Kramer and Landolt’s 2011 article provided a summary of several key practices in early trauma response for children and adolescents. The authors gleaned their information from an international literature review, which included an analysis of seven studies examining early interventions for trauma exposed youth. These seven studies were conducted across several continents: four in Europe, two in Australia, and one in the United States. Among the key practices highlighted in this article, the authors encouraged early intervention implemented over several sessions that include the following components: engaging in a screening process, providing age-appropriate psychoeducation, teaching individual coping skills, and parental involvement. Each of these practices falls among an abundance of related practices outlined in the PREPaRE curriculum (Brock et. al., 2009). Key findings related to these components are summarized next.

**Screening for Traumatic Stress**
Kramer and Landolt’s (2011) analysis revealed that early intervention is likely to be most successful when it is conducted in a “stepped” (i.e., tiered) manner, through which a screener is used to identify and intervene with students at highest risk for showing long-term post-traumatic stress symptoms. PREPaRE utilizes a similar process, termed psychological triage, to evaluate psychological trauma and differentiate between student needs. As well, the PREPaRE workshops include a review of several screening options that would be appropriate during this psychological triage process. For an in depth discussion of evaluating psychological trauma and practicing psychological triage, see Brock et. al. (2009) pages 127-170.

**Psychoeducation**
The authors also emphasized the use of age-appropriate psychoeducation as a platform for talking to students about the trauma. In the studies reviewed, psychoeducation included a combination of “debriefing” sessions and providing students and families with written psycho-educational information regarding coping strategies. Kramer and Landolt (2011) also noted that early crisis intervention should include some form of trauma re-construction or narrative, though they were
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unsure of the extent to which a trauma narrative should be included in an early intervention. In
the PREPaRE curriculum, adults are encouraged to guide students in sharing their crisis
experiences. In this way, they highlight shared experiences among students and answer student
questions without unnecessarily traumatizing them. Further, PREPaRE encourages similarly
targeted classroom-based crisis interventions to be comprised of homogenous members “in
terms of developmental level and degree of crisis exposure, experiences, and impact” (Brock et.

Teaching Coping Skills
An additional key practice outlined by Kramer and Landolt involved teaching individual coping
skills as part of the early crisis intervention process. While the types of coping skills taught
differed across the studies reviewed, the authors determined that a provision for some type of
individual coping skills training was beneficial for most students. Similarly, the PREPaRE
curriculum takes into consideration Maslow’s hierarchy of needs when providing care
immediately following a traumatic event. The hierarchy reminds us that those affected by trauma
must have their primary needs met first (e.g., food, water, shelter) before moving onto
secondary or psychological needs. Ultimately, PREPaRE outlines various levels of support to
encourage students to return to routine as soon as possible following a tragedy, among other
useful coping strategies (Brock et. al, 2009, p. 197). This process ensures that secondary needs
of safety and security are addressed.

Parental Involvement and Intervention Length
There are two final practices revealed through Kramer and Landolt’s literature review as
beneficial: Early intervention should include parental involvement and should occur across
several sessions. On these final two key points, PREPaRE is less clear. The PREPaRE
curriculum encourages parents to be reunited with students as soon as possible after a
traumatic event (Brock et. al., 2009, pp. 120-121), provides provisions for caregiver training
(pp. 188-192), discusses obtaining parent permission (p. 230), and addresses parent training for
students receiving psychotherapeutic support (pp. 248), but does not discuss parent
involvement as part of direct school-based interventions with students. Conversely, Kramer and
Landolt (2011) described a variety of parental involvement models, including concurrent
involvement of parents and students in intervention sessions. Regarding the number of sessions
that are beneficial to students, Kramer and Landolt’s (2011) review examined interventions
involving one to four sessions. Brock et. al. (2009) discussed that follow-up services should be
provided as needed. Based on information in these two resources, the role of parental
involvement and number of sessions in positively impacting traumatized students should be
examined more closely in the future.

Conclusion
Kramer and Landolt analyzed trauma interventions for children and adolescents, as researched
in seven separate studies conducted across three continents. The findings closely reflect the
best-practice intervention recommendations found in the PREPaRE curriculum, adding to the
evidence-base of PREPaRE as a school-based crisis prevention and intervention approach.
Additional research on the inclusion of parents in school-based interventions and the optimal
number of intervention sessions included may be warranted.

References

School crisis prevention and intervention: The PREPaRE model. Bethesda, MD:
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European Journal of Psychotraumatology. DOI: 10.3402/ejpt.v2i0.7858
Important Trainer Information

⇒ **Pre– and Post-Tests.** Read over each of the pre- and post-test questions and answers before you give your next workshop. The pre– and post-test with answers can be found on your trainer CD in the folder titled “Pre-Post Test-Evaluations-Scantrons.” Write the specific question and correct answer on the corresponding slide/pages in your presenter notes. Thus, when you teach the concept you are sure to be covering the information assessed on the pre– and post-test. Look for the icon included at left.

⇒ **NEW! Overview PowerPoint of PREPaRE for Administrators.** A very short, 10-15 minute “Administrator Overview PowerPoint” has been uploaded to the Trainer Community. This is a brief overview of the PREPaRE curriculum and the presenter notes have been provided for you. You can use this to gather stakeholder support.

⇒ **Order training materials well in advance.** We have seen a large increase in the amount of PREPaRE workshops being conducted over the past 4 months. Kudos to all of you! Please remember to have the Sponsor order the materials at least 4 weeks in advance otherwise orders cannot be guaranteed. We are seeing an increase in orders that are occurring within 2–3 weeks of training and it is creating difficulties in processing the orders. Contact Molly Drake at mdrake@naspweb.org or prepare@naspweb.org with questions regarding ordering.

⇒ **Add your Trainer Code on every Scantron form.** A reminder that each trainer who conducts a workshop, will now be assigned a Trainer Code. You should have received this with your trainer welcome e-mail or after you renewed your trainer status. You will use this Trainer Code for every PREPaRE workshop you conduct from this point forward. Please e-mail Molly Drake, mdrake@naspweb.org, if you have not yet received a Trainer Code. The Scantron forms have also been updated with the title “Trainer Code” above the column where trainer code bubbles are filled in.

⇒ **Updated Scantron forms are now available.** Go to the PREPaRE trainers area on-line for the sample Scantrons that can be shown and demonstrated at all PREPaRE workshops. www.nasponline.org/prepare/trainersarea/materials.aspx.

**Website Resources for PREPaRE Trainers**

There are three websites related to PREPaRE that trainers need to be aware of and utilizing:

⇒ **PREPaRE Main Webpage:** [http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/index.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/index.aspx) - This website contains a plethora of info on the PREPaRE curriculum—workshop descriptions, upcoming workshops, database of local PREPaRE trainers, brochure, program evaluation data, overview and talking points documents, FAQs, etc.

⇒ **PREPaRE Trainer Website:** [http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/trainersarea/index.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/trainersarea/index.aspx) “Hidden website” but link accessible from the PREPaRE main website—lower right hand corner there is a blue box that titled “PREPaRE Trainers” with wording “Check out the PREPaRE Trainers Area for information, additional resources, and updates.” This site includes the WS1 video, archived newsletters, updated Scantron directions, and sample forms to show on screen as participants complete Scantron, etc.). This website is critical as this is where updated documents are posted.

⇒ **PREPaRE Trainer Community:** [http://communities.nasponline.org/Home/](http://communities.nasponline.org/Home/) It is a requirement for PREPaRE Trainers to join. If you have not already done so, follow the directions provided on page 5 of this newsletter. This is the interactive website for Trainer to post questions, resources, and share ideas.
End-of-Year Examination of Crisis Response

By Ben Fernandez
PREPaRE Workgroup Member
Loudoun County Public Schools

One of the key features of PREPaRE is the Examination of effectiveness (Brock, et al., 2009). Annually, we review our crisis intervention team manual and the performance of our teams in order to make our crisis teams stronger, more efficient, and more effective. Generally, we review after each individual response and at the end of the school year as a whole. Fortunately, we do not have to activate our crisis teams every day, but our response teams are utilized throughout the school year. The challenge is to make sure we do not allow our crisis program to become a low priority. This approach helps to make sure that our crisis teams continue to be effective and mental health supports are recognized as important to the school environment.

As the school year winds down, I begin to reflect and review reports of our team responses from our previous year. I start with a review of our crisis intervention team’s mission statement. I find that reviewing our mission statement and comparing it to our teams’ responses can help answer the big picture question, “Are we being true to our own standards?” Starting here helps us determine if we are striving to support our students, staff, and families, or if we have fallen into a state of complacency. As I sort through all the information, I look for evidence of how our teams support the needs of the school and examples of team leaders and members going above and beyond. Not only are these examples highlighted, but examined to see what we can learn to further improve our practice.

Reviewing the reports, I am generally looking for three things: What went well? What was a challenge? How/what do we need to improve for the next response? These “lessons learned” situations can be rich with information on how to improve crisis response and future prevention efforts. Some of the challenges our teams have faced tended to be related to understanding how best to respond to cultural reactions to a crisis situation, collaborating with other professionals in and outside the schools, high profile crisis situations, and effective team communication and deployment. Again, looking at these situations and identifying the lessons learned will help our teams grow and be better equipped for future challenges. This analysis also informs our professional development offerings and what areas of our team manual we need to update.

School crisis and safety plans require regular review to meet the changing needs of the school community. At the end of every school year and through the summer, we review our crisis team performance and crisis team manual. Examining multiple sources of data related to our crisis team performance allows us to improve our teams from year to year. Not only is it important for improving program outcomes, but it is important to keep mental health and psychological safety at the forefront of a district’s safe and supportive school environment.

Reference

Stay Informed!
Join the PREPaRE Trainer Community

Follow these simple steps:

⇒ **Log in.** Go to www.nasponline.org and click on “Communities” on the bottom of the left menu bar. You will be prompted to log in, if you aren’t logged in already. If you are a NASP member, you will use the same username and password. If you are not a NASP member, sign up at www.nasponline.org and log in using your username and password. If you are a member or have signed up on the website previously and do not know your username and password, please contact Molly Drake at mdrake@naspweb.org or prepare@naspweb.org.

⇒ **Update your profile.** In the top right hand corner box of the Community site, click on “Profile” to fill in your profile and upload a photo so that other members will know more about you.

⇒ **Select e-mail notification status.** Because you have been auto-subscribed to the PREPaRE Trainers’ Community, your e-mail notification has been set to daily digest—meaning you will receive an e-mail message with each thread posted that day, once a day. You can change this by going to My Discussions across the top, and then to My Subscriptions. If you want to respond to e-mails directly from your inbox, without returning to the Community site, select the mobile/PDA option.

⇒ **Join a discussion.** Hover over the “Discussions” tab on the top navigation bar and select PREPaRE Trainers in order to read and join in discussions in this community. To join an ongoing discussion, click on Reply to Discussion in the left toolbar.

⇒ **Post a message.** Hover over the “Discussions” tab on the top navigation bar and click on “Post a Message.” Be sure to select PREPaRE Trainers in order to post your message to this community.

⇒ **Upload a document.** Hover over “Communities” and select My Communities. Scroll to PREPaRE Trainers and click on View the Library to the right. To open the folders, click on the text, Trainer Uploads, and then New to the right. This will allow you to upload resource documents you think will be of interest to fellow trainers.

⇒ **Write a blog.** Hover over the “Blogs” tab and select “Create New Blog.” Don’t forget to select the PREPaRE Trainers when asked with which community to associate your blog. Blogs are not private to the PREPaRE Trainer Community. Please be aware that all members of the Online Communities will have access to your blog entries.

⇒ **NASP members can also join other communities.** Join the NASP Member Exchange, the Crisis Interest Group community, or any open member community that interests you.