



For Immediate Release

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**Kognito and Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Offer Teachers, Schools “At-Risk” to Identify Student Mental Health
Concerns After Hurricane Harvey**

(HOUSTON) September 29, 2017 – In response to Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts, Kognito, a health simulation company based in New York City, announced a new partnership with the Center for School Behavioral Health at Mental Health America of Greater Houston in which it will provide mental health simulations to over 57,000 educators and staff working in Greater Houston-area K-12 school systems. The highly interactive and evidence-based simulations will assist and prepare school educators and staff to recognize and respond to students experiencing mental health concerns and connect them to counseling resources and support services.

“We know that schools and teachers are critical in helping stabilize the lives of so many children whose families and communities have been deeply affected by Harvey. Through our partnership with the great team at MHA of Greater Houston, we are proud to do our part in supporting the Greater Houston community,” said Kognito’s CEO Ron Goldman.

Now through March 30, 2018, Kognito’s three simulations, At-Risk for Elementary, Middle and High School Educators are available at no cost to teachers, counselors and staff through the Center for School Behavioral Health’s 27 partnering independent school districts and charter school systems as well as therapeutic/special needs schools and faith organizations that provide behavioral health and counseling services to schools.

“We stand for children’s mental health, and the educators and the schools who help address the concerns that affect children’s well-being,” said Mental Health America of Greater Houston’s president and CEO Susan Fordice. “It’s important that educators are equipped to recognize mental health concerns in youth and know how to respond appropriately. Kognito’s simulations will help.”

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), responses to natural disasters are immediate or delayed, differ in severity and cover a wide range of behaviors. Children with existing mental health problems, past traumatic experiences, and/or limited family and social supports may be more reactive to their experience. Community members—teachers, faith leaders, and other adults—can help children overcome these experiences and start the process of recovery.

“This gift comes at a time of great crisis and need. The disaster in our area impacted the well-being of tens of thousands of children,” said Center for School Behavioral Health’s director Janet Pozmantier. “We feel confident the At-Risk simulations will provide basic training for adults working in schools to help them identify and refer students who struggled before the storm and those who may have trouble coping after the storm.”

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The Center for School Behavioral Health’s collaborative partners that are eligible beneficiaries of the At-Risk simulations include at Aldine ISD, Alief ISD, Alvin ISD, Channelview ISD, Clear Creek ISD, Cypress Fairbanks ISD, Dayton ISD, Deer Park ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Galena Park ISD, Goose Creek CISD, Hitchcock ISD, Houston ISD, Humble ISD, Katy ISD, Klein ISD, La Porte ISD, Lamar CISD, New Caney ISD, Pasadena ISD, Sheldon ISD, Spring Branch ISD, Spring ISD, Waller ISD, KIPP Charter School System, YES Prep Charter School System, Harmony Charter School System, Fusion Academy, The Harris School, Gateway Academy, Monarch School, Westview Academy, Unlimited Visions, Catholic Charities (7 Catholic schools) and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston Bureau of Jewish Education’s day schools, religious schools, and youth-serving organizations.

For information on how to register for and access a simulation, contact at Lauren Pursley, lpursley@mhahouston.org or Betsy Blanks, bblanks@mhahouston.org at the Center for School Behavioral Health.

About Kognito

Kognito is a health simulation company that believes in the power of conversation to change lives. We are pioneers in developing research-proven, role-play simulations that prepare individuals to lead real-life conversations that result in measurable changes in social, emotional, and physical health. Our growing portfolio of simulations is used by 300+ leading health, education, government, and nonprofit organizations for professional development and public education. To date, more than 1 million people have engaged in a Kognito simulation. Kognito is the only company with health simulations listed in the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Learn more at <http://www.kognito.com>.

About the Products

At-Risk for PK-12 Educators is a suite of professional development simulations to educate PK-12 Educators about mental health and suicide prevention which supports improved student wellness and school safety.

About the Center for School Behavioral Health

The Center for School Behavioral Health at Mental Health America of Greater Houston serves as a “living laboratory” for incubating innovative, cost-effective and replicable best practices to improve the behavioral health of students by facilitating collective action; providing highly specialized professional development opportunities, technical assistance and community education; and conducting research, advocacy, and policy analysis. To learn more about the Center for School Behavioral Health, visit Mental Health America of Greater Houston at www.mhahouston.org.

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