Earthquake Practice Activities

• Drop, Cover, and Hold On (Required) ⚠
Tell students that you are going to create a pretend earthquake to help them practice for the real thing. Start shaking slightly and say, “I think I hear a rumbling! Earthquake!” Have the students Drop, Cover, and Hold On while you and your team add appropriate sound effects (e.g., “Wham! The whole bookcase tipped over. Smash! Now the windows are breaking. Bang! I think that was a tree falling outside.”) You can also flicker and turn off the lights to simulate the loss of power. After about 30 seconds, call out, “OK, the shaking has stopped, but stay under cover a little longer just to be sure.” Then say, “OK, it’s safe to come out now. Is everyone all right? Check yourself and your neighbors. Everyone OK?” Have students take their seats and cheer them for their good work.

• Hazard Hunt
Remind students that the biggest risk in an earthquake is that something will fall on you—a piece of furniture or a piece of the ceiling or even a can of tuna falling out of a cupboard. Have students move around the room and call out “Hazard!” when they find something that could be hazardous during an earthquake. Have 3-4 students explain the hazards they have found. Then have students return to their seats and ask for ideas to eliminate or reduce each hazard. Wrap up by telling students to conduct a hazard hunt at home and talk to a grownup about making their home safer in case of an earthquake.
Earthquake Sharing Activities

Coping Skills Activity
Use the following story to set up your transition to the Coping Skills part of the presentation. Read the story aloud and ask for ideas on what Bob could teach Molly to help her handle her worries about what might happen during an earthquake. Use the answer list below and/or the Coping Skills poster to generate ideas. Then continue on to the Coping Skills part of the presentation by using the poster to define “coping skills.” (Note: If time permits, you can use the Sharing Activity worksheet at the end of this Resource to have students discuss this situation in small groups on their own and then share their ideas in a follow-up discussion.)

• **Shook Up**
  Bob and his family live in a town where people have to be prepared for earthquakes. Bob’s family keeps their house “earthquake ready,” with bookcases and pictures all bolted to the wall so they won’t fall down. And they have safety spots all picked out in every room. But this summer, Bob’s cousin Molly is coming to stay for a few weeks, and Molly has only seen earthquakes on TV. She’s worried about what might happen if an earthquake hits the town while she is visiting. She’s already asked Bob what it’s like to see a building break apart and fall over. Luckily, Bob learned a lot about earthquake preparedness from The Pillowcase Project. “We even talked about feeling worried,” he told Molly. “Lots of people feel worried or scared when they think about what might happen in an emergency, even grownups. But there are ways to handle those feelings — they’re called coping skills — and you can figure out good coping skills BEFORE an emergency happens!”

What could Bob teach Molly to help her cope with her thoughts and feelings about what might happen during an earthquake?

**Answer:**
• Taking slow breaths to calm down when you feel worried or scared.
• Sticking with a buddy so you don’t feel alone.
• Singing a favorite song or picturing a favorite story, so you don’t think so much about feeling scared.
• Reminding yourself how sticking together helps everyone get through a tough situation.
• Reminding yourself of what you have done to get through tough situations in the past.
• Remembering that Bob’s family is prepared for earthquakes and will show Molly how to Drop, Cover, and Hold On if one happens.
• Listening to grownups for other ways to help each other feel safe.

Note: Some students may suggest “giving thanks” as a coping skill (e.g., Be thankful that you are OK), but this reaction can sometimes inhibit successful coping by masking the real impact of an emergency. Acknowledge this suggestion, but do not push students in this direction.
Earthquake Sharing Activities (continued)

Problem-Solving Activity
Divide students into small groups and distribute the Sharing Activity worksheet. Read the activity aloud and have students brainstorm ideas in their groups. Call on each group to share its ideas, then lead a whole group discussion based on the answer provided below.

• My Safety Spot
Imagine that you are in your bedroom when an earthquake happens. What would be the safest place to Drop, Cover, and Hold On? Picture your bedroom, and picture that safety spot. Then go around your group, and tell each other about the safety spot in your bedroom. Help each other figure out the safest place to take cover in case of an earthquake.

Answer:
Good answers can be: under a desk, a desk chair, a bed, or simply “covering my head with my arms and staying away from tall bookshelves” if they can’t get under their furniture. Remind students that if an earthquake happens when they are in a different room, they should not try to run to the safety spot in their bedroom. Instead, Drop, Cover, and Hold On right where they are.
Sharing activities

Read the activity assigned to your group. Talk with each other about how you could answer the question, and take notes in the space provided. Be ready to share your ideas with the class. Then join in the discussion to decide on the best way to answer the question.

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