to share their knowledge with the rest of the school's staff. Practice drills should be implemented as well as a crisis plan placed in every classroom. There should also be someone appointed to talk with media. Usually this would be the college president or the school superintendent.

Finally, it's not **if** one of these events will happen, it's **when** one of these events will happen. We must be adequately prepared to deal with all issues. Preparation with a great plan can save lives. The authors concluded their article by stating that professional experience and guidance from a seasoned administrator generally results in a staff that is much more competent and as ready as they can be when faced with dire situations.

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Because of the uncertainty of crisis situations in schools, I feel that we all need to be properly trained. Students and staff should feel safe in their schools. It is up to us as educators to do our best to protect our greatest value: our students. I would like to research up-to-date safety measures for handling tragic events. For example, at first, we were told if an intruder was to come on campus that we'd need to go into lockdown, turn lights and computers off, and hide. It made it easy for the intruder to come in the corner we were at and start firing away. Now, we are told to do those things and to have something to throw. So, I tell my students we will throw chairs. I just feel like we learn from past mistakes and we should constantly be looking for new methods to ensure our safety.

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## Reference:

Holzweiss, P. pholzweiss@shsu. ed., & Walker, D. (2018). Higher Education Crises: Training New Professionals for Crisis Management. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 36(1), 124–135. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uwa.edu/10.1353/csaj.2018.0008>