

School Bus Crash Critical Incident Scenario

Two nights ago, three bus loads of your middle school 7th-8th graders, were returning home from a day-long field trip to Kitty Hawk. As the three buses were driving back at night in a strong rain-storm, one of the three school buses (bus in the middle), slid off into a ditch and crashed and was turned on its side. Apparently, there was a car that the bus driver was trying to avoid. Currently, we do not have much information beyond this; an investigation is pending.

The bus that crashed carried about 35 students. Two of the students, Marcus and Joy, sustained some broken bones and a moderate brain injury. They are both listed in critical condition at Dare County Hospital. Marcus, sort of a school bully has a reputation of being somewhat of an “obnoxious and irritating” kid to everyone. He is an average student with poor social-emotional-interpersonal skills. Marcus spends time living between his grandparents and mother’s house and is not involved in any extra-curricula school activities. Joy is an academically talented student, plays on the girls softball team, and belongs to a number of school clubs. The remaining children were treated and released with only minor injuries of cuts and bruises. The bus driver also went to the hospital and is listed in stable condition.

Roles

Teacher: You have Marcus and Joy in your class as well as many of the other adolescents that were injured. You have contact with these students on a daily basis. You were riding in the bus that was following behind the bus that crashed. You didn’t actually see the crash, but you heard the students on your bus scream and then you passed by the bus that was lying off in the ditch.

Girls Softball Coach: Joy is one of the “star” softball players on your team and you have coached her for the last two seasons. Three of the other adolescents who sustained minor injuries are also on the team. However, you’ve got the Regional Tournament coming-up and you really need Joy.

School Nurse: You really don’t have much contact with Joy, but you see Marcus several times a month because he always seems to have frequent injuries during gym class. You were on the field trip and riding on the bus in front of the one that crashed. No one on your bus saw or heard anything until a few minutes later when your bus driver heard the emergency call over the radio.

School Counselor: You see Marcus regularly to coordinate outside social services for him and his mother. Although he is not one of your “favorite” students, he does follow-through on things.

Mental Health Case Worker: You don’t know Joy or any of the other youth that were injured. You see Marcus twice per month for family intervention services. You do have infrequent contact with some of the kids who were riding in the other two buses.

School Principle: You have frequent contact with Marcus because of his behavior problems. You’ve got a “soft-spot” in your heart for Marcus because you can relate with his family situation which reminds you of your own, as you were growing-up between two homes while in school.