

Nurse's Role in Preparing For a Disaster
NURS 3116
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I am employed by Upper Arlington City Schools. The district has a Safety Audit Summary Report and Recommendations booklet/url site that was last updated June 2018. This informational website outlines the security measures, training and preparedness plans that are implemented in all Upper Arlington schools. **Include URL or attachment of Local disaster plan:** The Safety and Security website is <https://www.uaschools.org/SafetyandSecurity.aspx>. From this page, on the bottom left, is the link to the Safety Audit Summary Report and Recommendations site <https://www.uaschools.org/Downloads/06-12-18%20UA%20Safety%20audit%20report4.pdf>.

Describe location of plan and what has been done in the past year regarding familiarizing staff with plan, updating, training, practice, review of plan and actual implementation of plan.

This plan is available to all staff in each Upper Arlington school. At Tremont Elementary School (where I work) each staff member is given a red plastic folder detailing fire escape routes/exits, tornado drill locations, lockdown level information and detailed evacuation routes and seating assignments once we reach our evacuation site (St. Agatha Catholic School gymnasium). In the clinic, this information is located in the top middle desk drawer. We also include this vital information in our 'Substitute Folder.' In regards to what has been done in the past year regarding familiarizing staff with plan, updating, training, practice, review of the plan and actual implementation of plan consists of monthly fire drills, quarterly tornado drills, periodic level 1, 2 and 3 lockdown drills, and most recently, on October 1st, our elementary school (in conjunction with Upper Arlington Police and Fire Division) performed a full evacuation of the building which took us to St. Agatha Catholic School gymnasium. This evacuation drill was wonderful practice for students and staff so we all know where to go, how to communicate with each other and familiarize ourselves with the safety plan.

Write a list of the steps the nurse needs to take to assure that all is in preparation for a disaster affecting the school health community. Note what is already in place and when and what the school nurses needs to do each year.

School nurses are leaders in caring for students, educating staff and planning for emergency events and multiple casualty incidents. School nurses are first responders, providing emergency management as well as long term support, and providing physical and emotional first aid to students and staff (Selekman, 2019). "Utilizing their expertise

in assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation, school nurses provide valuable insights for the four phases of school campus/district emergency management: Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery” (NASN, 2019).

1. **Prevention/Mitigation:** School nurses should educate students and staff about recognizing and reporting suspicious behaviors, implement and maintain effective immunization program for students and staff, and improve security measures to control access to school facilities (Selekman, 2019).

These steps are currently being implemented in my school. The staff and students are reminded regularly to be cognizant of any unusual or suspicious behavior. The district has implemented a school building check-in system for visitors that enhances the safety and security of our staff and students. Each of our 5 elementary schools have a part-time School Resource Officer, our 2 middle schools each have a full-time RSO and our high school has 2 full-time RSOs.

2. **Preparedness:** The school nurse helps to establish standard emergency response plans and practice skills, drills and other exercises to evaluate response capabilities. Also, the school nurse is instrumental in identifying unique emergency preparedness needs for children with special healthcare needs as well as specific equipment and supplies that may be needed in an emergency and first aid (Selekman, 2019).

At Tremont Elementary School, the nurse is an integral part of helping to establish emergency plans and drills. We meet with the principals, front office staff and custodians to help ensure our plans are up-to-date and change things as needed (we are under-going a large school renovation so we meet monthly to update evacuation/emergency escape routes as our building changes). We (the school nurse and myself) have a small, rolling suitcase that we take with us for an evacuation or emergency that contains all of our emergency medical supplies (water, snacks, first-aid kit, epi-pen and inhaler, trash bags, tissues, food allergy and asthma care plans, diabetic supplies and insulin, seizure meds, walkie-talkie, cell phone, ipad with emergency medical forms) and we also take a wheelchair and AED for evacuations. We also have periodic lockdown drills. A Level 1 lockdown is when there is a threat outside of the school. Exterior doors are locked and access into the school is restricted. It is a regular school day with the exception that no one goes outside. Our Level 2 Lockdown is when there is a threat inside the school. Classrooms are locked and students stay inside the class. Attendance is taken to account for all students. A Level 3 Lockdown is when there is imminent life-threatening danger (such as an active shooter). Classrooms are locked and secured. Begin appropriate lockdown enhancements (barricade, rapid evacuation, etc). If staying in the classroom- barricade, turn off lights, stay quiet and out of site.

3. **Response:** The school nurse is knowledgeable about their role in responding to an emergency, which may include triage, training of first-aid response teams, and direct physical and mental health care for all victims in an emergency. The school nurse also serves a vital role in reuniting families during and after a crisis (Selekman, 2019).

The school nurse at Tremont and myself are comfortable and knowledgeable about our role in responding to an emergency. I have been involved in a school situation where a bomb-threat was called in and our school had to evacuate for several hours. I learned a lot from that incident about how vital a role the school nurse plays in responding to several student and staff needs at once and helping the students reunite with their families after the situation was over.

4. **Recovery:** The school nurse assists students, parents and school personnel after a disaster. The SN provides direct support and serves as a liaison between community resources and those in need. This includes both short and long term recovery and may include maintenance of student and staff health status (which includes psychological and mental health) (Selekman, 2019).

Obviously, I hope to never be a part of a devastating catastrophic school event, but if I am, I have been trained to assist staff, students, parents and the community to give them the support they need to recover.

Analyze the plan's consistency with state requirements for disaster plans. Summarize with recommendations. Include any relevant literature guiding the use, review and implementation of disaster plans that impact school health services.

“A safety plan is a comprehensive all-hazards plan that takes into account all threats and hazards for a particular school. The plan must address ways the administrator will address those threats and a protocol for responding to those threats. An emergency sheet contains information so first responders can reach you and other people within your organization during an emergency, while the signature page identifies stakeholder involvement. Ohio Revised Code 3313.536 requires the Administrator of each facility in the state of Ohio that provides educational services to children and is subject to regulation by the Ohio Department of Education to submit an emergency management plan. Other regulations are also in place including the requirement to conduct an annual review and exercise of the plan. The statute can be found here:

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3313.536>. Ohio schools submit school safety plans via a secure online SAFE portal to help first responders in case of an emergency. State experts with Ohio Homeland Security review the safety plan information submitted and provide guidance to help schools implement best practices and improve their plans. Additionally, the **statute requires schools to review their plans each year and**

conduct emergency training drills so students and teachers can practice what to do in the case of a real emergency” (Safer Schools Ohio, 2019). Upper Arlington City Schools is in compliance with the Ohio requirements for disaster plans. The Safer Schools Ohio website provides relevant literature guiding the use, review and implementation of disaster plans that impact school health services for Ohio all schools.

RESOURCES:

NASN (2019). Emergency Preparedness. Retrieved from:
<https://www.nasn.org/advocacy/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-emergency-preparedness>

Selekman, J., Shannon, and Yonkaitis (Eds.) (2019). School nursing, a comprehensive text, 3rd ed. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co.

Safer Schools Ohio (2019). School Safety Plans. Retrieved from:
https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/school_safety_plans.

Upper Arlington City Schools (2019). Safety and Security. Retrieved from:
<https://www.uaschools.org/SafetyandSecurity.aspx>