Helping Students Cope with Crisis
Quick Tips for TEACHERS
Adapted from www.redcross.org

Talking About What Happened
Be especially loving and supportive; students need you at this time. Listen to and accept student’s feelings. Create opportunities for students to talk with each other (under teacher supervision) about what happened and how they are feeling.

Clarify Misunderstandings
If students keep asking the same question over and over again it is because they are trying to understand the disruption and confusion in their world. Give honest, simple, brief answers to their questions. Make sure they understand your answers and the meaning you intend. Younger children will not understand that death is permanent, so their repeated inquiries are because they expect everything to return to normal.

Behavior Changes
Teachers are often sensitive to changes in a student’s behavior and will be able to respond in a helpful way. Let parents know if their child has any of the following changes that last for an extended period following a traumatic event: behavior or academic problems at school; angry outbursts; withdrawal from usual social activities or play with other children; intense anxiety or avoidance behavior that is triggered by reminders of the event; depression, or a sense of hopelessness about life or the future; or continued worry about the event.

Focus on Safety and Security
Take notice if students have questions and want to talk. Even if you feel the world is an unsafe place, you can reassure your student by saying, “The event is over. Now we'll do everything possible to stay safe, and together we can get through this situation.”

Houston ISD Psychological Services Can Help (713-696-6430)
Children are amazingly flexible, even though they can be deeply affected by trauma or losses. Certain events may make a child more vulnerable to stress. If a student has experienced a recent loss such as a divorce, a death of someone who was close, or a move to a new neighborhood, he or she may feel overwhelmed by the trauma. A disaster can bring back the emotions associated previous losses or traumas. Your school counselor or psychologist can assist you with students that are having great difficulty.