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 **Fact Sheet**

**Connecticut’s Schools’ Crisis Response Drills**

***Recommendations***

H.B. 6846 proposes reducing the frequency of emergency drills from ten to three per school year. Reducing emergency drill frequency will not impact student safety but will dramatically reduce learning disruptions.

***Lockdown Drills.*** Rather than conducting three crisis response drills, H.B. 6846 proposes reducing school crisis drills to one drill per academic year. Also, emergency response or safety planning must be reevaluated to include trauma-informed planning and drills.

**Trauma-Informed Drills**

***What is a Trauma-Informed Drill?*** Trauma-informed care (drills) seeks to: Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery; Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff; Integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and actively avoid re-traumatization.

**Trauma-Informed Drill.** A trauma-informed drill is a school's unique emergency plan developed by multidisciplinary School Safety Teams (SST) (NASP, SSS, & NASRO, 2021). The School Safety Teams (SST) consists of a school administrator, mental health professional, social worker, nurse, resource officer [SRO], security personnel, teachers, and parents where appropriate (NASP, SSS, & NASRO, 2021).

**How it works**. Each school should have its own SST to tailor the emergency plan to incorporate the unique needs of schools and their students and staff (NASP, SSS, & NASRO, 2021).

***Safety Planning.*** Safety planning should include a succession of student and staff activities, classroom learning, and practice drills such as a walk-through (NASP, SSS, & NASRO, 2021). Nevertheless, all teaching and training should be tailored to meet the unique needs of schools and their students and staff (NASP, SSS, & NASRO, 2021). All safety planning and preparedness should also be designed to minimize the potential for causing or creating a traumatic experience for students and staff participating in the safety exercises (NASP, SSS, & NASRO, 2021). North Dakota, Kentucky, and Texas are utilizing trauma-informed drill strategies.

**Crisis Drills Adverse Effects**

* Grade K-12 students have ages ranging from 5 to 18 years old. They have experienced, perceived, and processed an ***emotional roller-coaster of fear, anxiety, and depression*** during and after school lockdown drills when they all should feel relaxed and safe in school.
* Due to school lockdown drills, many students are afraid to attend school, let alone travel there, for fear of being attacked.



* + In 2022, **32% of students’** “‘**stayed home at least one day because someone may attack or harm me**’ and ‘**I avoid at least one class because someone might attack or harm me**’ as a behavioral response, avoidance, to either fear or perceived risk following a lockdown drill (Schildkraut & Nickerson, p. 769), creating students of all ages having feelings that their schools are unsafe.
	+ ***Causing adverse effects on students, school faculty, and staff, unnecessary emotional and mental trauma, and mental health issues***, e.g., **increased fear, depression, and anxiety** (ElSherief, et al., 2021, p. 7; Schildkraut & Nickerson, 2022, p. 769).

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**Types of Drills**: ***Lockdowns*** *and* ***Shooter Simulation Drills.***

* ***Lockdown Drills*** consist of school faculty and students locking or barricading the doors, leaving them nowhere to escape and hiding out of sight as a group.

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* ***Simulation Drills*** take the **lockdown drill to the extreme.**  ***Students and teachers volunteer to agree to wear make-up and fake blood to play dead*** throughout the school while third-party walks through the school shooting anyone they see with a modified weapon, e.g., *guns shooting plastic BB*s or toy guns.

Connecticut’s current general statute, §§10-231(b). requires schools to have a fire drill every month of the school year, three of which must be substituted for crisis response drills, aka Active Shooter Drills or Lockdown Drills. These practice drills affect (about 52,550) teachers and (about 655,255) students (k-12, ages 5-19) in Connecticut.

**“Active shooter drills in schools are associated with increases in depression (39%), stress and anxiety (42%), and overall physiological health problems by (23%)**, including children from as young as five years old up to high schoolers, their parents, and teachers”(Everytown, 2021)***.***

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