


# **Crisis Intervention in the Schools**

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## **Table of Contents**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Evaluating Your District Plan .....</b> | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>General Crisis Intervention .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>The PREPaRE Model .....</b>             | <b>13</b> |
| <b>The Incident Command System .....</b>   | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Building Level Crisis Teams .....</b>   | <b>21</b> |
| <b>District Level Crisis Teams .....</b>   | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Large Scale Crisis Management .....</b> | <b>33</b> |
| <b>Suicide Interventions .....</b>         | <b>37</b> |
| <b>A.L.I.C.E. ....</b>                     | <b>41</b> |
| <b>Handling the Media .....</b>            | <b>43</b> |
| <b>Threat Assessment .....</b>             | <b>45</b> |
| <b>Team Burnout .....</b>                  | <b>53</b> |
| <b>Final Thoughts and Tips .....</b>       | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Resources and References .....</b>      | <b>55</b> |

## Evaluating Your District's Plan

## Evaluating Your District's Crisis Plan

- Does the district have a plan?
  - Building Level Teams
  - District Level Team
- Is the plan reactive or proactive?
- Is the plan mental health oriented or more physical environmentally based?
- Are people trained in the plan?
- Do people know where the plan is located?

## What is the School Psychologist's Role?

### Are you a:

Consultant  
Leader  
Participant  
Trainer

### Is participation:

Voluntary or Mandatory

## Does the Plan Involve:

- Small, building level crisis
- Large, district level crisis
- Immediate, short-term response
- Long term follow-up

## Does the Plan Address:

- Death Adjustment
- Suicide Procedures
- Threat Assessment Policies
- Policies on Bullying

## WS1 Handout 15: Evaluating Crisis Plan Preparedness

School/District: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Evaluation Questions

|   |                                 |                            |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Was the crisis plan developed in cooperation with all stakeholders?<br>___ police      ___ fire      ___ rescue      ___ hospitals      ___ community agencies<br>___ parents    ___ students    ___ community members | Check to Indicate<br>Yes or No  |                            |
| <b>Does the Plan:</b> (Circle "Yes" or "No")  |                                 |                            |
| 2) Include a mission statement?   | Yes                             | No                         |
| 3) Include clear discipline codes with consistent reinforcement?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 4) Provide for sufficient communication during emergencies (e.g., walkie-talkies, multiple phone lines)?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 5) Require staff to have emergency numbers posted by their phones?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 6) Clearly state the chain of command (Incident Command System)?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 7) Clearly identify leaders that fulfill positions within the ICS ...<br>a) Incident Commander<br>b) Planning & Intelligence section<br>c) Operations section<br>d) Logistics section<br>e) Finance section               | Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes | No<br>No<br>No<br>No<br>No |
| 8) Require regular practice of crisis drills?   | Yes                             | No                         |
| 9) Include a fully stocked and updated crisis box/cart that can be immediately accessed?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 10) Require annual review of physical safety of the building(s)?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 11) Allow for other responders outside the school to access blueprints and floor plans?   | Yes                             | No                         |
| 12) Include requirements for responding to the needs of special needs students?   | Yes                             | No                         |
| 13) Identify area(s) where student, staff, parents, and caregivers should reunite in an emergency?  | Yes                             | No                         |
| 14) Provide clear bus routes and an adequate fleet of buses for transporting students to reunion areas or other necessary locations?  | Yes                             | No                         |

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 15) Consider how to obtain and effectively use volunteer support?   | Yes | No |
| 16) Include a policy on verifying facts before releasing to the public?   | Yes | No |
| 17) Include timely and effective means for informing parents and the community of new information?  | Yes | No |
| 18) Include a defined policy and system for swiftly and reliably responding to media queries that is managed by two or fewer individuals? | Yes | No |
| 19) Consider alternative sites for conducting school if the school building is destroyed or unusable?                                     | Yes | No |
| 20) Designate safe areas for staff and students to receive help before, during, and after school?   | Yes | No |
| 21) Allow for students to obtain assistance from additional support staff and outside professionals?                                      | Yes | No |
| 22) Have policies/procedures for responding to memorials or anniversaries of an event?  | Yes | No |
| 23) Have policies/procedures for responding to suicide and contagion issues?  | Yes | No |

### Personal, Family and Work Life Inventory

Providing mental health support during times of disaster can be exciting, stimulating and perhaps one of the most enriching experiences—professionally and personally. It can also be physically and emotionally exhausting. Long hours over many days and weeks coupled with intense environments and interactions can take their toll on those called to provide these services. Having a clinical mental health degree alone does not prepare you for this type of work. It is often helpful to anticipate the consequences of volunteering before you go out on each assignment. Disaster relief is not for everyone.

You can use this tool to assess your overall readiness and commitment to engaging in disaster mental health work or it can be used to assess your availability and readiness before your deployment to an actual disaster.

Consider where you are in your life at the time you are reviewing the assessment tool (with your personal needs and with your family and career responsibilities). Ask yourself, is this the right time for me to be doing this? Will my family and work environment support and embrace this decision?

#### Personal

1. Am I emotionally prepared to be with people who are experiencing enormous grief and loss and who may be expressing those extreme feelings in a variety of ways, including screaming, hysterical crying, anger or withdrawal?
2. Do I have the ability to engage with clients in nontraditional settings (i.e., outside the typical office and work environment)?
3. Am I emotionally prepared to work in a chaotic, unpredictable environment over which I have little control?
4. Do I have the flexibility to adapt rapidly to abrupt role changes and demands and accept tasks that may not initially be viewed as “mental health care”?
5. Am I comfortable working in an environment where there may be minimal supervision or an environment that is “micro-managed”?
6. Am I comfortable working with and providing support to individuals from diverse cultures and ethnicities?
7. Am I emotionally prepared to respond to environments where the risk of harm or exposure is not fully known?

# 1

## Segment

## Foundations of Disaster Mental Health

8. Have I considered the status of my current physical health? (Have you had any recent surgeries or medical treatments or do you have any diet restrictions that may compromise your ability to be available for long shifts, for work in certain environments, or under difficult circumstances? Are you able to stand on your feet for long periods of time? Do you have enough medication available on hand for the total length of your assignment?)
9. Have I been dealing with any significant life changes or losses within the past six to twelve months (divorce, death of a loved one)? Have I experienced earlier losses or other life events that may make it difficult for me to meet the challenges presented by a particular type of disaster?

### Family

1. Is my family prepared for my absence, which may span over hours, days or weeks?
2. Is my family prepared for me to work in environments where the risk of harm or exposure is not fully known?
3. Do I have a support system at home that will assume my family responsibilities and duties while I am away?
4. Do I have any unresolved family/relationship issues that will make it challenging for me to focus on my disaster-related responsibilities?
5. Do I have a strong, supportive environment to return to after my disaster assignment?

### Work Life

1. Is my employer/supervisor supportive of my interests in disaster mental health response?
2. Will my employer/supervisor allow me "leave" time from my job or will I have to use my vacation time or "absence without pay" time?
3. Is my work position flexible enough to allow me to respond to a disaster assignment within 24-48 hours of being contacted?
4. Will my coworkers be supportive of my absence and provide a supportive environment upon my return?

5. If working in a clinical environment, will my absence affect my client population?
6. Are my clients aware that I may be rescheduling or canceling appointments with little notice?

### Other Considerations

1. What skills or abilities do I have that will contribute to my effectiveness as a disaster mental health professional?
2. What steps have I taken to ensure that I will have access to the emotional supports and networks that will help me achieve in this difficult and challenging role?
3. What motivates me to be involved in disaster mental health work?

### Personal, Family, and Work Life Plan

Please briefly describe the plan(s) or preparations you have made in the following areas that will allow you to respond to a disaster assignment within 24–48 hours of being contacted and for up to two weeks in duration.

Family and other Household Responsibilities:

Pets:

Work Responsibilities (clinical/administrative coverage):

Community Activities/Responsibilities:

Other Responsibilities/Concerns:

**Reference:** Adapted from the New York State Office of Mental Health Disaster Planning Workgroup document "Are You Ready?" in Disaster Mental Health: A Critical Response, University of Rochester, 2005.



### Guiding Principles for Crisis Planning

1. Build on what is already in place
2. Involve others
3. Include comprehensive and condensed versions of the plan
4. Focus on the local context
5. Make plans user-friendly and free of jargon, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
6. Account for the possibility that team members will be unavailable
7. Include training in risk assessment procedures
8. Provide for professional development to ensure adequate preparation and examination of effectiveness
9. Coordinate plan elements with nonpublic schools and recognize the need for special school populations
10. Review and update plans periodically so they remain current

## Crisis Intervention

## NASP - NEAT Team



## School Needs

- Deal with the situation
- Re-establish equilibrium as soon as possible
- Media can become a secondary crisis
- Protection of children and their privacy

## Intervention Actions - Needs

- Physical survival
- Expression of feelings
- Cognitive functioning
- Real world functioning
- Establishing altered beliefs
- Behavioral and interpersonal adjustment

## Planning Goals

- Prepare to identify the signs of problems
- What should be done when a child/problem is identified?
- How resources can be used to create:
  - Safe schools
  - Systems to address troubled students

## What Should Be Done:

- Review Current Crisis Plan
- Develop and Train School Safety Task Force
- Update School Policies
- Create a Response Plan

## **Levels of Intervention**

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- Primary Intervention (Prevention)
  - Activities to prevent a crisis from occurring
- Secondary Intervention (Intervention)
  - Activities in the immediate aftermath of a crisis to minimize the effects
- Tertiary Interventions (Post-vention)
  - Long term follow-up: weeks, months or years later

## **Intervention Techniques**

- Bibliotherapy
- Memorials, Projects, etc.
- Class Discussions
- Small Group Discussions
- Art Therapy

### Sample PA Announcement by the building Principal

Good morning. It is with sadness that we have recently learned of the death of (John Smith) a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student here at (West) School. John was well liked by his many friends. His teachers and classmates are shocked to here of the situation. John died (last night) from the injuries he received in a (car accident). Counselors will be available in the building this (morning) .

Your teachers will talk to you a little more about the accident. *(Alert teachers ahead of time of basic details. If students need to go to where the counselors are located they must be given a special hall pass and only students who can not compose themselves should be permitted to leave the classroom.)* As soon as we know the family's wishes concerning the funeral and calling hours we will share that information with you.

There will be a school card for all students of the (West) School community to sign at lunch time in the cafeteria. We will give this to John's parents to let them know we are very sad at their loss and are thinking about John today.

We ask that all students remain in their regular classrooms and a regular schedule will be followed today.

Thank you.

## **Sample Letter to Students and Parents: Student Sudden Death**

**Dear Students and Parents:**

On Friday, John Doe, a fifth-grade student at (Insert Name of School) was in a terrible accident. Apparently, John was hit by a car that was speeding and had crossed over the median strip to the wrong side of the road. John died instantly.

John's death is a tragic, emotional loss for the entire school family. I am sure all of us will make every effort to comfort and support John's family as they attempt to deal with this traumatic loss. There are no adequate words to express our sense of grief and sympathy for the family.

Because John's death is felt so deeply by so many, on Monday and thereafter as needed, we will bring in our crisis team to discuss this accident and loss with students and faculty.

We encourage each of you to discuss this loss with your child. In order to help you do so, we are holding a parent meeting on **date and time**, in the school cafeteria. The topic will be ways to help children cope with loss and will be presented by a local mental health professional. John's family, friends, and the school are suffering deeply. Please join us in supporting John's family.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Sample Joint APS/Community Letter to Parents/Guardians about Crisis**  
(i.e., shooting or other violent acts)

**SCHOOL LETTERHEAD**

**Dear Parents:**

The tragic event of (date) has hurt/affected the entire (school) community. This unfortunate incident shows us that we must band together as parents and seek positive solutions to problems that victimize us.

It is for this reason I'm asking ALL parents to join me in a special meeting (day, date, time) in the school auditorium. We will learn the steps the administration is taking to ensure the welfare and safety of our children; we will discuss what we, as parents and community, can do to assist our children and school staff.

There will be representatives from the school staff, Akron Public Schools administration, Akron Police Department, guidance office, and the representatives of the Akron Mayor's Office to address ALL our concerns.

Bus transportation will be provided for the (area) families. (Here include the place and time of bus pickups.)

Child care will be provided at the school for your convenience.

Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting.

If you would like further information about this meeting, contact (name/telephone).

Cordially,

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Principal

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Mayor's Office

## **PREPaRE**

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- NASP sponsored, comprehensive crisis prevention and intervention program
- Prevent, Reaffirm, Evaluate, Provide and Respond, Examine
- Conceptual framework that goes across phases of a crisis
- Workshop 1: Prevention & Preparedness
- Workshop 2: Crisis Intervention & Recovery

## Handout 1: The Relationship Between Phases of a Crisis, the PREPARE Model, and Levels of Crisis Prevention/Intervention

| Crisis Phase<br>(Raphael & Newiman, 2000;<br>Valent, 2000)                                 | Pre-Impact<br>The period before crisis  |                     | Impact<br>When crisis<br>occurs                          | Recoil<br>Immediately after crisis<br>threats end  | Post-Impact<br>Days/weeks after the crisis       | Recovery/Reconstruction<br>Months/years after crisis |
|--|---|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
|  | Preparation &<br>Planning   | Threat &<br>Warning |  |  |  |  |
| <b>PREPaRE:</b><br>School Crisis Prevention &<br>Intervention Training<br>Curriculum       | <b>P</b> Prevent & prepare for psychological trauma risk  |                     |  |  |  |  |
|  | • Prevent/Prepare for crisis<br>• Foster student resiliency   |                     | • Keep students safe<br>• Avoid crisis scenes and images |  |  |  |
|  | <b>Reaffirm</b> physical health, and ensure perceptions of security & safety                                |                     |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |                     |  | • Meet basic physical needs (water, shelter, food, clothing)<br>• Facilitate perceptions of safety |  |  |
|  | <b>Evaluate</b> psychological trauma  |                     |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |                     |  | • Evaluate crisis exposure and reactions<br>• Evaluate internal and external resources             |  |  |
|  |   |                     |  | • Make psychotherapeutic treatment referrals   |  |  |
|  |   |                     |  | <b>Provide interventions and Respond</b> to psychological needs                                    |  |  |
|  | • Re-establish social support systems<br>• Provide psycho-education: Empower survivors and their caregivers |                     |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |                     |  | • Provide immediate crisis intervention<br>• Provide/Refer for longer-term crisis intervention     |  |  |
| <b>Examine</b> the effectiveness of crisis prevention and intervention                     |   |                     |  |  |  |  |
| Level of Prevention<br>(Caplan, 1964)  | Primary   |                     | Primary  | Primary & Secondary  | Secondary  | Tertiary   |
| Level of Preventive<br>Intervention<br>(Gordon, 1983)                                      | Universal   |                     | Universal  | Universal & Selected   | Universal, Selected, & Indicated                 | Selected & Indicated                                 |
| Level of Violence<br>Prevention (Dwyer & Osher,<br>2000)                                   | School-Wide   |                     | School-Wide  | School-Wide & Early<br>Intervention  | School-wide, Early, & Intensive<br>Interventions | Early & Intensive<br>Interventions                   |
| Emergency Response &<br>Crisis Management<br>(EMCR; U.S. Department of<br>Education, 2003) | Crisis Prevention/Mitigation<br>and Preparedness  |                     | Crisis Response and Recovery                             |  |  |  |

-14-



## The Incident Command System (ICS) and the Schools

## History

The Incident Command System (ICS) was developed in the 1970's following a series of catastrophic fires in California. Lack of accountability, including an unclear chain of command, poor communication, lack of systematic planning, lack of a common management structure, and no predefined method to integrate other agencies led to a weakness in managing the incident.

ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all hazard incident management approach.

In response to the attacks on September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Directive 5 (HSPD-5), in February 2003.

HSPD-5 called for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and identified steps for improving coordination of Federal, State, local, and private sector response to incidents and described the way these agencies will prepare for such a response. (FEMA-IS-100SC).

## What is NIMS?

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is:

- A consistent, nationwide approach for all levels of government to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for and respond to domestic incidents
- A core set of concepts, principles, and terminology for incident command and multiple coordination.
- NIMS requires the use of the Incident Command System (ICS)

ICS can be used to manage any of the following types of incidents:

- Disasters, such as fires, tornadoes, floods, ice storms, or earthquakes.
- Disease outbreaks and prevention measures
- Search operations for a missing student.
- Hazardous materials accidents in a chemistry lab.
- Hostile intruders or other criminal acts
- Planned events, such as school drills, festivals, sporting events, and graduations.

## Benefits of the Incident Command System

- Meets the needs of incidents of any kind or size
- Allows school personnel and responders to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provides logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Is cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

## Key Components of the Incident Command System

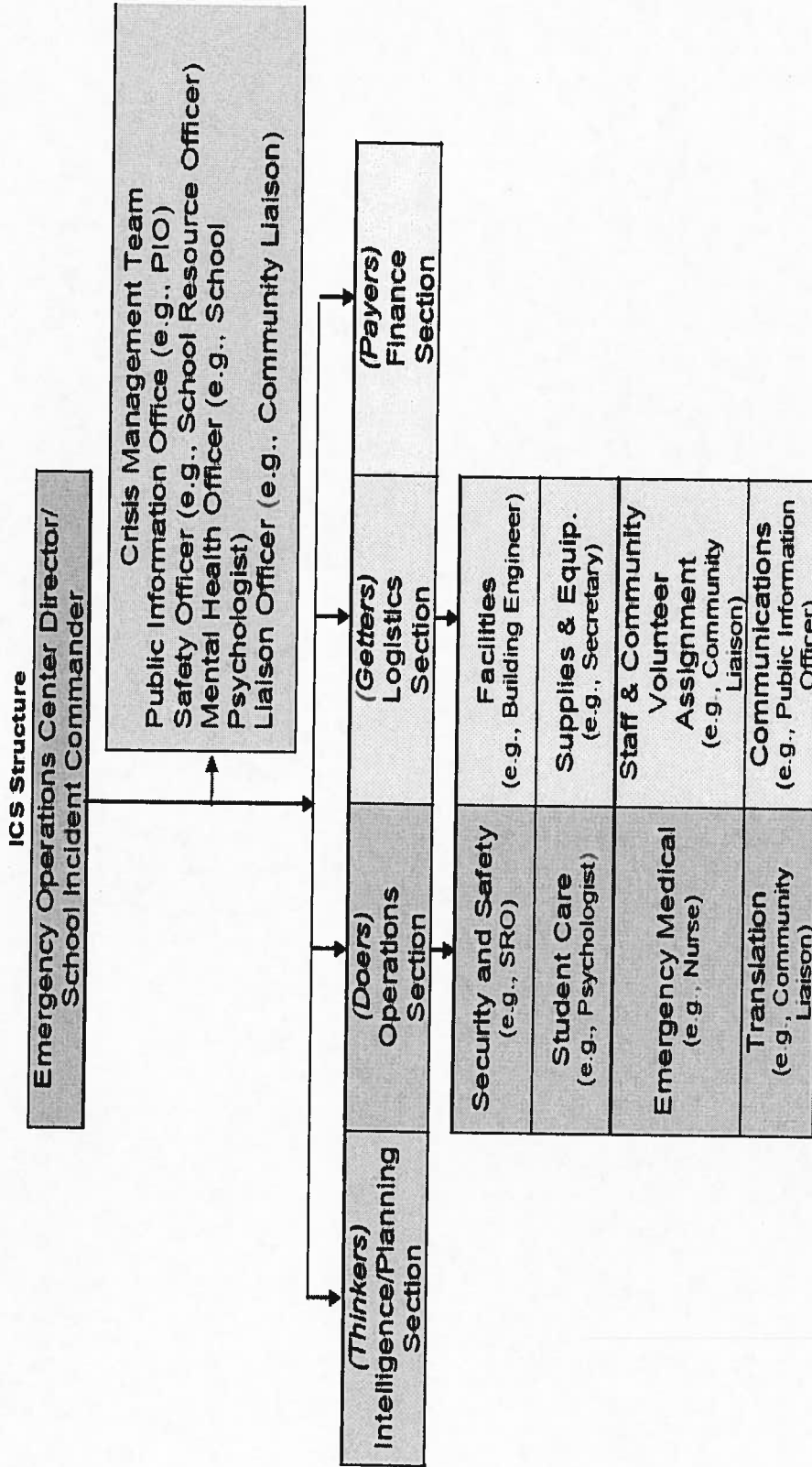
- Common Terminology
- Modular Organization
- Management by Objectives
- Reliance on an Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- Chain of Command and Unity of Command
- Unified Command
- Manageable Span of Control
- Predesignated Incident Locations and Facilities
- Resource Management
- Information and Intelligence Management
- Integrated Communications
- Transfer of Command
- Accountability
- Mobilization

## General Organization

- Incident Commander
- Command Staff
  - Liaison Officer
  - Public Information Officer
  - Safety Officer
- General Staff
  - Operations
  - Planning
  - Logistics
  - Finance/Administration
- General Staff Functions can be broken down further into:
  - Teams
  - Branches
  - Divisions
  - Sections
  - Units
  - Groups

### WS1 Handout 3: School Crisis Teams Roles/Responsibilities Within Incident Command Structure (ICS)

This figure illustrates the structure of the National Incident Management System's Incident Command System (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2004). Examples of school personnel who may assume the different roles within this system are included in parentheses.



## WS1 Handout 5: Integrated or Unified Command

# Unified Command System

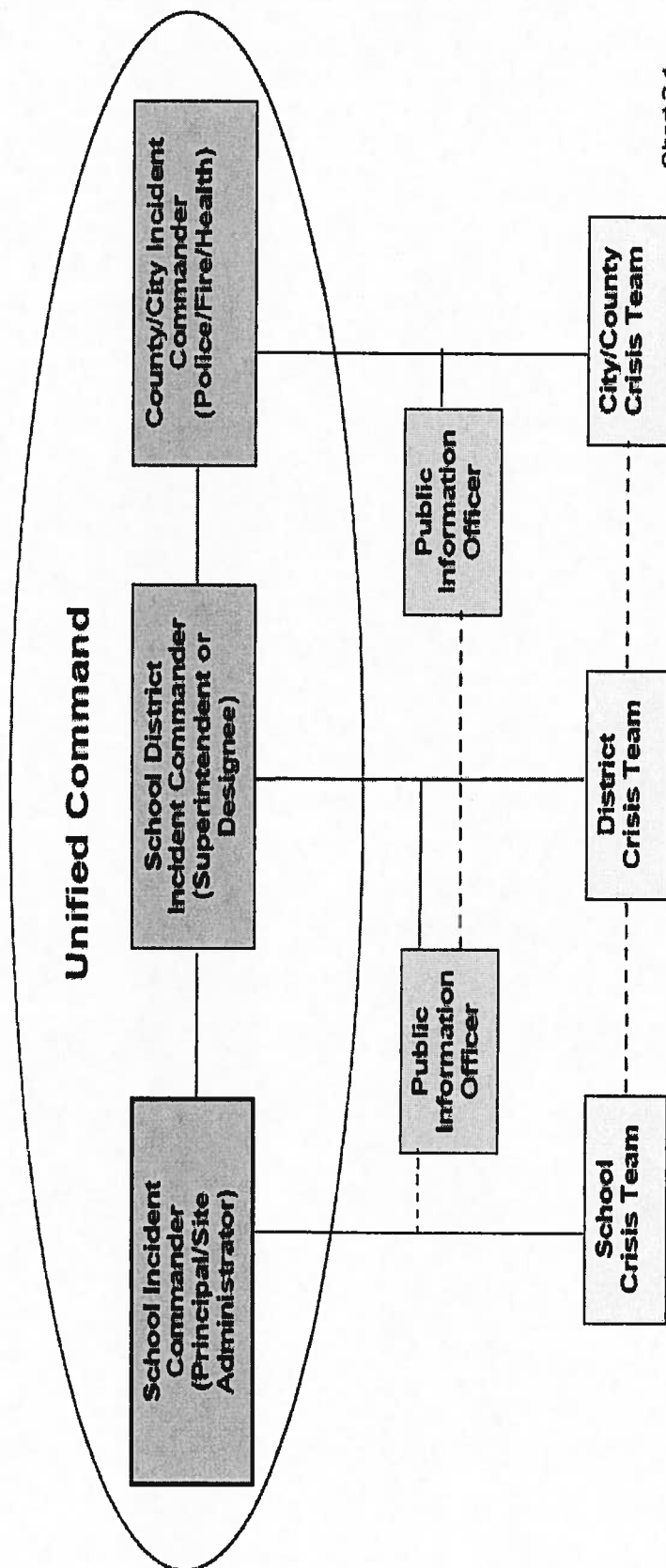
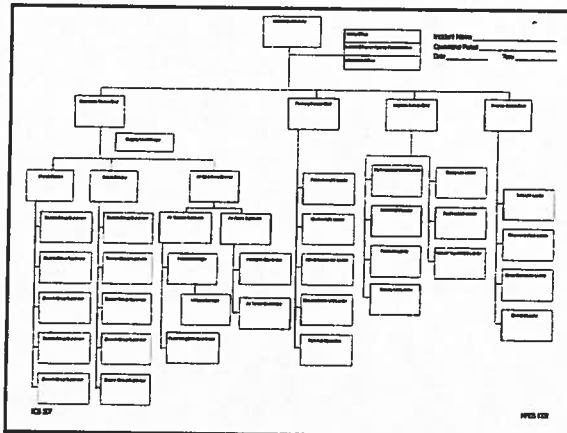


Chart 2.1

Cherry Creek School District, Greenwood Village, CO. (2006) – Permission granted to use.  
Permission not granted to modify.



## Training

- Training can be obtained by attending a class by a trained FEMA representative
- On-line self-guided classes are available
- Certification Requirements:
  - Complete class in lecture or self-study format
  - Pass Final Exam with at least 75%

## Additional NIMS Programs

The Federal Emergency Management System (FEMA) in conjunction with NIMS, offers on-line classes and self-study options, including:

- IS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-100 SC: Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools
- IS-200: ICS For Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction

## **Directions to Access FEMA Online Courses 10/2010**

IS-100 SC. a Introduction to the Incident Command System For Schools

**Go to**        ***<http://training.fema.gov/EMI/>***

- Click on FEMA Independent Study
- Click on ISP Course List
- Find: IS-100 SC. a Introduction to the Incident Command System For Schools
- Click on Take This Course and follow the directions to take the web- based course  
    \*\*Be sure to allot enough time to take the whole course at once (FEMA suggests 3 hours) \*\*
- Follow the directions to take and submit the final exam.

## **Directions to Access FEMA Online Courses 10/2010**

**IS-700.a National Incident Management (NIMS) An Introduction**

**Go to      *<http://training.fema.gov/EMI/>***

- Click on FEMA Independent Study
- Click on the NIMS Courses
- Click on IS-700.a National Incident Management (NIMS) An Introduction
- Click on “Take This Course” and follow the directions to take the web- based course  
    **\*\*Be sure to allot enough time to take the whole course at once (FEMA suggests 3 hours) \*\***
- Click on Take the Final Exam
- Follow the directions to take and submit the final exam.

### **Building Level Crisis Teams**

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### **Building Level Team Activation**

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- Accidental Death of Student
- Death of Sibling
- Acts of Trauma
- Bomb Threat
- Death of Prominent Person In Community
- Faculty Death
- Natural Disaster: fire, tornado, flood, etc.
- Kidnapping
- Suicide Attempt
- Suicide Completion
- Sexual Abuse Allegation

### **Principal Role**

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- Select Crisis Team
- Determine appropriateness of activities
- Notify Central Administration Team the building team activated
- Coordinate periodic Crisis Team in-service training
- Keep documentation

### **Counselor or Assistant Principal, or Designee**

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- Receive Information
- Contact Principal
- Assemble Data
- Complete Crisis Intervention Form and / or Suicide Risk Scale
- Provide Counseling
- Contact Parents and Agencies

### **School Assigned School Psychologist**

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- Will Assess if Needed
- Provide Testing, Screening, or Counseling if Needed
- May Attend Parent Conference
- Liaison with Community Mental Health Agencies

### **Teacher Role**

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- Notify School Officials of Crisis
- Gather Information
- Document Information on Crisis Intervention Form

### **Custodians**

- Report Information to Team
- Provide Physical Supports as Needed

### **School Security Personnel**

- Gather Information on Crisis
- Alert Principal of Trespassers

### **Parents and / PTA**

- Provided Feedback from Parental Point of View
- Acts as Information Provider to Community, as Needed

### **Clergy**

- Receive Directions from School Administration

### **Physicians and Community Health Care Professionals**

- Receive Direction from School Administration
- Provide Comfort / Counseling
- Provide Information Regarding Outside Referrals

### **Community Support Services (Advisory Basis)**

- Offer Professional Advice and / or Inservices
- Provide Additional Student Counseling as Needed
- Provide Information / brochures for Parent / Community



## **Crisis Team Members**

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- Lead Member - School Psychologist or Counselor placed in charge to help direct on-site crisis intervention services
- Team Participants – Help with the interventions
- Building School Psychologist and Counselor - Become part of the team and assist for long-term follow-up, as needed

## District Level Crisis Teams

## Why a District Crisis Team?

- Used when building resources are exhausted or more than one class impacted by event
- Able to use district-wide resources and expertise

## Before you start your team.....

- Inventory district resources and agencies
- Coordinate with other departments
- Know your district's philosophy and political issues

## When starting a team....

- Obtain support of the administration
- Gather core group of team members from different levels
- Decide on training style
- Decide what team will and will not do
- Train core team members
- Update training yearly

## Crisis Team Members

- Lead Member - School Psychologist or Counselor placed in charge to help direct on-site crisis intervention services
- Team Participants - Help with interventions
- Building School Psychologist and Counselor - Become part of the team and assist for long-term follow-up, as needed

## How is the Team Mobilized?

- Call Comes in to Coordinator
- Level of Crisis is Assessed
- Team Members Mobilized
- On-Sight Interventions Take Place
- Review and Follow-up Procedures Evaluated
- Crisis Summary Completed

### Steps to Mobilizing the Intervention

- Confirm the Facts
  - Answer all the "wh" questions
- Create a Crisis Fact Sheet
- Come Up with a Plan
  - School Wide vs. Class-by-Class
  - Logistics (space, time, resources)
  - Confirm Team Members' Roles
  - Unexpected Contingencies

- Meet With Staff
  - Follow the Plan
- Generate Announcement (as needed)
- Generate Letter Home To Parents
- Target Specific Groups
  - Clubs, Homeroom, etc.
- Research / Contact Schools of Siblings

### Crisis Procedures

- Staff meeting to inform staff (both certificated and classified) of facts and to quell rumors as soon as possible after in school crisis is over
- Plan:
  - A PA announcement for the next school day, or
  - A prepared statement for each teacher to read (if they are able to)

### Crisis Procedures

- Out of school crisis/trauma –mobilize phone call tree with a prepared statement beginning with "I have some sad news to tell you..." to give staff time to prepare

### Crisis Procedures

- Schedule before school staff meeting (if timing allows)
- At the staff meeting:
  - plan for the students receiving the news
  - plan for dealing with the students after they receive the tragic news

### Crisis Procedures

- If there is no time for a staff meeting, carefully plan:
  - A PA announcement, or
  - A personally delivered announcement to each classroom

## Crisis Quick Reference Guide

The following points are suggestions that can be used during a crisis. Please refer to your district's crisis plan for specific policies and procedures.

### When Information is Obtained After School Hours:

- Use calling tree to notify staff
- Meet with Principal early to confirm details of your plan
- Meet with school staff to share intervention plan
- Notify students and complete on-site interventions

### When Information is Obtained the Morning of the Incident:

- Gather facts and mobilize team members as quickly as possible
- Notify school staff prior to a school-wide announcement
- Notify students
- Plan for small group and pull-out activities
- Send a letter home to parents

### When Information is Obtained During the School Day:

- Gather facts
- Notify teachers and staff about the crisis
- Notify students at the end of the school day
- Send a letter home to parents at the end of the day
- Have a end of the day follow-up staff meeting to plan for next day
- Have Crisis Team on-site the next morning

### At the Staff Meeting:

- Share any updated information, facts, etc.
- Answer questions as you can
- Encourage teachers to handle the situation in their own classroom
- Inform teachers where the pull-out area will be and how to identify students who may need to go there
- Request students be sent to pull-out area only with a hall pass
- Be prepared to call for substitute teachers, if needed

### School-Wide Announcement

- Write an announcement down and practice it before delivering it live
- Inform students that help is available, BUT DO NOT tell them to go to pull-out area on their own.

### Pull-Out Services

- Try to keep the groups small, and staffed with an adult
- Isolate very emotional students for more intense one-on-one services
- Follow-up with withdrawn or very angry students
- Allow students to share thoughts, feelings, emotions, stories, etc.
- Reconnect students with good coping strategies, such as talking to adults, working together, etc.
- Validate and allow for a large range of emotional responses
- Prepare an activity at the end of sharing, such as writing a letter or a card to the family.
- Students who are too emotional may need to be sent home to an adult or guardian
- Have staff members walk the school halls, check restrooms, etc. to look for any students that are not where they belong
- Screen any notes or cards prior to sending them to the family

### Other On-Site Tips if a Student is Involved in the Crisis:

- Have a Crisis Team member follow the student's schedule and touch base with each class
- Follow-up with activities the student was involved with (clubs, sports, etc.)
- Follow-up with siblings of the student, who may be at other schools and may have different last names
- Having poster paper for students to write a message on during lunch can be helpful
- Monitor the student's locker if it becomes a memorial, so that it does not become a fire/safety hazard
- When the time comes to move the student's desk away in class, rearrange the whole class
- Allow students to create ideas to memorialize the student

### Team Members:

- Keep track of team members during crisis intervention
- Debrief as a team after crisis
- Remind team members to have lunch/drink water throughout the day

**Classroom Discussion Guidelines**

The following list provides guidelines for classroom discussions related to a school crisis. Teachers may want to use the open-ended questions provided at the bottom of the page to help them structure discussion following the announcement of a crisis situation.

1. Review the facts and dispel rumors.
2. If a suicide occurs, discuss facts and myths about suicide.
3. Inform students of locations for grief support.
4. Encourage students to express their reactions in a way that is appropriate for them, and affirm the appropriateness of *all* responses from severe upset to no visible reaction whatsoever.
5. Discuss possible guilt feelings or feelings of responsibility.
6. Discuss students' possible fears for their safety and that of their peers and siblings.
7. Ask students to support one another and to escort any friend who needs additional help to one of the designated locations for grief support.
8. Reassure students that any adult in the building is available to help.
9. Allow students to discuss other losses they have experienced. Help them understand this loss often brings up past losses; this is a normal occurrence.
10. Encourage students to discuss their feelings with their parents/families.

**Suggested Questions**

1. What was it like for you when you heard the news?
2. Did/will you discuss it at home? How did it go?/How do you think it will go?
3. If you were a member of \_\_\_\_\_'s family, what do you think you would want at a time like this?
4. How can you students help each other through this?
5. What other losses have you experienced?
6. What thoughts and feelings does this bring up for you?
7. What are some of the memories you have of \_\_\_\_\_?

**Suggested Group Activities (depending on age/maturity of students)**

1. Designing sympathy card for family
2. Drawing a picture of how you are feeling.
3. Making large individual flowers to put together as an arrangement at the funeral.
4. Writing a letter listing 10 things remembered about the student with illustrations.
5. Compose a brief letter to parents reporting a memory of the student.
6. Discuss options to develop a memorial, i.e. planting a tree, designing a plaque, donating to a charity, if tragedy was not a suicide.

Adapted/revised 7/1/99

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AFTER A LOSS

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- Writing a eulogy
- Designing a yearbook page commemorating the deceased
- Honoring the deceased by collecting memorabilia for the trophy cabinet
- Writing stories about the victim or the incident
- Drawing pictures of the incident
- Debating controversial issues
- Investigating laws governing similar incidents
- Creating a sculpture
- Creating a class banner *in memoriam*
- Building a fitness course, a sign for the school, or a bulletin board in memory.
- Discussing ways to cope with traumatic situations
- Discussing the stages of grief
- Conducting a mock trial if laws were broken
- Starting a new school activity such as a SADD unit if a child was killed by a drunk driver
- Encouraging students to keep a journal of events and of their reactions, especially in an ongoing situation
- Placing a collection box in the class for notes to the family
- Urging students to write the things they wish they could have said to the deceased
- Practicing and composing a song in memory of the deceased
- Discussing alternatives for coping with depression, if suicide is involved
- Analyzing why people take drugs and suggesting ways to help abusers, if substance abuse related
- Writing a reaction paper
- Writing a "where I was when it happened" report
- Discussing historical precedents about issues related to crisis
- Reading to the class (bibliography in the appendix)
- Encouraging mutual support
- Discussing and preparing children for funeral (what to expect, people's reactions, what to do, what to say)
- Directing energy to creative pursuits, physical exercise, or verbal expression when anger arises
- Creating a class story relevant to the issue



# CHILDHOOD REACTIONS TO DEATH AND SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS

## Infants and Toddlers Approximate Ages 0 through 3 years

### Reaction to Death

1. Generalized distress, shock, protest, despair
2. May react to grief of caretaker

### Suggested Responses

1. Maintain consistent nurturing figure

## Preschool through Kindergarten Approximate Ages 3 through 6 years

### Reaction to Death

1. Confusion, regression, generalized fear; helplessness & passivity
2. May seem unaffected
3. Repeated questioning. Do not understand permanence of death. Magical thinking. May believe superficial events are related to the death
4. May have difficulty verbalizing distress
5. Sleep disturbances (night terrors & nightmares: fear of sleep; fear of being alone)
6. Regressive symptoms (thumb sucking, enuresis, regressive speech)

### Suggested Responses

1. Provide reassurance; secure, loving environment consistent rituals
2. Provide opportunity to ask questions: Draw, read to child
3. Give repeated, concrete explanation using simple, honest words
4. Actively listen and observe behaviors. Provide words to describe.
5. Encourage child to let parents know. May require additional attention.
6. Tolerate regressive symptoms in a time-limited manner.

## Kindergarten through Second Grade Approximate Ages 5 through 8 years

### Reaction to Death

1. May begin to understand the finality of death but may believe the dead have feelings and biological functioning—dead may return; death can not touch self; death may be viewed as a person.
2. May behave as though nothing has happened. May ask inappropriate questions.
3. Sleep disturbances, regressive symptoms, generalized anxiety may exist.
4. Difficulty verbalizing distress. May engage in repetitive play themes.
5. Denial, anger, general distress, withdrawal.

### Suggested Responses

1. Give simple, concrete explanations. Look for magical thinking. Answer—directly and with as little excessive explanation as possible.
2. Provide opportunity to share concerns yet allow time to engage in activities.
3. Tolerates within appropriate time limits; provide nurturance, stability; Discuss dreams; simplistically explain purpose of dreams.
4. Provide emotional labels.
5. Engage in reading, drawing, playing with the child. Provide reassurance.

## Third Through Sixth Grade Approximate Ages 8 through 12 years

### Reaction to Death

1. Finality of death understood, morbid curiosity.
2. Preoccupation with own actions during the event; issues of responsibility and guilt.
3. Specific fears, perhaps triggered by traumatic reminder.
4. Preoccupation with event.
5. Fear of being overwhelmed by their feelings (crying, fury)
6. Impaired concentration and learning.
7. Sleep disturbances (nightmares, fear of sleeping alone).
8. Concerns regarding own and others' safety.
9. Altered and inconsistent behavior, (e.g., unusually aggressive or reckless behavior)
10. Somatic complaints.
11. Hesitation to discuss fears, concerns with caretaker.
12. Feeling disturbed, confused and frightened by grief response; fear of ghosts.

### Suggested Responses

1. Answer questions directly and honestly.
2. Help to express their thoughts and imaginings; reassess realistic expectations
3. Identify and articulate anxieties; encourage child not to generalize.
4. Provide opportunity to talk about event; assess distortions; validate feelings
5. Allow expression of feelings in supportive environment.
6. Teach and encourage use of relaxation techniques; encourage assertiveness with adults.
7. Provide information regarding purpose of dreams. Discuss dreams.
8. Allow expression of worries; provide realistic information; encourage constructive activities on behalf of deceased.
9. Teach methods to cope with anger; acknowledge anger.
10. Identify physical sensations; identify relationship to death if possible.
11. Encourage assertiveness; offer opportunity to meet with caretaker.
12. Encourage positive memories as intrusive, traumatic memories are addressed.

## Adolescents Approximate Ages 13 and up

### Reaction to Death

1. Detachment, shame and guilt.
2. Self-consciousness about fears, sense of vulnerability; fear being labeled abnormal.
3. Post-traumatic acting out behavior (e.g., drug use, sexual acting-out, delinquency).
4. Abrupt shifts in interpersonal relationships.
5. Premature entrance into adulthood (e.g., leaving school, getting married) or reluctance to leave home.
6. Shock, anxiety, distress, denial, anger, depression, withdrawal, aggression.

### Suggested Responses

1. Provide opportunity to talk about event; assess distortions; validate feelings.
2. Identify adult nature of these concerns; encourage peer support.
3. Relate behaviors to numbing pain, expression of anger.
4. Talk about strained relationships due to stress.
5. Encourage a period of evaluation and problem solving before making major life decisions.
6. Allow and encourage ventilation of feelings; encourage support group; provide appropriate literature.

Adapted from Heath (1990), Lord (1990), St. Mary's Hospice, Wolfelt (1983)

## Developmental Stage of Grief

| AGE   | UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH   | HOW THEY EXPRESS FEELINGS OF GRIEF   | GRIEVING BEHAVIOR   | ADDITIONAL COMMENTS   |
|-------|--|--|---|---|
| 2-5   | Do not understand finality of death. It is temporary and reversible.   | Do not have the vocabulary to express grief.<br><br>Feelings will be acted out in play and behavior.   | Crying.<br>Egocentric concern.<br>Have an interest in dead things.<br>At times will act like the death never happened.                            | May ask same questions over and over.<br><br>They react to death in light of their own experiences with it.   |
| 6-9   | Beginning to understand finality of death.<br><br>Believe death is real but it only happens to others, not them. | Have strong feelings of loss but it is difficult to show them.<br><br>Need permission to grieve especially boys.   | Magical thinking – what they wish for happens.<br><br>Can be withdrawn.<br>Can experience nightmares.<br>Aggressive behavior, especially in boys. | May feel responsible for the death because of their behavior or magical thinking.<br><br>Personify death as ghosts, monsters, etc. If it is real they can't avoid it.                                     |
| 9-12  | Have a good understanding of finality of death.<br><br>Have a curiosity about the physical aspects of death.     | Have the vocabulary to express feelings but will often not express them verbally, but in behavior, concerns are egocentric.<br><br>Need encouragement to express feelings. | Lack of concentration.<br>Decline in school grades.<br>Misbehavior<br>Aggressiveness, especially in boys.   | May identify with deceased by imitating their mannerisms. have short attention spans, can be grieving one minute, act like nothing happened the next.<br>Adults sometimes misinterpret as not caring.     |
| 13-18 | Have adult understanding of death.<br><br>Philosophize about life and death, search for meaning to death.        | Can express feelings but often choose not to because they feel they must be strong.<br><br>Paradox of feeling immune to death but also fear it.                            | Aggressive behavior, need for comforting and reassurance especially girls.<br><br>Participate in dangerous behavior like drugs or alcohol.        | Have the additional problems of puberty and adolescents to compound grief. Death affects entire life of adolescent, school, relationships with others.<br>May appear to be handling it, but really isn't. |

Taken from: Ralph Klicker, Ph.D.

## Large Scale Crisis Management

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## Family / Community Meeting

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### Guidelines for a Family / Community Meeting

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- Held on the evening of the first day
- Impart Information -
  - Parent Information Packet
  - State the facts
- Assist community members in processing their reactions to crisis
- No media allowed

### Parent / Family Information Packet

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- Most Updated Crisis Fact Sheet
- Relevant District Policies
- Community Contacts
- Services the School will Provide
- Typical Children's Reactions
- Suggestions for Helping Children

### Who?

---

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Highest School Representative | • Security Liaison         |
| • Crisis Coordinator            | • Media Liaison            |
| • Police Spokesperson           | • Red Cross Representative |
| • District Attorney             | • Counseling Liaison       |
| • Victim's Advocate             | • Hospital Representative  |

### Sample Agenda

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7:00-7:10

Superintendent opens meeting.

Crisis Coordinator makes sure media is not present.

Information Packet distributed.

7:10 - 7:20

Sheriff reviews facts and answers questions

7:20-7:30

District Attorney discusses  
litigation and answers questions.

7:30-7:40

Victim's Advocate provides  
community support options and  
answers questions.

7:40-7:50

Hospital Advocate updates  
victims' status and answers  
questions (BEWARE OF HIPPA  
REGULATIONS).

7:50-8:00

Crisis Counselor outlines plans for next few  
days, including status of school day,  
curriculum, funeral announcements, and  
debriefing procedures.

8:00-8:15

Counseling Liaison discuss how parents can  
help children and themselves deal with crisis.  
What to expect, typical reactions, and stress  
management techniques.

8:15-9:00

Each speaker takes questions from the  
audience. End on a positive note, looking to  
the future.

9:00 - 9:05

Crisis Coordinator closes the meeting.

9:05

Media Liaison holds a press conference  
about the meeting as far away from the  
doors as possible to allow people to leave.

## Large Group Processing

## Large Group Intervention

- For use when group size is more than 30
- Break group into small, equal groups
- 5 processing questions asked in a timed fashion (60 to 90 seconds / person / question)
- Each question shown on overhead projector
- "Stop, please go to the next person in your group. Thank you."

- Summarize the session at the end:
  - This is only a starting point
  - Invite people to stay for additional small group processing

## Processing Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to the group and tell where you were when you first become aware of the tragedy and specifically what were your initial sensory perceptions? What did you see, hear, taste, touch, or smell?
2. What thoughts or reactions have you been having since the tragedy?

3. What is your biggest concern or worry about the immediate future?
4. What would help you feel safe right now?
5. What has helped you cope when you have had to deal with difficult things or losses in your life before? What can you do to help yourself cope now?

|                 | Groups of 30 or More   | Groups of 29 or Less  |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Questions       | Same 5 questions   | Same 5 questions  |
| Rules           | Follow large group procedures with equal size groups and time limits.                  | Leader personally asks questions to small group seated in a circle. Scribe takes notes of key points. |
| Advantages      | Large group process in a short amount of time and everyone has an opportunity to talk. | Each participant who chooses to talk gets personal attention from leader.                             |
| Disadvantage    | Participants only have mental health leader summative, not individual feedback.        | Some participants may dominate the session and it may be quite lengthy.                               |
| Recommended for | Faculty, other adults, and high school students.                                       | All age students and any adult group.   |

## **Crisis Management Briefing**

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## **Crisis Management Briefing (CMB)**

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- For Large Groups or Organizations
- Inform and Consult
- Allow Psychological Decompression
- Provide Stress Management
- Four Phases
- Participant Leave with Information and Resources

## **Four Phases of Crisis Management Briefing**

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- Phase 1: Bring People Together Who Have Experienced a Common Crisis Event
- Phase 2: Explain the Facts
- Phase 3: Discuss Common Reactions
- Phase 4: Address Personal Coping and Self-Care needs

## Suicide

## Suicide Terms

- Suicide Ideation - Thoughts or expressions related to death or suicide.
- Suicide Attempt (Acting) - The deliberate attempt by an individual using a potentially lethal means to inflict injury that would result in death.
- Suicide Completion - A suicide attempt has resulted in a death.

## Suicide Facts

- Approximately 2,000 to 2,500 suicides / year
- Locally, an average of 4 suicides / year in Summit County, ages 10 to 21
  - with 8 to 25 attempts / completion, that leaves between 32 to 100 more attempts / year.

## Intervention Goals

- KEEP THE STUDENT SAFE
- Assess levels of danger
- Refer for assistance

## Suicide Interventions

- Follow District's Procedures
  - Action must be taken
  - Do not minimize ideation

## Suicide Postvention Guidelines

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- Do not dismiss school or encourage funeral attendance during school hours
- Do not dedicate a memorial to the deceased
- Do not have a large assembly

### **Suicide Postvention Guidelines**

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- Give facts to the students
- Emphasize prevention and everyone's role
- Provide individual and group counseling
- Emphasize that no one is to blame for the suicide
- Emphasize that help is available

### **Suicide Postvention Guidelines**

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- Emphasize alternatives to suicide
- Contact the family of the deceased



# AKRON PUBLIC SCHOOLS - CRISIS INTERVIEW

## SUICIDE RISK SCALE

(Experimental Edition)

*This form is to be completed when the student is feeling suicidal, threatening suicide, or in the process of attempting suicide.*

Evaluator's Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

### PART I

**Assessing Risk:** Circle all of the following items relating to the client's situation.

1. Student has a plan? YES NO

Method:

Firearms

Drowning

Drugs/Poison

Car Exhaust

Suffocating

Cutting

Hanging

Jumping

Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Method on hand? YES NO

3. Making final plans? YES NO

4. Prior attempts? YES NO

5. Suicide note? YES NO

6. Previous psychiatric history? YES NO

7. Suicide survivor? YES NO

8. Drug/alcohol use? YES NO

9. Male 15+ YES NO

10. Personal loss? YES NO

### PART II

From your conversation with the student, rate your impression of the student's status on *each* of the following items. (A score of 1 indicates the item is not an issue.) Ratings should be based on *initial perceptions of the student's present status*, rather than on changes resulting from your intervention.

|                            | <u>NONE</u> |   |   |   | <u>EXTREME</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|----------------|
| 11. Sense of hopelessness  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 12. Sense of worthlessness | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 13. Social isolation       | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 14. Depression             | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 15. Impulsivity            | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 16. Hostility              | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 17. Intent to die          | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |
| 18. Environmental stress*  | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5              |

*\*The level of stress precipitated by any actual or anticipated events in the student's life, such as loss of a loved one, change in lifestyle, illness, etc. (Refer to Student Stressor Scale)*

PART I SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 point for each "yes")

PART II SUBTOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Sum of circled numbers)

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Part I + Part II)

**SUICIDAL RISK: LOW** (score of 0-9)

**MODERATE** (score of 10-19)

**HIGH** (score of 20-50)

*Regardless of the risk level, items within this scale are important aspects to consider when assessing overall status*

Engaged student in a "NO SUICIDE" contract?

YES NO

Utilized student's personal support systems for referral?

YES NO

Mobilized emergency mental health delivery system?

YES NO

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_



## NOTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY CONFERENCE FORM

I, or we, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent(s)  
or guardian(s) of (include student number) \_\_\_\_\_  
were involved in a conference with school personnel on \_\_\_\_\_. We have been  
notified that our child has expressed thoughts or ideas related to suicide or suicide behaviors. We have been further  
advised of intervention options, including, but not limited to, seeking some psychological / psychiatric consultation  
immediately within the community. School personnel have clarified the district's role and will provide follow-up  
assistance to our child to support the treatment services from within the community.

Actions taken: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Referrals suggested: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Personnel & Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Personnel & Title

For Suicide Assessment, stop here; do not complete Duty to Warn/Protect pages ahead.



### Office Use Only:

- ☐ Original placed in Permanent File
- ☐ Copy provided to parent/guardian
- ☐ Copy sent to Terry Bendo & Erich Merkle, Pupil Adjustment Program, c/o Student Services, Administration Building

## **Active Shooter Emergency**

An active shooter emergency involves one or more persons using a firearm, engaging in a random or systematic shooting spree.

### **ALICE**

"ALICE" is an acronym for 5 steps you can utilize in order to increase your chances of surviving a surprise attack by an Active Shooter. It is important to remember that the "ALICE" response does not follow a set of actions you "shall, must, will" do when confronted with an Active Shooter. Your survival is paramount in this situation. Deal with known information and don't worry about unknowns. You may use only 1 or 2 parts of the response plan or you may have to utilize all 5. In this type of incident, your perception is the reality. You will be deciding the appropriate action to take.

1) **Alert-** Can be anything.

- Gunfire – Witness - PA Announcement - Phone alert

2) **Lockdown-** This is a semi-secure starting point from which you will make survival decisions. If you decide not to evacuate, secure the room.

- Lock the door. Cover any windows in the door if possible
- Tie down the door, if possible, using belts, purse straps, shoe laces, etc.
- Barricade the door with anything available (desks, chairs, etc.)
- Look for alternate escape routes (windows, other doors)
- Call 911
- Move out of the doorway in case gunfire comes through
- Silence or place cell phones on vibrate
- Once secured, do not open the door for anyone. Police will enter the room when the situation is over.
- Gather weapons (coffee cups, chairs, books, pens, etc.) and mentally prepare to defend yourself or others.
- Put yourself in position to surprise the active shooter should they enter the room.

3) **Inter-** Using any means necessary to pass on real time information.

- Given in plain language
- Can be derived from 911 calls, video surveillance, etc.
- Who, what, where, when and how information
- Can be used by people in the area or who may come into it to make common sense decisions
- Can be given by "Flash Alerts", PA Announcements or Police Radio speakers

4) **Counter-** This is the use of simple, proactive techniques should you be confronted by the Active Shooter.

- Anything can be a weapon
- Throws things at the shooters head to disrupt their aim

- Create as much noise as possible
- Attack in a group (swarm)
- Grab the shooters limbs and head and take them to the ground and hold them there
- Fight dirty-bite, kick, scratch, gouge eyes, etc.
- Run around the room and create chaos
- If you have control of the shooter call 911 and tell the police where you are and listen to their commands when officers arrive on scene.

5) **Evacuate**- Remove yourself from the danger zone as quickly as possible.

- Decide if you can safely evacuate
- Run in a zigzag pattern as fast as you can
- Do not stop running until you are far away from the area
- Bring something to throw with you in case you would encounter the Active Shooter
- Consider if the fall from a window will kill you
- Break out windows and attempt to quickly clear glass from the frame
- Consider using belts, clothing or other items as an improvised rope to shorten the distance you would fall
- Hang by your hands from the window ledge to shorten your drop
- Attempt to drop into shrubs, mulch or grass to lessen the chance of injury
- Do not attempt to drive from the area

## **Secondary Issues**

- Responding Police will have their weapons drawn and ready for use. They do not know exactly who the shooter is and will probably point weapons at you. Remain calm and follow any directions they may give you.
- Responding Police are there to stop the Active Shooter as soon as possible. They will bypass injured people and will not help you escape.
- If you come into possession of a weapon, do NOT carry or brandish it! Police may think you are the Active Shooter. If possible, put it in a trashcan and carry it with you. If you come across Police, calmly tell them what you are carrying and why. Follow their commands.
- If you are in lockdown for a long period of time, give consideration to issues such as bathroom use, keeping people calm, etc.
- Discuss before hand with people in your office or classes where you will meet up should you have to evacuate and make it a place easily accessible and far away from the scene.
- Talk to your students and co-workers before hand to know if they have any special skills. Consider strategic placement of these people in a classroom or office setting. You may have current or ex-military personnel, medically trained persons, or even people trained in martial arts that can provide assistance in this type of incident.
- Consider setting up classrooms and offices to make it harder for an Active Shooter to enter and acquire targets.

## Handling the Media

## Response by the Media, in Hours

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- 0-12 hours: What are the facts?
- 12-24 hours: Who are the victims?
- 24-36 hours: Why did it happen, and who is to blame?
- 36-72 hours: In-depth analysis
- 72 hours on: Funeral concerns and societal issues

## Communicating with the Media

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- Consult with Director of Communications
- What happened: avoid sensational account
- Who was involved: use general terms, unless names already public knowledge and next of kin notified
- How were individuals involved: report general way

## Communicating with the Media

(Taken from Coping with Crisis, Lessons Learned, Scott Poland, OSPA Fall Conference, November 9, 2001)

- Where it happened
- When it occurred
- Prognosis for involved: verify facts
- Avoid "No Comment"
- Be knowledgeable, sincere, and compassionate
- Use good nonverbal communication

### Tips for Handling the Media

- Provide a media area off school grounds where media personnel can receive crisis information.
  - Notify media that they do not have access to school grounds
  - Use security personnel if necessary
- Assign only one person to communicate with members of the media and to release information regarding victims or perpetrators.
  - Withhold names of victims and perpetrators until families have been notified and have given permission to release information
  - Verify all information
  - Monitor media outlets for errors in reporting
- Work collaboratively with the media.
  - Use the media to relay important crisis information and supportive services
  - Educate the media on contagion and vicarious traumatization
- Conduct regularly scheduled press conferences, even if there is no new information to report.
  - Focus on the facts
  - Develop three to five key messages for parents and community
  - Detail the school's plan for the next day
  - Repeat the question before giving an answer to demonstrate understanding
  - Do not feel obligated to answer all questions, but avoid the statement, "No comment."
  - Set and enforce clear time limits
- Minimize media exposure to students, staff, and families.
  - Use side or back entrances for students, staff, and families
  - Provide guidelines to students and staff about communicating with the media
  - Assign a staff member to the victims' or perpetrators' families to help the enter/exit the school building
- Control access to family and community meetings.
  - Deny media access to meetings
  - Discuss the role of a parent who is also a member of the media
  - Hold a short press conference after community meeting

(From *School Crisis Prevention and Intervention: The PREPaRE Model* (2009) Brock, Nickerson, Reeves, Jimerson, Lieberman, & Feinberg)

## Threat Assessment

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## Are Schools Safe?

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- "135,000 Guns in School Every Day!"
- "School Shootings are on the Increase!!"

## What was the worse case of school violence in US history?

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## What is the likelihood that there will be a shooting at your school?

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One case in \_\_\_\_ years.

Dr. Dewey Cornell, Student Threat Assessment

## Threat Assessment Facts

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- In 81% of school violence acts, at least one other person knew.
- In 59% of the acts, two or more other people knew

## What is the profile of a school shooter?

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## Profiling Does Not Work

- Types of Profiling:
  - Prospective Profiling – using checklists of possible characteristics to speculate about future behavior
  - Retrospective Profiling – Analysis of a crime scene, infer characteristics of the offender.
- School Shootings are too rare
- Profiles make false predictions
- Profiles generate stereotypes
- Profiles don't solve problems

Dewey Cornell, Student Threat Assessment

## 6 Principals of the Threat Assessment Process

(abridged from Secret Service/DOE Guide)

1. Targeted violence is the result of an understandable process, not a random or spontaneous act.
2. Consider person, situation, setting, & target.
3. Maintain an investigative, skeptical mindset.
4. Focus on facts and behaviors, not traits.
5. Use information from all possible sources.
6. Making a threat is not the same as posing a threat.

Dewey Cornell, Student Threat Assessment

## A Model Threat Assessment Plan

Notification

Assessment

Management

FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit - 1

## Notification

- Students, teachers, staff, and parents **MUST** report on receiving information on a threat of violence
- Assume every threat is serious
- Immediately report to supervisor
- Stress difference between snitching and reporting:
  - Snitching – informing on someone for personal gain
  - Telling – attempting to stop someone from being hurt

FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit - 1

## Assessment

- Be aware of:
  - Self-Victimization – Attention-seeking attempt to portray self as victim
  - Third-Party Victimization – Attempt to throw suspicion on another individual as attacker

FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit - 1

## Assessment

- Review blogs, Myspace and other social networking sites for information on subject and victim
- Look for Emotional Leakage (movies, writings, art, etc.)
- Conduct Investigation
  - Adolescent & Child Urgent Threat Evaluation (ACUTE) - PAR
  - 11-Key Questions DOE and US Secret Service Threat Assessment

FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit - 1



## **Management**

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- Policies and procedures for dealing with victims and perpetrators
  - Duty to Warn
- Interventions to reduce the risk of violence
  - Bully prevention program, community involvement, interagency collaboration, etc.
- Follow-up to assess intervention results

# Eleven Questions to Guide Data Collection in a Threat Assessment Inquiry

*DOE and United States Secret Service Threat Assessment Guide*

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Star areas of concern</i> | <i>Eleven Key Areas</i>  |
| <b>1.</b>                    | <b>What are the student's motive(s) and goals?</b>   |
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What motivated the student to make the statement or take the actions that caused him/her to come to attention?</li> </ul>   |
|                              |  |
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?</li> </ul>  |
|                              |  |
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the student have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?</li> </ul>   |
|                              |  |
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result? Does the potential attacker feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternatives?</li> </ul>                      |
|                              |  |
| <b>2.</b>                    | <b>Has the student shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?</b>   |
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School attacks or attackers; weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon); incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murders). Ask about Columbine, Santana, etc.</li> </ul> |
|                              |  |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?</b>  |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What if anything has the student communicated to someone else (targets, friends, other students, teachers, family, others) or written in a diary, journal, or Web Site concerning his/her ideas and/or intentions?</li> </ul> |
|           |  |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have friends been alerted or "warned away"?</li> </ul>  |
|           |  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Has the student engaged in attack-related behaviors? These behaviors might include:</b>   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing an attack idea or plan</li> </ul>  |
|           |  |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons</li> </ul>   |
|           |  |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casing or checking out, possible sites and areas for an attack</li> </ul>   |
|           |  |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehearsing attacks or ambushes</li> </ul>   |
|           |  |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Is the student's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?</b>   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does information from collateral interviews and from the student's own behavior confirm or dispute what the student says is going on?</li> </ul>  |
|           |  |

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 6. | <b>Does the student have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?</b>  |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How organized is the student's thinking and behavior?</li> </ul>  |
|    |  |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the student have the means; e.g., access to a weapon, to carry out an attack?</li> </ul>                 |
|    |  |
| 7. | <b>Is the student experiencing hopelessness, desperation and/or despair?</b>   |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there information to suggest that the student is experiencing desperation and/or despair?</li> </ul>       |
|    |  |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the student experienced a recent failure, loss and/or loss of status?</li> </ul>                          |
|    |  |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the student known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?</li> </ul>                        |
|    |  |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the student now, or has the student ever been, suicidal or "accident-prone"?</li> </ul>                    |
|    |  |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the student engaged in behavior that suggests that he or she has considered ending their life?</li> </ul> |
|    |  |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?</b>   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the student have at least one relationship with an adult where the student feels that he or she can confide in the adult and believes that the adult will listen without judging or jumping to conclusions? (Students with trusting relationships with adults may be directed away from violence and despair and toward hope.)</li> </ul> |
|           |   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the student emotionally connected to—or disconnected from—other students?</li> </ul>  |
|           |   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the student previously come to someone's attention or raised concern in a way that suggested he or she needs intervention or supportive services?</li> </ul>   |
|           |   |
| <b>9.</b> | <b>Are other people concerned about the student's potential for violence?</b>   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are those who know the student concerned that he or she might take action based on violent ideas or plans?</li> </ul>  |
|           |   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are those who know the student concerned about a specific target?</li> </ul>   |
|           |   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have those who know the student witnessed recent changes or escalations in mood and behavior?</li> </ul>   |
|           |   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>10.</b> | <b>What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?</b>  |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What factors in the student's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that the student will attempt to mount an attack at school?</li> </ul>  |
|            |  |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the response of other persons who know about the student's ideas or plan to mount an attack? (Do those who know about the student's ideas actively discourage the student from acting violently, encourage the student to attack, deny the possibility of violence, passively collude with an attack, etc.?)</li> </ul> |
|            |  |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Does the student see violence as an acceptable—or desirable—or the only—way to solve problems?</b>  |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the setting around the student (friends, fellow students, parents, teachers, adults) explicitly or implicitly support or endorse violence as a way of resolving problems or disputes?</li> </ul>   |
|            |  |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the student been "dared" by others to engage in an act of violence?</li> </ul>  |
|            |  |

## Team Burnout

## Team Member Debriefing

- "Debriefing of the Debriefers"
- Team members are debriefed to ensure crisis situation dealt with appropriately
- Limits team member burnout

## Caring for the Crisis Responder

- Contributing factors
  - professional isolation
  - Emotional drain of providing continued empathy
  - Ambiguous successes
- Stress reactions
  - Burnout
  - Counter-transference
  - Compassion fatigue

## Burnout: Handling Daily Stress

(From APS Crisis Handbook)

- Like yourself
- Define tasks at hand
- Learn to accept what you cannot change
- Talk about troubles
- Relax creatively
- Work off tension

## More Stress Tips

- Treat yourself to sufficient sleep
- Take medications cautiously
- Know your limits and your personal issues
- Don't be afraid to say no

## **Final Thoughts, Resources, and Questions**

## **Tips**

- Create a Crisis Kit for your district
  - Handouts, examples, references, books, etc
  - Keep a copy of the Crisis Kit in your car
- Network with other agencies for opportunities
- Realize you are entering a closed political system
  - Avoid first year system changes

## **More Tips**

- Try to work as a committee to shape policies, handouts, materials, procedures, etc.
- Bookmark important websites, such as the NASP resource website



### Using Technology to Your Advantage

The use of tablets and smart phones as a useful tool is on the increase these days. The Crisis Committee has been exploring applications that might be useful in crisis intervention work. The following are applications that are all currently available for the iPad, and are free through the Apple Store:

First Aid - There are a number of paid apps for First Aide, but there are a number of free ones too. I like First Aid Lit HD, which gives you the signs, symptoms, and treatment for a number of basic first aid needs, such as burns, broken bones, etc. There are more complex ones that you can pay for, but this seems to cover most situations.

CPR –Choking – This free app gives you step-by-step directions on how to perform CPR and emergency chocking first aid.

American Red Cross Shelter View – This app will provide you with a real-time map of the US listing which Red Cross Emergency Shelters are currently open and active. You can pick a shelter, and contact information is provided.

FEMA - This free app helps you build a disaster kit, apply for assistance if you are a survivor, view maps of disaster recovery centers, and participate in a blog.

Police Scanners – US Scanner is a free, nation-wide system of police scanners by state, and by county. It could come in handy to obtain updated information during a crisis.

Disaster Prep – This free app has information on disaster kits, medical information, and personal contact information. If you want, it will send reminders when it is time to update your disaster kit.

ICRC – This app allows you to keep in touch with the International Committee of the Red Cross, with news, films, and publications.

Flashlight Applications – There are a number of application that allow you to turn you iPad into a flashlight. Free Light is one that has a color and strobe function to allow you to turn your tablet into an emergency beacon.

Dropbox – While not strictly a crisis site, this free on-line storage program allows you to access your documents online from your computer or iPad. This is a great place to store sample crisis letters, copies of procedures, crisis checklists, and other documents you might find helpful.

## **Crisis Intervention Resource Kit: Checklist**

### **Files:**

- ☐ Abuse Report Form
- ☐ Akron Crisis Procedures
- ☐ Bomb Threat
- ☐ Classroom Interventions (Tissue Paper Flower Instructions, Grief Cards, etc.)
- ☐ Community Resources
- ☐ Death Adjustment
- ☐ Disaster: Parent Handout
- ☐ Disaster: Teacher Handout
- ☐ Emergency Conference Documentation
- ☐ Large Scale Incident Procedures
  - ☐ Student Reunification Procedures      ☐ Student Release Form      ☐ Parent Letter
  - ☐ Student and Personnel Tracking Form      ☐ Notice of First Aid Care
- ☐ On-Site Crisis Team Member Sign-In
- ☐ PA Announcement - Sample
- ☐ Paper – Blank
- ☐ Parent Letter – Examples
- ☐ School Directions
- ☐ Suicide Information
- ☐ Suicide Risk Scale
- ☐ Teacher Packet – Most Requested Handouts
- ☐ Threat of Violence (Akron Procedures, 11-Key Questions, etc.)
- ☐ Victimization Information

### **Supplies:**

- ☐ Name Badges      ☐ Kleenex      ☐ Pens/Pencils      ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Emergency Money (pop, coffee, phone calls)

## WS1 Handout 13: Crisis Response Box Elements

This table includes the specific materials that may be included in a crisis response box. The member of the crisis team, using terminology from the Incident Command System (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2004) who is likely to be responsible for each item in the response box is also listed.

| Element                                      | Responsible Team Member                                |
|--|--|
| Crisis Management Team phone numbers         | Critical Incident Commander                            |
| Crisis Response Team role descriptions       | Critical Incident Commander                            |
| Media staging area/resources*                | Public Information Officer                             |
| Media management policy                      | Public Information Officer                             |
| Community emergency resources listing*       | Liaison Officer  |
| Emergency response personnel staging area    | Safety Officer/Liaison Officer                         |
| Structural engineering resources             | Safety Officer   |
| Aerial photos of the campus                  | Intelligence Section                                   |
| School community map                         | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Campus layout (with staging areas indicated) | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Blueprints of all school buildings           | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Crisis incident log                          | Intelligence Section                                   |
| AM/FM battery-operated radio (batteries)     | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Battery-operated weather radio (batteries)   | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Battery-operated laptop (with AirPort)       | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Site status report forms                     | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Damage documentation tools (e.g., cameras)   | Intelligence Section                                   |
| Keys for all campus facilities               | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./F&G Sp.)  |
| Fire alarm turn-off procedures               | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./ F&G Sp.) |
| Sprinkler system turn-off procedures         | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./F&G Sp.)  |
| Utility shut-off valves/tools                | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./F&G Sp.)  |
| Gas line and utility layout                  | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./F&G Sp.)  |
| Cable television satellite feed shut-off     | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./F&G Sp.)  |
| Yellow caution tape                          | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SRA Sp.)  |
| Search and rescue supplies/equipment*        | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SRA Sp.)  |
| Student photos                               | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SRA Sp.)  |
| Parent Center location                       | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./CM Sp.)   |
| Evacuation routes and assembly procedures*   | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SAR Sp.)  |
| Evacuations sites                            | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SAR Sp.)  |

| Element  | Responsible Team Member                               |
|--|---|
| Student disposition/release forms                  | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SAR Sp.) |
| Student release procedures                         | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SAR Sp.) |
| Student attendance roster                          | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./SAR sp)  |
| Traffic management plan                            | Operations Section (Security & Safety Coord./TS Sp.)  |
| Student emergency cards                            | Operations Section (Student Care Coord./SFW&S Sp.)    |
| Special needs student listing (e.g., meds)         | Operations Section (Student Care Coord./SFW&S Sp.)    |
| Crisis codes established                           | Operations Section (Student Care Coord./CI Sp.)       |
| Lockdown procedures                                | Operations Section (Student Care Coord./CI Sp.)       |
| Crisis intervention resource listing               | Operations Section (Student Care Coord./CI Sp.)       |
| Crisis intervention procedures/resources*          | Operations Section (Student Care Coord./CI Sp.)       |
| First aid supplies list and location*              | Operations Section (Emergency Medical Coord.)         |
| First aid procedures                               | Operations Section (Emergency Medical Coord.)         |
| Morgue procedures and supplies*                    | Operations Section (Emergency Medical Coord.)         |
| Translator listing                                 | Operations Section (Translation Coord.)               |
| Crisis intervention center/service rooms           | Logistics Section (Facilities Coord.)                 |
| Command post/Staging area signs                    | Logistics Section (Facilities Coord.)                 |
| Care/Shelter resource listing (e.g., water, food)* | Logistics Section (Facilities Coord.)                 |
| Teacher Roster/Assignments                         | Logistics Section (SCVA Coord.)                       |
| Staff Roster/Assignments/Crisis duties             | Logistics Section (SCVA Coord.)                       |
| Staff resources listing/Crisis duties              | Logistics Section (SCVA Coord.)                       |
| List of key parent/community volunteers            | Logistics Section (SCVA Coord.)                       |
| Crisis Response Team Identification                | Logistics Section (SCVA Coord.)                       |
| Communication resources listing/locations*         | Logistics Section (Communications Coord.)             |
| Staff phone tree (with cell phone numbers)         | Logistics Section (Communication Coord.)              |
| Phone line use designation listing                 | Logistics Section (Communications Coord.)             |
| Office supplies                                    | Logistics Section (Supplies & Equipment Coord.)       |
| Flashlights (with extra batteries)                 | Logistics Section (Supplies & Equipment Coord.)       |
| Emergency resource budget information              | Finance Section                                       |
| Emergency personnel sign-in/sign-out sheet         | Finance Section                                       |
| Purchase Order forms                               | Finance Section                                       |
| FEMA forms   | Finance Section                                       |

**\*Notes:** (a) Adapted from Brock et al. (2001); California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (1998), and Lockyer & Eastin (2000), (b) F&G Sp. = Facilities and Grounds Specialist; SRA SP. = Search, Rescue, & Accounting Specialist; CM Sp. = Crowd Management Specialist; SAR Sp. = Student Assembly and Release Specialist; CI Sp. = Crisis Intervention Specialist; TS Sp. = Traffic Safety Specialist; SFW&S Sp. = Shelter, Food, Water, & Supplies Specialist; SCVA Coord. = Staff & Community Volunteer Assignment Coordinator

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**Websites**

- National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org/>
- National Education Association: <http://www.nea.org/crisis/>
- Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools: <http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan/>



## CRITICAL INCIDENT TOOLKITS

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### Elementary Bibliotherapy Books:

Bennett-Blackburn, L. (1999). *Timothy Duck: The story of the death of a friend*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.

This book tells the story of the death of Timothy Duck's good friend, a boy named John. While Timothy misses John, he will remember him, and he realizes that life at the pond goes on after his friend's death.

Brown, L.K. & Brown, M. (1996). *When dinosaurs die: A guide to understanding death*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

This book answers some very basic questions, including "Why does someone die?" "What does *dead* mean?" "What comes after death?" and dealing with emotions. It also somewhat addresses customs related to dying. It is most appropriate for children ages 4-8 years old.

Cohn, J. (1987). *I had a friend named Peter: Talking to children about the death of a friend*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

This book is best for use with children in kindergarten through 4th grade. Peter is killed when he is hit by a car, and Betsy's parents talk to her about the doctors being unable to make Peter better, Betsy's quarrel with Peter being unrelated to his death, attending the funeral, and other issues.

Holmes, M. M. (2000). *A terrible thing happened: A story for children who have witnessed violence or trauma*. Washington, D.C.: Magination Press.

This book relates the story of a raccoon, Sherman Smith, who witnessed a tragic event. Sherman tries to forget about what happened, but he later begins to have stomachaches and bad dreams, and he also becomes angry and gets into trouble. He then talks to Ms. Maple about what happened and feels better. It is best for children ages 4-8 years.

Ferguson, D. (2006). *A bunch of balloons*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.

This book is best for use with children approximately 5-9 years old. It compares losing a loved one to letting go of a helium balloon, and looks at what is lost and what is still left. The book also includes a message to parents.

Mellonie, B., & Ingpen, R. (1983). *Lifetimes: The beautiful way to explain death to children*. New York: Bantam Books.

This book discusses the life cycles of a variety of living things, and it can be used to gently begin to talk about death with very young children (ages 5-8).

Varley, S. (1984). *Badger's parting gifts*. New York: Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Books.

This book is best for children ages 4-8. Mole, Frog, Fox, and Rabbit are sad after their friend Badger dies, but their sadness begins to reside as they remember him and the different things that they did with him.

### Intermediate Elementary/Junior High Bibliotherapy Books:

Hemery, K. M. (2005). *Sunflower promise*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.

This chapter book is written on an 8-12 year old level. It tells the story of a girl whose friend passes away, and how she is eventually comforted by going to the place where they often spent time together.

Greenlee, S. (2003). *When someone dies*. Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers.

This book is best for use with children ages 8-12. It speaks directly to the reader as it acknowledges the feelings of children experiencing loss, how it feels, things that they worry about, not knowing what to say, and other aspects of grief and loss.

Mundy, M. (1998). *Sad isn't bad: A good-grief guidebook for kids dealing with loss*. St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press.

This book provides a simple, realistic look at death and loss, and comforts children by addressing questions and providing reassurances, such as, "Where is your loved one now?" "Some things will change," and "Some things will remain the same." It is best for use with 9-12 year olds.

Romain, T. (1999). *What on earth do you do when someone dies?* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

This author talks to kids about what death means and how to cope. He asks questions like, Why? How? What next? Is it my fault? What's a funeral? and answers them in a straightforward manner. This book is best for ages 9-12.

### Adolescent Bibliotherapy Books:

Gootman, M.E., (2005). *When a friend dies: A book for teens about grieving and healing*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

This book is designed for teens grade 6 and up. It has 16 short chapters which discuss questions like, "How can I stand the pain?" "How should I be acting?" and other topics. Photos and quotes from other teens who have experienced grief assist in expressing that they are not alone in their feelings.

Samuel-Traisman, E. (2002). *Fire in my heart, ice in my veins: A journal for teenagers*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.

This book provides activities and reflection opportunities for teens dealing with grief, prompting written responses to statements or questions such as, "I feel angry!" or, "This is what helps me find meaning in the pain over your death."

Schwiebert, P., & DeKlyen, C. (1999). *Tear Soup*. Portland, OR: Grief Watch.

This story is about Grandy, an elderly woman who suffers a loss and decides to make tear soup. She then begins to cry, and the pot is slowly filled with her tears. She eventually adds memories, like the good, bad, silly, and sad times to help season her soup, and she does not want to forget the memories of her loss.

### Activity Books for Children:

Kanyer, L.A. (2004). *25 things to do when grandpa passes away, mom and dad get divorced, or the dog dies: Activities to help children suffering loss or change*. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press.

This book discusses symptoms of grief in children, tips for talking to children about different types of grief situations. It then provides activities to help with grieving within five categories -person to person connections, soothing repetitive activities, ceremonies/keepsakes, large muscle activities, and small muscle activities. Activities are oriented toward elementary age children.

Dernederlanden, C. (2004). *H. U.G.S. (Helping children understand grief)*. St. Catherines, Ontario: Robert's Press.

This activity book structures group activities for six sessions of grief counseling for elementary children. It provides detailed instructions for hands-on activities and materials, sample letters/permission slips to go home to caregivers, and a leader's journal that helps leaders to identify how things are progressing within the group.

### Books with Activities for All Ages:

Barbara Ward and Associates. (1993). *Good Grief: Exploring feelings, loss and death with under elevens: A holistic approach, Second edition*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

This book provides a variety of activities that can be used to intervene in a wide variety of grief situations. It provides instructions for interventions such as guided imagery, hands-on activities, poems, and other activities. Some topics include reactions to death, preparing for a child's funeral, dealing with reactions to death such as aggression, anger, etc.

Barbara Ward and Associates. (1993). *Good Grief: Exploring feelings, loss, and death with over elevens and adults: A holistic approach, Second edition*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

This book provides a variety of activities that can be used to intervene in a wide variety of grief situations. It provides instructions for interventions, hands-on activities, and poems/readings, and addresses issues such as coping with death, funerals, rituals and customs.

Lowenstein, L., (2006). *Creative interventions for bereaved children*. Toronto: Champion Press.

This book provides a wealth of hands-on activities. It begins by providing guidelines for practitioner, and discussing a brief theoretical overview of children experiencing grief. It then provides practical interventions for engaging and assessing bereaved children, processing reactions to grief, helping children to understand death, commemorating the deceased person, facilitating coping/self-esteem, addressing specific issues such as suicide, murder, etc. It also provides interventions for group sessions and family sessions.

McWhorter, G. (2003). *Healing Activities for Children in Grief*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.

This activity book organizes grief activities into three age groups, providing children (ages 5-8), preteen (9-12), and teen formats. For use in a group or individual counseling formats, the book lists a variety of activities for opening a session, main session activities. It also provides specific activities to address grief during various holidays.

### **Therapeutic Games for Children:**

Rugg, S. (1998). *Healing Hearts*. Marietta, GA: Rising Sun Center.

This game encourages children to talk about their feelings and experiences while learning about the journey through grief.

### **Therapeutic Games for Teens/Adolescents:**

Rugg, S. (2004). *Wilderness Grief Journey*. Marietta, GA: Rising Sun Center.

This game is designed especially for teens and young adults to explore their grief journey, by answering questions and addressing feelings cards. It portrays grief as a cyclical process.

### **Therapeutic Games for All Ages:**

Arneson, L. (2003). *Memory Garden Bereavement Card Game*. Rancho Santa Fe, CA: Bright Spots Games.

This card game can be used with students individually or in small groups. It prompts expression of feelings through brief, open-ended statements.

### **Parent Resources:**

Fitzgerald, H. (2003). *The grieving child: A parent's guide*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

This book is designed to serve as a guide for parents and help them to explain the death of a parent, relative, friend, or even a pet to a child. It specifically addresses visiting the seriously ill child, using age appropriate language, selecting useful books, dealing with grief over a murder or suicide, and whether a child should attend a funeral.

Wakenshaw, M. (2002). *Caring for a grieving Child: Engaging Activities for Dealing with Loss and Transition*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

This is an excellent resource for parents. It describes children's reactions to grief, explaining death to children of different ages, helping themselves as they grieve. It also provides practical activities that parents can use to assist their children through play sessions at home.

### **Grief Support Group Curricula:**

#### **Mourning Child/Teens Together Grief Support Group Curriculum**

Lehmann, L., Jimerson, S.R., & Gaasch, A. (2001). *Mourning child grief support group curriculum: Preschool edition*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Lehmann, L., Jimerson, S.R., & Gaasch, A. (2001). *Mourning child grief support group curriculum: Early childhood edition*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Lehmann, L., Jimerson, S.R., & Gaasch, A. (2001). *Mourning child grief support group curriculum: Middle Childhood Edition*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Lehmann, L., Jimerson, S.R., & Gaasch, A. (2001). *Teens together grief support group curriculum*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

This curriculum provides grief support group lessons for 10 sessions, and includes sample materials. The lessons include conducting informational interviews, as well as "Telling My Story," "Exploring Death," "Identifying Changes," "Memories/Remembering," "Identifying and Expressing Feelings," "Exploring Unfinished Business," "Coping with Feelings," "Learning Self-Care and Support," and "Learning to Say Goodbye."

Murphy, R. & Smith, L.L. (2005). *Grieving, Sharing, and Healing: A guide for Facilitating Early Adolescent Bereavement Groups*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

This book provides information on planning and structuring grief groups. It provides practical activities for the beginning, middle, and ending stage of the group, and provides plans for 12 sessions.

### **Other Toolkit Materials**

#### **Suicide Assessments**

- Suicide Assessments from the district's Signs of Suicide program
- Suicide and Intake Assessments from the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (see reference below)
- Assessment of Crisis/Suicide Handout (developed from Crisis Counseling coursework at BGSU)
- Suicide Desk Reference/No-Suicide Contract handout

### Other Included Materials

- District and High School Critical Incident Response (CIR) Plans (including sample announcements, letters, etc.)
- Crisis Team Contact List
- Wood County and Greater Toledo Area Community Resources Lists
- Critical Incident Documentation forms
- Critical Incident Staff Sign-In Sheet
- Teacher/Parent/Student Handouts from online NASP School Safety and Crisis Resources and from OSPA's Crisis Committee Page (see websites below)
- Resource articles/handouts for CIR team
- Paper/pencils

### Resources

#### **Activities for Grieving Children**

<http://www.cgcmaine.org/docs/subdocs/activities.htm>

#### **The Centering Corporation**

<https://www.centeringcorp.com/catalog/index.php>

#### **NASP School Safety and Crisis Resources**

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/index.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/index.aspx)

#### **Ohio School Psychologists Crisis Committee**

<http://www.ospaonline.org/practitioners/crisis.htm>

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