



Huddle Up! for Effective Communication

Sports teams use the huddle to quickly, and discreetly, share information and strategize. Counselors and school psychologists in DoDEA are now using the same technique for similar results. At Fort Campbell High School in Kentucky, psychologist and crisis team leader Nancy Beale, Ph.D., gathers her team for a weekly crisis management huddle. By establishing objectives and moving quickly through a prepared agenda, she ensures all team members have the information they need to perform their respective duties. This weekly huddle allows the team to update one another on progress and new issues. Dr. Beale explained that they “discuss current trends and needs, and brainstorm ways to address those needs.”

At one recent meeting, counselor Martha Speake described an excellent seminar that the counselors had attended on grief and loss. Assistant Principal Jacquelyn Knox asked her to share a summary of the seminar at the upcoming faculty meeting. “That way we’ll share the knowledge with the entire staff,” Ms. Knox observed. The Crisis Management Team then put their heads together and reviewed the status of students who might be indicating through actions or behavior that they needed support.



The football team at Fort Campbell High School “huddles up.”

Each team member brings a unique perspective to the huddle. Participation by administrators allowed the team to make decisions. Counselors and the school psychologist contributed the skills and experience to identify appropriate actions and “divvy up” the work. With only a handful of people in the room, including the nurse and school resource officer, the team shared the latest intelligence from personal observations or conversations with classroom teachers. In less than an hour, the team ensured they were adequately supporting their student population.

The U.S. Department of Education recommends this approach in the guides *Early Warning*, *Timely Response* and *Safeguarding Our Children*. Dr. Beale, who is also a DoDEA parent and has seen her husband deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, notes that the Crisis Management Team understands the unique needs of DoDEA students. Timely and effective communication helps the team match these needs with assistance. Dr. Beale concluded, “These weekly huddles let us utilize our resources better through regular communication.” ■

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Deployment Stress Busters: Learning to Accept Assistance

This third and final “Stress Busters” article describes how to alleviate one salient source of psychological stress during deployments: not having enough time to get everything done. A powerful time management tool available to many parents and sponsors is the assistance offered by friends and neighbors.

Accepting help is not easy, especially for military spouses who are used to being self-reliant. The twin secrets to reducing deployment stress by accepting help are to divide the mountain of chores into discrete “chunks” or tasks, and to learn to accept help graciously. Spouses who have survived deployment offer the following examples of how to let the community help:

- 1.) **Commissary** – Keep a list of needed items by the phone. People love to feel helpful, and by saying, “I need milk,” you give them a chance to contribute.
- 2.) **Household Chores** – One of the hallmarks of deployment is that something always goes wrong with the house or car. Think of ways that others can contribute in this area. Can a friend call a plumber? Some churches have teams of volunteers eager to devote a day to helping with household repairs and maintenance. Resist the temptation to tackle everything on your own.
- 3.) **Parent’s Helper** – If you are new to an installation and do not yet have trusted friends with whom you can leave your children, ask a teen to come to your house as a “parent’s helper” for a few hours. The teenager can play a board game with the children while you catch up on bills, do the laundry, or even read a novel.

Finally, take advantage of the respite programs offered by the child development centers, schools, and other



organizations. Research shows that parents who take care of personal needs are better able to manage unexpected situations (e.g., kids getting sick, car breaking down). By accepting help graciously, parents/sponsors reduce their personal stress and strengthen the fabric of the school community. For more information about available resources to support military families during deployment, see www.pdhealth.mil/smfss_family.asp#FP. ■

Recognizing the Contributions of School Nurses

School nurses do more than bandage skinned knees. They conduct health screenings, they support students living with chronic conditions, and they serve a vital function on Crisis Management Teams. The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) declared May 12, 2010 School Nurse Day to raise awareness of the contribution of school nurses in creating healthy school communities. NASN President Sandi Delack noted that although the work of school nurses varies from school to school, there is one salient commonality: “Their desire to promote health and provide the best care possible to students and their families is remarkable.” Join DoDEA administrators around the world in taking a moment on this day to share a word of appreciation to your school nurse. For additional information on creative ways to celebrate school nurse day, visit www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=70. ■

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Integrating New Members into the Crisis Management Team

At the 2009 Principals and Counselors Conference held in Leipzig, Germany, DoDEA Director Shirley Miles, Ph.D., challenged principals to concentrate on providing “academic leadership” for their schools. As part of this overarching vision, Dr. Miles recently committed to provide support in the form of personnel who could assist principals with budget and logistical duties to allow principals more time to concentrate on maintaining academic excellence.

According to a formula based on school size, Student Management Services Specialists (SMSSs) were allocated to various schools throughout DoDEA. Since their initial charter includes assisting with planning and coordination related to safety and security, some administrators have asked their “principal’s helper” to coordinate the Safe School Planning efforts.

Each principal will integrate the SMSS into the daily life of the school differently depending on their personal management style. In addition, close coordination with the District Safety and Security Officer (DSSO) will allow new administrators to benefit from the knowledge and work that has already been done by neighboring schools.

The best place to begin learning about school security in DoDEA is the Office of Safety and Security Web site (www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/). For any new administrators who plan to be involved in the Crisis Management Team, here are five ways to quickly familiarize one’s self with school security “best practices” and the good work that has gone before:

- ◆ Read your Safe School Plan to see if it includes a Risk Reduction Plan and Crisis Management Plan. If so, review the risk reduction and climate improvement objectives as well as the supporting data.
- ◆ Review the Crisis Management Plan to become familiar with the incident response procedures.
- ◆ Meet with the counselor and school psychologist to learn about prevention programs and plans that are already in place to help the school recover quickly from a crisis incident. Request the program materials to become familiar with the resources in use at the school.
- ◆ Inventory the Grab and Go Kit personally to become familiar with the contents. Restock as needed.
- ◆ Talk to the DSSO or Antiterrorism Officer to learn about upcoming drills, exercises, and resources available at the district and area levels.

DoDEA school administrators can use the additional resources in the text box below as references for crisis management planning. To arrange for an online briefing to learn about the resources available, or to receive a copy of the resources below via e-mail, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Safe Schools Resources for New Administrators

- ✓ The [DoDEA Crisis Management Guide](#) provides additional templates, tools, and resources to develop a comprehensive safe school planning process.
- ✓ The U.S. Department of Education offers [Early Warning, Timely Response](#) and [Safeguarding Our Children](#) to help adults identify troubled youth and respond with appropriate assistance.
- ✓ The U.S. Secret Service guide [Threat Assessment in Schools](#) offers a methodology for determining whether a student who makes a threat poses a credible threat.

NASP Taps DoDEA Knowledge Pool

DoDEA educators know better than anyone how parental deployment(s) can affect children. That is why, when the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) began receiving questions from civilian educators about how to support the needs of their military students, they turned to Fort Bragg Schools Psychologist Mark Pisano, Ed.D. NASP asked Dr. Pisano to put together a series of three podcasts that could be accessed through the NASP Web site.



DoDEA psychologists encourage parents to talk with their children about the feelings they may experience during deployment. Photo courtesy of U.S. Army.

“I am the stateside coordinator for NASP’s Military Families Interest Group,” Dr. Pisano explained, “So it was a natural fit when they needed someone to address these issues. NASP always tries to meet the needs of all school psychologists, and with multiple deployments of National Guard and Reserve service members, more and more school psychologists in civilian schools were faced with meeting the needs of families with a deployed parent.”

Two podcasts have been completed so far and are available online as transcripts and in MP3 format. Dr. Pisano is working on the content for the third presentation. NASP also published an article last year in their national newsletter *The Communiqué* entitled: “Military Deployment: How School Psychologists Can Help,” which was written by Dr. Pisano. The two podcasts on the NASP Web page were recorded in Boston last year at the NASP national convention.

“NASP Dialogues: Military Families and the Reintegration Process” is a round table discussion involving Pisano; Sharon Cooper, M.D., a pediatrician and retired Army officer who is now on the faculty of University of North Carolina; and Mark Swerdlik, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Illinois State University who works with an award-winning veteran’s reintegration initiative in that state. The second podcast reviewed the Deployment Cycle and the emotional reactions from military families. Both podcasts target audiences of school psychologists, parents, and teachers.

The podcasts contain an array of information and resources for educators about the stages of deployment. The experts discuss the differing ways children respond to the stages of deployment: pre-deployment, deployment, homecoming, and reintegration. Dr. Pisano describes warning signs teachers can look for that might indicate a child is feeling distressed. He also provides specific “field-tested” tips for soothing anxious children, such as ways to help kids sleep at night so they can get the rest they need.

Thus far, reception to the podcasts and other resources has been extremely positive. NASP has recently reported that these podcasts are the fourth most downloaded from their library of podcasts. Dr. Pisano points out that the academic literature contains very little data about the effects of repeated and long term deployment on the lives of children. Administrators in some school districts had literally no experience with deployment until recently. By comparison, many DoDEA educators have years of experience supporting children through this period. “In DoDEA,” said Dr. Pisano, “We live this every day.” The podcasts can be downloaded from the NASP Web site at www.nasponline.org/resources/podcasts/reintegration.aspx. ■

DoJ offers Rules for Dating in the Digital Age

A new campaign, sponsored in part by the Department of Justice, attempts to raise awareness about cyber-bullying and cyber-stalking among teens. *That's Not Cool* is a Web site designed to address new and complicated teen dating problems such as constant and controlling text messaging, pressuring for explicit pictures, and breaking into someone's e-mail or social networking page. The campaign appeals to young people, both graphically and in the use of slang terminology. The language of the site addresses students on their own terms; "Your cell phone, IM, and social networks are all a digital extension of who you are. When someone you're with pressures you or disrespects you in those places, that's not cool."

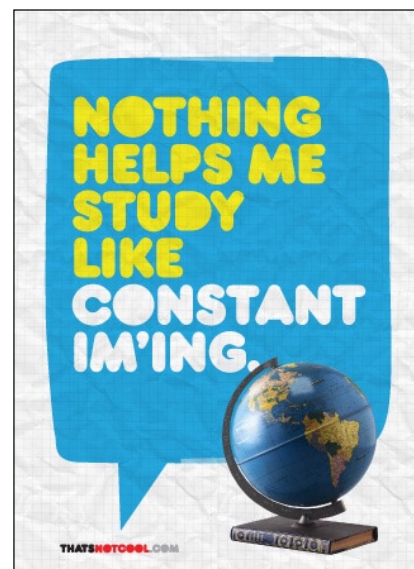
The program empowers teens to identify inappropriate behavior and speak out against it. *That's Not Cool* employs humor to help teens learn to draw electronic boundaries in their lives. In the parlance of the program, it is not cool to send tantalizing pictures of yourself, to text endlessly, or to spread rumors online. The site uses several approaches to getting the message about appropriate behavior to teens including a discussion forum called "Talk It Out" where teens address various topics relating to electronic communication. One student using "Talk It Out" complained about a friend who sent him a constant stream of annoying texts. He wanted to know how best to respond to this situation. Some teens posting messages on the site's forum assured the student that he should let his "so-called friend" know that this behavior is "not cool."

This is the portion of the campaign designed to empower students to identify offensive behavior. The solution to poorly behaving electronic friends, according to the site, is something known as a "call out card." The "call out card" is a colorful electronic greeting card that serves as a reminder when a person is behaving intolerably. The cards can be sent via phone, e-mail, or through the more popular social networking sites.

When a student sends a "call out card," their friend receives a message that says, "Looks like someone thinks you've crossed the line." A link is provided to the *That's Not Cool* Web site. The selected card might offer a statement that uses irony to let the recipient know his or her behavior is unwelcome, such as "Nothing helps me study like constant IM'ing." Other "call out cards" are more direct, reflecting the unfortunate choices some individuals make online. For example, one card, designed to address the sharing of inappropriate images, reads: "You'll be happy to know the unwanted naughty photo you sent made me gag."

Students can follow *That's Not Cool* on the major social networking Web sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. To find out more about how teens should behave appropriately online, visit the DoJ Web site for *That's Not Cool* at www.thatshotcool.com.

The Web site is a project of the DoJ Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), which also offers information for parents who suspect their teen is involved in an abusive relationship. Links to violence prevention resources and a teen dating abuse hotline are available from OVW at www.ovw.usdoj.gov. ■



Incidence of “Huffing” Rises among Preteens

Analysis by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that inhalants are now one of the drugs most commonly abused by 12 year olds. Results from the 2006-2008 *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* found that among 12 year old boys and girls, nearly seven percent have used inhalants to get high. That number is significantly higher than many other common drugs.

Alcohol was still the most-abused drug, however, at 9.8 percent. Only 1.4 percent of 12 year old students have used marijuana, 0.7 percent have used hallucinogens, and a mere 0.1 percent cocaine. The survey also showed that 5.2 percent of 12 year olds smoke cigarettes.

The Safe Schools Newsletter team recently spoke about inhalant abuse with Dr. Jennifer Caudle, a family physician and director of the family medicine section of the Department of Internal Medicine at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Caudle has partnered with SAMHSA and other inhalant abuse prevention organizations to curb inhalant abuse among students.

How did you interpret the results of this study?

Every time I read these numbers, I'm surprised. That's what I fear other people may not know, as well. Even as physicians for young people, we have to ask about inhalants. As a medical community, we have to be aware of that, too. I don't know that every parent out there is aware just how common [inhalant abuse] is.

What do you think causes students to abuse inhalants?

I think it's the context around inhalants. These are substances you can find around the house. You don't have to go very far to find them. One of the most compelling aspects – the substances are household products, they're cheap and legal when used for their intended purpose. They become gateway drugs to using other substances.

What are the signs of inhalant abuse?

Any changes in mood or behavior that parents, friends, or teachers can take note of. Look for changes in a group of friends, seeming dazed or confused, disoriented speech, uncoordinated movements. These can occur even when they're not using inhalants.

What is the greatest harm of abusing inhalants?

Symptoms range from the very mild to death. It can be something as small as eye irritation or as severe as kidney problems. It is important kids know that “sudden sniffing death syndrome” can occur even after first-time use. (Editor's note: In sudden sniffing death, chemicals from inhalants can accelerate the heart rate and cause cardiac arrest.)

Prevention and awareness for students and their parents can help curb inhalant abuse. Some of the slang terms for this form of drug abuse include, “huffing,” “sniffing,” and “bagging.” The SAMHSA study, *Lifetime Use of Inhalants and Other Substances among 12 Year Olds: 2006 to 2008*, is available online at www.oas.samhsa.gov/2K10/inhalents/Spotlight001AdollInhalant.htm. ■

