



**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND YOUTH**

**Address by the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth**

**Dr Athena Michaelidou**

**at the Crisis Management in Schools Training  
organised by the Educational Psychology Service  
Golden Bay Beach Hotel, Monday 3 June 2024, 8:30**

Dear Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to this educational event on crisis management in schools, offered by the National Association of School Psychologists. I am confident that this workshop on the PREPaRE model, an evidenced-based school crisis prevention and intervention curriculum, will assist school psychologists and schools, in effectively preparing for and responding to emergencies.

It is with great pleasure that I also welcome our distinguished guests, developers and core trainers of the PREPaRE curriculum Dr. Melissa Reeves and Dr. Stephen Brock from the United States of America, both leading experts in the field of school crisis prevention and response.

This workshop offers the opportunity for a significant number of school psychologists of the Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to receive valuable information on school safety topics that pertain both to the physical and psychological care of students. Our hope is that school psychologists will transfer this knowledge to the schools and the greater community.

Schools are responsible for ensuring a safe environment, fostering personal growth, and maximizing the potential of all individuals. In normal circumstances, schools operate efficiently and effectively. However, in the ever-evolving school landscape, crises unfortunately occur and

are a part of reality. Terms like crisis, emergency, disaster, tragedy, trauma, and stress are commonly associated with schools today. These crises can vary from individual traumas to incidents impacting the entire school and broader community. It is a reality that every school, even in the small country of Cyprus, may face a crisis at any given moment.

Amid a crisis, schools encounter unique challenges and pressures. Balancing their regular operations with the need to adjust to unforeseen and erratic circumstances is no easy task. During a crisis, school personnel, parents, students, and the community at large could be impacted by a distressing event. Consequently, organizing an efficient crisis intervention plan and promptly restoring normal operations become challenging for schools in such situations.

Crisis intervention in schools is now acknowledged as an urgent public health concern that demands immediate action. Schools and support services are crucial in preventing and managing crises. In the event of a critical incident, schools and the community must be prepared to respond promptly and provide necessary support for recovery. It is essential to have crisis intervention plans in place beforehand to minimize confusion and trauma. Without intervention efforts or plans, emotional responses can impact students' daily functioning, affecting both school and family life. Challenges concerning students' social-emotional well-being can have serious consequences, potentially leading to long-term psychosocial issues. A crisis or traumatic event within a school community can have detrimental effects on students' mental health and disrupt the learning process.

School psychologists in Cyprus encounter various crises in their daily work, highlighting the critical need for enhanced and comprehensive knowledge. Responding promptly and effectively to these situations proves to be both challenging and essential for these professionals and support services. The actions taken during crises not only offer immediate relief but also establish the foundation for long-term recovery and resilience. By providing support services, educators can be empowered to gain a deeper understanding of the situation, reflect on their emotions, and be equipped to offer immediate assistance to students and their families.

Understanding such important issues and acquiring the skills to prevent and address potential crises are crucial for the school psychology service, schools, and the Ministry. Therefore, the training provided these days will be truly beneficial.

I trust that this seminar will spark fresh ideas and conversations to enhance the safety and quality of our schools for every student. Congratulations to the Educational Psychology Service for hosting this event, and appreciation to all volunteers for their hard work in ensuring its success. A big thank you to all the participants for joining us.

Thank you. I wish everyone a productive and informative workshop ahead.

