

Crisis Manual



Hamilton R-II School District

(updated Spring 2023)

Contents

Statement of Purpose	4
Chapter 1: Preparedness	
● District Responsibilities	5
● Crisis Intervention Worksheet	7
● Administrator's Checklist for Responding to an Emergency/Crisis	10
Chapter 2: Crisis Interventions	
● Guidelines for Understanding and Responding to a Crisis	16
● Suggestions for Visits to Classrooms	17
● Discussion Suggestions Do's and Don'ts	19
● Tips for Students in Crisis	21
● Topics for Discussion at Teacher Meeting	23
● Teacher's Handout- All Levels	24
● Handling Crisis Situations: Tips for Teachers	26
● Tips for Parents of Students Who Are Experiencing Crisis	27
● Tips for Counselor/Crisis Team Members When Assisting in a Crisis Situation	28
● Suggestions for Communicating with the Media	29
● Script for Announcing Event	31
● Sample Announcements	31
● Individual Counseling Contacts	32
● Discussion Starters	33
● Young People and Grief	34

Chapter 3: Crisis Evaluation	
● After a Crisis Occurs	36
● Crisis Team Evaluation	37
● Group Counseling Summary	39
● Activities Summary	40
Chapter 4: Special Circumstances	
● Grief Counseling	41
● Crisis Plan/Memorials and Memorial Services- Sample Board Policy	44
● Handling Crises From Virtual Platforms.....	45
● Protocol for Online Meetings.....	48
● How to Handle a Potentially Suicidal Student	49
● Emergency Numbers.....	53

Introduction

The original Missouri School Counselor Association's Crisis Plan was collated by Sonie Trotter, Retired School Counselor of Cabool Middle School, Cabool, Missouri. This handbook is a collection of materials and suggestions from a variety of sources and organizations, much of it developed in the 11 regions of the Missouri School Counselor Association. Counselors are the best at helping each other, and this project is one of the best examples of counselors helping counselors help children, teachers, and school staff members successfully handle crises. This manual was adopted and previously revised by the Missouri School Counselor Association. As with the other iterations of the Crisis Manual, this revision has relied upon the efforts and dedication of a team of school counselors who volunteered their time and expertise.

When a school community experiences a loss of one of its members or a critical incident, the school community is often left in turmoil. In today's society, educators are continually faced with situations that can cause education to come to a complete standstill. We are grateful to all of the team members, past and present, who have collaborated on this work and provided such a valuable resource for every school counselor in the State of Missouri.

Statement of Purpose

In the State of Missouri, accidents are the leading cause of death among teenagers, and suicide remains the second leading cause of death. The death of a student and/or faculty member, especially in these circumstances, creates a crisis situation for a school district. As schools are committed to providing for the emotional well-being of students, it is imperative that a plan and a crisis team be in place to provide support and a return to stability.

During a crisis, a team can further the emotional well-being of students in several ways:

1. The crisis team members work within the framework of that school's crisis plan.
2. A crisis team member can serve as a consultant to an administrator or counselor, rather than having an entire team travel to the school.
3. A crisis team member can provide support to local staff members during and after a crisis.

It will be the goal of the crisis team to help schools return to stability/normal while caring for the emotional needs of the school community.

Chapter 1: Preparedness

District Responsibilities

Every district should have a comprehensive crisis plan. Each school within the district also needs to have a crisis plan; it should be based upon the district's comprehensive plan. The crisis plan should be kept in an easily accessible location, and each person on the crisis team, including each administrator, should have a copy of the plan so it can be accessed quickly when the need arises.

To ensure a school/district's comprehensive and thorough response, it is imperative that a specific crisis plan be created and in place prior to a crisis situation. Careful pre-planning, including the consideration and reflection of what is best for the school community safeguards against overlooking or forgetting important steps in the response. This helps to establish a foundation of emotional support.

Below, you will find a template for creating a crisis plan. It is best to work through this document with your crisis team, discussing the various sections and what needs to be included for your particular site. Members of the crisis team may include: administrators, school counselors, school nurses, other student support personnel, school resource officer, administrative assistant, teacher leaders, custodial leaders, and food service personnel. This list is not exhaustive or exclusive; the team may determine other necessary members to add to the crisis team.

Pre-Planning

Each district/school should engage in Pre-Planning activities to ensure the smooth implementation of the crisis plan. The following steps will help make your crisis response more efficient and effective:

1. Administrator selects members of the crisis team. Members of the crisis team may include: administrators, school counselors, school nurses, other student support personnel, school resource officer, administrative assistant, teacher leaders, custodial leaders, and food service personnel. This list is not exhaustive or exclusive; the team may determine other necessary members to add to the crisis team.
2. One person should be designated as the crisis team leader. This individual will be the point person/designee for the administrator, and will oversee the implementation of the plan. Collaboration and communication between the administrator and the crisis team leader is essential! The crisis team leader will:
 - a. Consult with principal when a possible crisis or emergency situation occurs.
 - b. Coordinate plan:
 - i. Use of assistance from other buildings
 - ii. Substitute personnel
 - iii. Room assignments
 - iv. Meeting times
 - v. Notification
 - vi. Media coordinator and staff communications (See page 37 of this manual for details.)
 - vii. Phone chain and other communication
 - c. Manage monitoring and documentation process
 - d. Organize daily debriefing sessions
 - e. Distribute identification badges to all incoming personnel helping with the crisis
 - f. Delegate any of the above responsibilities

3. The crisis team should meet together at the beginning of each school year to ensure that necessary pieces are in order, such as:
 - a. Update the crisis plan
 - b. A list of rooms and places to be used for individual and group counseling
 - c. Phone tree is up-to-date
 - d. Copies of the crisis plan are distributed to the staff (certified and non-certified); do a brief explanation of the plan at an early faculty meeting
 - e. Make sure that necessary supplies and forms are in order and available in the Counseling Office
4. It's helpful to prepare a smaller version of the Crisis Manual for all staff. Include only the information that pertains to teachers and other staff members. Make information easy to find and to understand.
5. Prepare folders of information for substitutes and visitors who may come to your building to help out during a crisis. Include a map of the school, bell schedule, clear expectations about how/what to do during a time of crisis. Be sure to include these individuals in meetings to keep them informed.
6. Prepare a handout to be given to any parent who comes into the building during a crisis. Be very clear about expectations, and what they can/cannot do while in the building.
7. Prepare a plan for communicating with the media before an emergency/crisis occurs, which includes:
 - a. Who will be the contact and spokesperson
 - b. Where the media will be located within or outside the building
 - c. Who will be responsible for the building security with respect to the media (they should not be allowed to disrupt the management of the classroom activities).

Crisis Intervention Worksheet

This document is designed to organize personnel prior to, during, and after a crisis to minimize the trauma and focus resources.

Date: _____

<p>1. School and Administrator Contact Information School: Hamilton R-2 School District Superintendent Billie McGraw</p>	<p>Phone: 816-583-2134 Cell Phone: 660-247-2583</p>
<p>2. Contact Building Administration: Penney High School, Chris Anderson Hamilton Middle School, Rick Ross Hamilton Elementary School, Ashley Ford</p>	<p>Cell Phone: 816-294-2464 Cell Phone: 816-769-4923 Cell Phone: 816-935-0143</p>
<p>3. Contact District Counseling Coordinators: Dorothy Silvey, District Coordinator Renae Wattenbarger, High School Jan Wilkerson, Middle School Erin Yuille, Elementary School Mānon Ellsworth, District Therapist</p>	<p>Cell Phone: 816-465-0675 Cell Phone: 816-262-3323 Cell Phone: 660-973-2467 Cell Phone: 660-247-2553 Cell Phone: 303-214-8054</p>
<p>4. Contact Crisis Team Members Maggie Scott, School Nurse Heather Evans, School Nurse</p>	<p>Cell Phone: 816-632-9653 Cell Phone: 816-284-5232</p>
<p>5. Building Security A. Office a. Tammy Schweder (HS) b. Whitney Hosman (MS) c. Amber Conkling (HES) d. ISS personnel (MS/HS) e. Julie Hendrix (HES) B. Volunteer Coordinator a. Chelee Phillips b. Jessi Green c. Amy Walker</p>	<p>Cell Phone: 660-605-1095 Cell Phone: 816-392-892 Cell Phone: 816-529-7299 MS/HS Security Cell Phone: 816-649-8055 Cell Phone: (660) 646-9062 Cell Phone: (816) 284-1158 Cell Phone: (816) 695-6945</p>

5. Plan for notifying faculty & staff:

_____ If there is a death of a student or faculty member, family should be contacted by the administrator or administrator designee regarding details the family may wish to be shared.

_____ Administration notifies and provides administrative assistants with a prepared script to use for phone calls/emails that may come into the school/district. Information to be provided in regards to questions that may be asked will also be provided to the administrative assistants.

_____ Administrator prepares script to share on phone tree. Best practice that is strongly recommended is for the administrator to work closely with the school counselor on the preparation of the script.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include approved details of the crisis situation. NOTE: The school/district may ONLY share details approved by the family; the family has the final say. • Include time and place of faculty meeting • Remind staff of confidentiality, especially for faculty and staff that may live in the area and have children who attend the school in question.
<p>_____ Contact Faculty by personal phone. Avoid using text and email messages with sensitive information.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Decide who will place calls and activate phone tree.</i></p>

6. Building Security; plan for monitoring entrances to building (if appropriate)

Entrance Location	Who Will Monitor Entrance
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Specified District or Building Administrators responsible for any media requests

Billie McGraw - District Superintendent

8. Develop a plan for notifying students of the crisis

_____ Develop a script that will be used by all staff , Check in with staff before sharing information with students. If a staff member is personally affected by the situation and is unable

to complete their responsibilities, assign a crisis team member to their classroom to assist.

<p>_____ Depending upon the situation, one of the following may be appropriate:</p> <p>_____ Counselors announce crisis to individual classes by using the approved script.</p> <p>_____ Teachers announce crisis to their individual classes by using the approved script.</p> <p>_____ Announcement may be made over the intercom, if necessary.</p>
--

9. Plan for informing parents/guardians

_____ Letter/email home written by district or building administration (see sample in the Appendix)
_____ If appropriate, parents are notified of meeting place and time

10. Room and personnel assignments for individual and/or group counseling will occur as needed.

Location Room #	Person Responsible for Individuals/ Group
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

11. Provide and deliver supplies for meeting rooms (kleenex, water, paper (chart paper and note cards), pens, pencils, markers, fidgets, anxiety tools, hard candy, etc.). If a therapy dog is available, be sure to notify staff and students where they may access the dog.

12. Follow up activities

_____ Crisis Team Members complete Individual and Group Counseling Summary (<i>Located in Chapter 3</i>)
_____ Crisis Team Members Complete Activities Summary (<i>Located in Chapter 3</i>)

_____ Crisis Team Evaluation/Feedback and plans for the next day (*Located in Chapter 3*)

_____ Crisis Team and Staff Self Care Check before leaving for the day.

Organization/ Contact Person	Phone Number	Desired Donation	Time of Arrival	Comments
Ministers		Counseling Alternative Locations		
Retired Teachers - Tyna Wynne Allison Ford David Richman Alternate: Tim Schieber Karen Hartley		Supervision		
NWMSCA Counselors Crisis Team		Counseling Services		

bottled water

Food - pizza, simple foods

supervision of recess, lunch room, hall duty, extra supervision

added support

kitchen staff prepare sack lunches for students in support rooms

Administrator's Checklist for Responding to an Emergency/Crisis

These guidelines have been written to help those involved to think ahead and plan for situations. The suggestions below are designed to be thorough, as well as flexible and adaptable. Discretion and judgment will determine their use.

I. Immediate Action to be Taken

_____	A.	Principal or designated individual will verify information regarding emergency/crisis
_____	B.	Notify affected buildings where siblings are enrolled or other family members are employed. Confirm family information from them if necessary.
_____	C.	Activate building crisis team.
_____	D.	In the event of death... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remove the name from the class roll and other forms of communication. ● Intercept any disciplinary, scholarship, testing, or special placement notifications that may be sent to the family.
_____	E.	Secure the building. Activate plan for determining who is in the building. Distribute badges to incoming personnel or visitors.

II. Contact Family

_____	A.	Communicate with the family involved to express condolences and to offer support.
_____	B.	Explain school procedure to the family with regard to meeting with the staff in order to insure that the family's situation is handled with the utmost respect and to discuss the family's wishes in handling the situation.
_____	C.	Ask what facts the family would allow to be discussed. This information should be recorded or received in writing.
_____	D.	Repeat the information back to the family member who will serve as the contact person for the family. Offer the family the opportunity to review the information being shared with the school community.

III. School Plan of Action for a Crisis Response

	A.	<p>Administrator's Responsibilities: <i>Any or all of the responsibilities below may be delegated to the building team coordinator.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use telephone tree to notify faculty before arrival at the school and to inform them of a special faculty meeting prior to the beginning of the school day if emergency/crisis occurs after school hours. If possible, meet/speak with the individuals directly impacted separately and before the staff meeting. 2. Meet with faculty as soon as possible after the event if emergency/crisis occurs during the school day. 3. Include in the faculty meeting agenda: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A printed statement approved by the family to be read verbatim by the classroom teacher. Include the time the statement will be read. Emphasize need for hard facts to reduce rumors and fantasies. If family had not been reached, reassure faculty/staff that further information will be forthcoming. b. A handout covering recommendations for dealing with a loss in the classroom c. An announced plan for disseminating further information during the day, e.g. notes in boxes, runners, further faculty meetings d. The name and location of person in the building who can be called upon for accurate and current information e. Assess the individual faculty members' comfort levels in reading the prepared statement and discussing the situation with students at the faculty meeting f. Evaluate the need for substitute personnel from other building teams g. A schedule of times and location for faculty to process loss with the EAP and/or local grief specialist (often found in funeral homes) to share their experiences and offer suggestions. (Prior to this, buildings will have determined who will work with students and who will work with faculty.) h. The area that will be designated as a workroom for the team i. The space available for small group counseling sessions j. The plan for handling the media including the name of the spokesperson k. Any other pertinent information 4. Keep all parents informed of school's activities in connection with the emergency/crisis (i.e. letters to parents, parent meetings, e-mail, etc.).
--	-----------	--

		<p>5. A best practice is to include the PTO/PTA and ask for their assistance in supporting faculty. They might provide water, snacks, and lunch to serve to the faculty.</p>
--	--	--

	<p>B.</p>	<p>Faculty Responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read prepared statement at the designated time 2. Direct students who have questions/concerns to the school counseling office and/or have a school counselor join the discussion in the classroom. 3. Acknowledge emotions and provide instructions on where the students may go for support. 4. Be aware of those who were close friends or who have suffered a similar loss and would like an opportunity to speak with a school counselor or member of the crisis team. 5. Identify students obviously in distress and arrange for a member of the crisis team to escort them to a location for support. 6. Request assistance from the crisis team if a class has a large number of distressed students. 7. Shorten and re-structure assignments when appropriate. Postpone and reschedule tests as needed. 8. Know evacuation procedures. If evacuation becomes necessary, keep class roster at all times for accountability purposes. THIS IS IMPERATIVE.
--	------------------	---

	C.	<p>Team Responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crisis team leader: must be appointed by the building principal at the beginning of each school year. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consults with principal when a possible crisis or emergency situation occurs. b. Coordinates plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Use of assistance from other buildings ii. Substitute personnel iii. Room assignments iv. Meeting times v. Notification vi. Media coordinator and staff communications vii. Phone chain and other communication c. Manages monitoring and documentation process d. Organizes daily debriefing sessions e. Distributes identification badges to all incoming personnel helping with the crisis f. Delegates any of the above responsibilities 2. Team <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assists the principal and/or coordinator with developing specific plan for responding to the crisis. b. Accepts the responsibilities delegated by the building coordinator or principal c. Consults with and supports (on an as needed basis) the affected building's staff in reacting to and dealing with the crisis d. Provides direct support services to staff and e. students in distress f. Makes referrals to crisis team leader for those needing follow-up support from outside resources g. Monitors the situation after the crisis has subsided and provides other follow-up services h. Collects data to submit to crisis team leader i. Anticipates and manages other building, family, and community needs
	D.	<p>Responding to the Media</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult and follow the plan for communicating with the media, which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who will be the contact and spokesperson b. Where the media will be located within or outside the building c. Who will be responsible for the building security with respect to the media (they should not be allowed to disrupt the management of the classroom activities). d. Make sure faculty is informed about who will

		<p>Speak with the media, and how they should handle any media requests.</p>
_____	E.	<p>Responding to Parents/Community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be calm, patient, and courteous when dealing with others. 2. Reassure parents that the emergency/crisis management team is at work to keep their children safe. 3. Give all callers the same information, which includes these topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. In answer to "What's going on?" "What happened?" Read the prepared statement which was read in the faculty meetings. Update information as often as possible, but make certain all persons answering the phone have the same printed information. b. In answer to "What are you doing to keep my child safe?" enumerate measures presently in operation. 4. Thank the parents for calling. 5. Give time and place, if parents meetings are scheduled. 6. Ask if parents have received letters/emails if these communications were sent.
_____	F.	<p>Follow Through</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing monitoring <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staff and building team should monitor, for as long as needed, all students and staff for continued distress and their need for further intervention. b. Documentation c. Evaluation 2. Plan a faculty meeting for the end of the day to address any questions, to identify those who may be struggling, and to debrief and process the day.

Building Phone Trees Attached in District Binders

Chapter 2: Crisis Interventions

Guidelines for Understanding and Responding to a Crisis

1. Here are some of the emotions you may observe in your students (or in yourself) following a tragedy.
 - Numbness, shock, denial- After a sudden death, you don't want to believe it has happened; you had no preparation for its occurrence.
 - Confusion- Why did this happen? I don't understand the circumstances. How could this happen to someone I know?
 - Fear/Anxiety- Could something like this happen again? Will something like this happen to me or to someone I care about?
 - Grief- Sadness, crying, a deep sense of personal loss
 - Depression- emptiness, unhappiness, loneliness, isolation
 - Guilt- An irrational feeling of responsibility for the event.
 - Anger- Why did someone do a violent, senseless thing? Why did others let it happen? Anger can be directed toward a specific person or persons or be a more general feeling of anger. This could also look and feel like blaming.
2. Here are some of the changes in behavior that you may see. Most, if not all of these changes, will be temporary. Children are resilient and do bounce back.
 - Lack of concentration- inability to focus on school work, household chores, or other leisure activities.
 - Lack of interest in usual activities-Preoccupation with current circumstances may impact activities that normally had great appeal.
 - Greater dependency- A need to feel protected may result in a child seeking security by staying close to significant adults, and possibly not wanting to be alone.
 - Problems with sleeping and eating- difficulty going to sleep, occasional bad dreams or a decreased or increased appetite are common physical reactions to a stressful event.
 - Overly quiet or overly talkative or a combination- A student may not want to talk about the situation with you, preferring to discuss with friends, classmates, parents- those who may have been closer to the tragedy; or the student may not want to talk with anyone about it.
3. Here are some things that teachers and parents can do to help a child of any age through this difficult time.
 - Listen-. Provide opportunities for voices to be heard and feelings to be expressed.
 - Accept feelings-Every feeling, even if it is not similar to yours, is valid and should be honored.
 - Empathize-Validate all feelings.
 - Reassure- The student is not responsible for what happened.
 - Accept-Not everyone will be prepared to talk about the trauma at the same time. Make sure that students know you are willing to listen whenever it is needed.
 - Be tolerant of temporary changes.
 - Maintain as much of a sense of routine as possible.
 - Provide additional activities if the students seem to have excess energy.

- Don't hesitate to ask for help. This help can be sought from other parents, family members, the school staff or an outside professional.

Adapted from Robert L. Lewis, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist, Clayton, MO

Suggestions for Crisis Team Members Visiting Classrooms

1. Briefly explain why you are there... "If you are wondering why there are some adults you may not know in the building today, it's because we are all counselors who are and were invited here by your counselor/principal because of the death of (person's name). We care about what you are going through and know it is tough. Even though we may not have been as close to the person as you are, we just want to help out in any way possible." Emphasize that the teams or individual team members are not there to take the place of local counselors, administrators, or clergy, but that you are there to assist and help in any way that you can.
2. If you are following the schedule of the deceased, it's important to recognize the "empty chair."
3. Reinforce that all feelings are ok. It may be anger, sadness, fear, confusion, guilt-anything, or even a mixture of these and/or other feelings.
4. Help students realize that different people will express feelings in different ways and that is okay. Grieving is a personal journey; not everyone will grieve in the same manner. "Try not to pass judgment because someone else does not seem to be hurting or suffering as much as you are."
5. Help the students understand that some people may not have "known (use the deceased's name) or been "close" to them but what they have heard today may bring back memories of a similar loss or recent experience. It is acceptable for them to be dealing with their own feelings of sadness.
6. Help students understand that the intense sadness or hurt will not last forever. "Life will go on and the terrible hurt you are feeling right now will not hurt quite as much after some time passes. You won't forget (person's name), or course, but time will help and just because we have to go on with school schedules, jobs and everything else does not mean you care less for the person who died."
7. Encourage expression of present feelings, be accepting of silence.
8. Inform students of the opportunities to meet and share in smaller groups.
9. Help students eventually share about some of their positive experiences they had with (use the person's name), if they feel comfortable. Arrange for students to leave who may not be ready for this type of discussion.
10. Compliment students for being supportive of each other and helping each other.
11. If possible and it seems appropriate, walk around the campus with one to two students. Physical activity helps some students.
12. Invite students to write, draw, or speak about the student who died.
13. Do not be too structured. Allow students to sit close together, sit on the floor or on a desk or table if it's safe. Sitting in a circle is a good way to draw people close together. This will develop intimacy and make members of the group feel together and equal.
14. Allow students to talk to one another.
15. Ask students to think of at least three words that would describe the victim(s) and go around the circle and share these words. Don't force participation, most will want to share.
16. If there is a community wide crisis, let students tell what has happened at their homes and how they felt.
17. Sometimes students want to do something to express their sympathy to the family. The teacher or school counselor could encourage students to write letters or make cards. **School personnel need to read over the letters or cards to make sure they are appropriate before sending or delivering to the family.**

Good Tips for School Counselors to Remember (A Handout for the Crisis Team)

The following may be used as ways to encourage a discussion if the students are hesitant to speak or items to anticipate in the course of discussion.

DO's

1. Do listen to the students and wait after you've asked a question to give them adequate time to respond.
2. Do allow students the opportunity to express any and all thoughts regarding the incident without judging or evaluating their comments.
3. Do be aware of your voice tone, keeping it low, even and warm.
4. Do help all students see that everyone shares similar feelings (i.e. "We're- not You're) all stunned that something like this could happen here" or " A lot of us (not you) are feeling angry.")
5. Do expect tears, anger, resentment, fear, inappropriate language (often due to tension and discomfort), stoicism (apparent non-reaction).
6. Do expect some students to become phobic and have sudden overwhelming concerns that may seem illogical to you but are very real to them.
7. Do be aware that this death could bring about the resurfacing of other losses for students.
8. Do encourage students to sit in a circle, or to make a more intimate grouping in which to have this discussion.
9. Do stress the confidential nature of the feelings and thoughts expressed in the discussion.
10. Do use your own thoughts and ideas as a means to encourage discussion, not as a means for alleviating your own feelings.
11. Do expect that other feelings of loss may emerge.
12. Do give accurate information about the incident. If you don't know an answer, say so.
13. Do squelch any rumors that may exist by either giving the facts, or researching what the facts are and reporting back.

DON'T's

1. Don't give "should, ought, or must" statements (i.e. "You shouldn't feel like that." "We mustn't dwell on this.")
2. Don't use clichés (i.e. "Be strong." "It could have been worse.")
3. Don't ask questions without being ready to listen.
4. Don't try to make them feel better, let them know that it's okay to feel what they're feeling.
5. Don't isolate anyone; each will need to feel a part of the group
6. Don't expect the students to "get over" grief/recovery process within a certain time.
7. Don't assume a person is not grieving/reacting just because they don't look or act like it. Let them know you are available at any time (i.e. six weeks or three months from now), IF YOU REALLY ARE.
8. Don't let students interrupt each other, allow each person to finish his/her own statement.
9. Don't repeat what you have heard outside of the school setting. Stick to what has been communicated to you by the crisis team and/or administration. It is important

for you to model and practice the elimination of rumors.

10. If you are a faculty member in the school of the deceased and have children in the school or know neighborhood children who attend the school, don't share any confidential information/facts within earshot of these children.

Tips for Students in Crisis

All of us, at some time in our lives, experience a death or trauma that evokes a crisis response. It may be from the results of various weather events, accidents, deaths, or other traumatic events. When events of this nature happen, we have what is called a grief response. No two people grieve in the same way, but the emotions or feelings are similar in everyone.

Each of us grieves differently and at our own individual pace. Grieving is hard work. You may feel sad, hurt and cry a lot. Crying is okay.

Your behavior may be influenced by your feelings. Here are some emotional responses that are expected and normal.

1. Remember that everyone reacts to pain and stress in different ways. Don't expect everyone to act or feel the same. Also, don't expect the pain to last the same amount of time for everyone. Some "normal" responses are:
 - Denial- "No...no, it can't be."
 - Anger/resentment
 - Guilt- "It must be my fault. If only I hadn't said what I said. I never said, 'I love you.'"
 - Numbness or shock
 - Tears- lots of tears
 - Life seems out of balance.
 - Disbelief
 - Nightmares, sleep disturbances/bad dreams
 - Sadness
 - Feeling deserted
 - Forgetfulness
 - Increased substance use
 - Withdrawing from friends and/or family
 - Nervousness, anxiety: "What will I do now?"
 - Loneliness/depression
 - Self-pity
 - Hostility/on edge
 - Sorrow
 - Self-doubt
 - Fears of going crazy
 - Easily excitable
 - Asking questions- the same questions- over and over
2. In the case of death, remember that friends and family will need your care and concern long after the funeral is over.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you aren't sure if you can cope.
4. Take care of yourself. Eat well; get plenty of sleep and exercise.
5. Try some of these ideas to help you handle stress and grief.
 - Talk to someone
 - Cry
 - Write a letter
 - Ride a bike
 - Keep a journal
 - Clean your room
 - Dance

- Help someone else
- Listen to music
- Run
- Rearrange your room
- Read a book
- Create something
- Go for a walk
- Draw
- Plant something
- Dig in the dirt
- Yell at your pillow
- Set some goals
- Get a neck rub

The Teachers' Meeting

1. Attached is a copy of "Young People and Grief." This information may be helpful to you as you help students deal with their feelings.
2. Present facts as they are known. Stick to what the school has given you as information to present. Do not offer your opinions and/or what you may have heard from other sources.
3. Discuss procedures and support that will be available.
4. Discuss use of hall passes as means of student's getting from class to support rooms. Emphasize the need for sensitivity in approaching students who may be in the hall. Emphasize the importance of monitoring exits. Be alert to students who may be in need of emotional support.
5. Explain that members of the crisis team will follow the victim's schedule in order to speak to classes. Explain that other team members will be available for other classes if needed.
6. Go over teacher handout pertaining to grief and emphasize "if kids want to talk," be sensitive.
7. Go over how to take care of teacher feelings (your own) and emphasize that support rooms and support are available.
8. Inform teachers of the mandatory debriefing meeting at the end of the day.
9. Discuss staff and students handling of the press.
10. Inform teachers to notify crisis team members of names of students who may be high-risk.
11. Inform teachers to refrain from discussing death in terms of religious beliefs.
12. Reassure staff members that it is acceptable for them to have the need to grieve. If they are having a difficult time, they should ask for someone to cover their responsibilities until they are able to resume.
13. Emphasize the importance of watching each other, as well as the students. Don't be afraid to "refer" a colleague if you see that they are having a difficult time. No one will be judged for the emotions they are experiencing.
14. Remind that staff members that the bells may not ring as usual based upon the needs of the students. Let them know that they are to keep their students until the bells or someone directs them differently.

Teacher's Handout- All Levels

1. A support room has been set up for students who need or want additional support. Members of the crisis team will be available for individual and group support. PLEASE LET STUDENTS KNOW WHERE THEY CAN GO FOR HELP, and follow the directions given for releasing them and monitoring their coming and going to these rooms. It is best to have students escorted to the various locations by a member of the crisis team.
2. Please be especially observant for those students who experience a high level of distress and/or whose behavior indicates a strong grief reaction. Names of students who should be monitored or seen for follow-up should be given to counselors.
3. Counselors and members of the crisis team are available to come to classes to talk about common reactions to loss, to provide support, to answer questions- whatever you might need. Please contact if at any time you would like someone to come to your class.
4. If students ask questions or want to talk about their feelings, it is usually a good thing to let that happen for an appropriate period of time; it is best to have this type of discussion led by a member of the crisis team. During the discussion, some things you might include are:
 - a. Reinforce the idea that people grieve in different ways. All responses are OK there is no "normal" way to feel.
 - b. Reinforce that people grieve for different reasons. It is acceptable for someone to have grief feelings even if they didn't personally know the victim. What they heard may have resurfaced previous or recent experiences of their own.
 - c. Talk about what they can do with their feelings
 - i. Talk with people they trust
 - ii. Encourage talking with a parent/guardian
 - iii. Encourage talking to school staff
 - iv. Inform them of the support room
 - v. Let them know it is fine to seek out help
 - d. Discuss what they can do to help each other
 - i. Reach out to each other/listen to each other
 - ii. Accompany an upset friend to talk to someone
 - iii. Let an adult know if a friend is very upset and might need to be sought out
5. Students may be encouraged to write letters or cards or other expressions of care that can be brought to the counseling center for delivery to the family.
6. State and reinforce the stability of a routine. Allow appropriate time for sharing of feelings and discussion, but return to scheduled instructional activities each day.
7. See counselors for additional materials if necessary
8. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
 - a. Recognize and acknowledge your own feelings of loss and grief.
 - b. Talk to someone you trust about your feelings. The staff support room is in _____.
 - c. Be realistic about what you can do. Maybe you need to take some time for yourself. Do it.
 - d. Stick to a schedule as much as you can. It provides stability and the comfort of a normal routine when your feelings are out of control.

- e. Give yourself permission to mourn. No matter what the nature of your relationship, there is loss. Give yourself the same latitude you give your students.
- f. Be kind to yourself. You don't have to "get it all together" right away. You don't have to do it all, be strong for everyone, or take care of everything. Treat yourself with the same gentleness and understanding you would anybody else.

Handling Crisis Situations: Tips for Teachers

1. Be honest. Find out all the information you can and according to the instructions from administrators, share information approved by the administration with students. Cognitive and emotional development will determine how much and in what manner to share.
2. Allow time for students to express feelings, thoughts, and to ask questions. The amount of time will vary with the situation, age groups, and individual groups concerns. Best practice is to have someone from the crisis team lead this discussion.
3. Look for signs of distress in individual students (i.e. heightened breathing, crying, increased fidgeting, etc.) Use your school's process to refer students who are of concern. It might be in small groups or individual counseling, but be sure concerned students get attention.
4. Allow time for a break or recess after discussing and sharing. In cases of a continuing crisis remember to allow times for breaks.
5. Listen to your students' feelings.
6. Remember that everyone experiences and reacts to grief and crisis in a different way. There is no one-way to act.
7. Some students may express various religious beliefs about death. Remind students that this is a time to honor the deceased and not a time to pass judgment. If a student seems to have a need to discuss a specific religious belief, encourage them to talk with a parent, family member, or member of the clergy.
8. In case of death, discuss ways to express sympathy with the class. This is often a first time experience for young people, and ways to express sympathy and the funeral process can be confusing. Death and crisis are a part of living, and this can be a valuable learning experience.
9. In case of the death of a classmate or teacher, it is best if the desk can be left empty to help students acknowledge the death. The same is true for a student's locker or cubbie. Sometimes students are more angry if they are not given time to grieve.
10. Removal of student's personal belongings should be arranged by the school's administrator after school hours. If a memorial has been set up of the belongings, notify the students that the belongings will be removed by a certain date so they are not surprised.
11. In the case of a student's death, remove their name from your roster and/or any other communication sources. This will prevent accidentally calling out their name during upcoming roll calls by you or a substitute.

Tips for Parents of Students Who Are Experiencing Crisis

1. Keep your child informed and updated, keeping in mind the developmental and cognitive level of the child. Children need to feel involved and as in control as much as possible. [Developmental Stages of Understanding Death and Grieving](#)
2. Watch for signs of distress. Loss of appetite, aggression, acting out, being withdrawn, sleeping disturbances, and other behavior changes can indicate problems.
3. Send your child to school if possible. The stability and routine of a familiar situation will help young people feel more secure.
4. Remember that everyone reacts to stress and/or grief in different ways. There is no one-way to act in a crisis situation.
5. Allow children the opportunity to express feelings. It is important to validate these feelings, by listening quietly and attentively to what children are saying. Avoid correcting children for how they are reacting, thinking and/or feeling. Communicate that you understand what your child is expressing by restating what they are saying. Resource: <https://www.psychalive.org/why-important-parents-validate-children/>
6. A good diet and plenty of exercise are important for children who are under stress. Encourage your child to eat well and get plenty of exercise.
7. Be honest about your own concerns, but stress your and your child's ability to cope with the situation.
8. Respect a child's need to grieve; everyone experiences grief differently and there should be no judgment.
9. Provide somewhere private and quiet for your child to go.
10. Be available and listen to your child.
11. Remember to take care of yourself.
12. Obtain outside help from local mental health professionals, if necessary.

Here is a resource that parents can use to identify what is appropriate for their child's developmental/cognitive level: [Developmental Stages of Understanding Death and Grieving](#)

Tips for Counselor/Crisis Team Members When Assisting in a Crisis Situation

1. Have a plan for your support at home.
 - a. Eat well and get plenty of exercise. A good diet and exercise is important when under stress.
 - b. Balance work and rest.
 - c. Stick to a schedule as much as you can. It provides stability and the comfort of a normal routine when your feelings are out of control.
 - d. Avoid new major projects or decisions.
2. Be realistic about what you can do.
3. Recognize and acknowledge your own feelings of loss and grief.
4. Give yourself permission to mourn. No matter what the nature of your relationship, there is loss. Give yourself the same latitude you give your students.
5. Meet with fellow crisis team members and be supportive of each other or form a support group with fellow counselors or staff members.
6. Be kind to yourself. You don't have to "get it all together" right away. You don't have to do it all, be strong for everyone, or take care of everything. Treat yourself with the same gentleness and understanding you would anybody else. It's ok to allow a crisis team member to offer support to your school if you are not in the right mindset.
7. Debrief with the Crisis Team members and/or administration before going home.
THIS IS A CRITICAL STEP!!!!

Suggestions for Communicating with the Media

The administrator in charge of the school communication should work directly with the building administrators on press coverage when outside media is likely to be involved. All media questions and statements may be deferred to that office. However, information of a written nature should only be released after consultation with the designated administrator.

Before a Crisis Occurs

Prepare a preliminary plan for communicating with the media prior to a crisis situation. This plan should be short and simple. It should have activities, roles and responsibilities clearly defined. For example, it should be decided in advance:

- Who should make the contacts?
- Who is to be called?
- Who is to communicate with the media?
 - No one has to speak with the media
- Where is the media to be located within or outside the building?
- Who is responsible for building security with respect to the media?
 - They should not be allowed to disrupt the crisis intervention efforts.
- How staff is to handle contact from the media

At the Time of a Crisis (this section and heading could be added to a different page in the implementation)

- Briefly state the known facts of the situation, but do not give name of victims or persons responsible.
- Do not go into depth, or say more than is needed.
- Do not speculate about motives or feelings. If civil authorities are involved, refer questions that require their expertise.
- Review what is being done to respond to the situation. In general terms, identify the support being provided to the students, their families, and staff. Emphasize that the primary goal is to help the students through the crisis situation.
- Let the media know that the school will try to maintain or quickly return to its normal routine and schedule, based on the response of staff and students and how well people are coping.
- Avoid judgment statements or opinions.

REMINDERS:

1. Teachers may allow a few minutes for students to talk about their reactions to the situation. Teachers should try to resume the normal class schedule as soon as possible. Not everyone will be comfortable leading a discussion; if help is needed, contact a member of the crisis team.
2. Don't dismiss or discount any person's concerns, however; reassure the person that all perspectives need to be considered.
3. Look for signs of emotional reactions over several days that may need attention and then refer to counselors or designated crisis center. As a reminder, please have a member of the crisis team escort the student(s) to the designated crisis center.

- Crying
- Major change in student's behavior
- Withdrawal from normal class participation
- Change in student's work/study habits
- Excessive daydreaming
- Increased absences
- Passivity in class
- Defiance, especially if this was not a problem before
- Lingering sadness (sadness for several days is to be expected, but IMPROVEMENT should be seen within one week to ten days)

Sample Announcements and Script

Announcement information should be approved by family and building administrator(s). Every script should include how to contact the crisis team for support.

Generic Sample Script:

_____ (died, was killed, was seriously injured, is seriously ill, died by suicide). Relate the facts that were relayed during the initial faculty meeting concerning this issue. **Be certain that whatever is shared has been cleared with the family of the victim(s).**

Sample for Informing a Class: (Individual Loss)

John will not be in school today. His mother was killed in an automobile accident last night. A truck on Highway 10 struck her car. John may not act or feel like himself.. Perhaps we can discuss some ways John might be feeling and how we can all help him.

Sample for Informing About A Schoolwide Loss:

We have something very sad to tell you today. John was driving home in the rain last night. His car swerved into an oncoming lane, was struck by a car and went off the road. John died in the crash. It was sudden and he did not suffer.

We have something very sad to share with you today. We've been notified that Elaine died last night. At this time, we have no further details to share. Please keep Elaine's family in your thoughts.

Discussion Starters

Choose one or two of the following statements. Complete the statements by sharing your thoughts about what happened. You may write or draw.

I remember when...

I feel...

I wish...

When we...

Happy times I remember...

My thoughts today are...

You are/we...

Sometimes I wanted...

I wish I told you...

My memories are...

I need...

I want...

RESOURCE FOR ADULTS: Young People and Grief

Grief is an expected, normal, and natural process when dealing with loss. Young people of all ages exhibit grief and reactions to grief. Guilt, anxiety, anger, fear, and sadness may be universal, and the expressions of these emotions may vary from day to day. Helping a young person and yourself through this difficult time may often feel overwhelming; however, knowledge of common reactions to loss may help you recognize behavior for what it is- grieving.

Possible Grief Reactions:

- Anger
- Aggression/acting out: starting fights, outbursts of temper, drop in grades, change of peer affiliation
- Explosive emotions: gentle tears, wrenching sobs, extremes in behavior
- Physiological changes: fatigue, trouble sleeping, lack of appetite, headaches, and stomach pains
- Idealization of the deceased (i.e. remembering the person as having no faults, seeing unrealistic perfection, etc.)
- Sadness/emptiness/withdrawal: overwhelmed by feelings of loss when realizes person is not coming back; feels extremely vulnerable
- Guilt/self-blame: "If only..." "Why didn't I...?" Feels responsible for the loss, seeks self-punishment
- Disorganization: restless, unable to concentrate, uncontrollable tears, difficulty focusing
- Lack of feelings: denial; protection from pain; can be a form of numbness; may be difficult to admit and may generate guilt

How to Help a Young Person Experiencing Grief

- Use the terms "died/dead/death" rather than phrases like "passed away" or "taken from us." Give an honest age appropriate explanation for the person's death, avoiding clichés or easy answers. Straightforward, gentle use of the words helps a person confront the reality of death. [Developmental Stages of Understanding Death and Grieving](#)
- Explain and accept that everyone has different reactions to death at different times. The reaction might not hit until the funeral or weeks later.
- Reassure the young person that his/her grief feelings are normal. There is no "right" way to react to a loss. Give permission to cry. Let them know it's okay not to cry if the young person does not typically react in that way.
- Permit or encourage the young person to talk about the person who has died. This is a vital part of the healing process, both at the moment of loss, but especially after the funeral.
- Do not attempt to minimize the loss or take the pain away. Phrases like "Don't worry, it will be OK," "He/she had a good life," or "He/she is out of pain" are not helpful.
- Grief is painful. There must be pain before there can be acceptance and healing. It is very difficult to do, but most helpful to acknowledge the person's pain and permit them to live with it without trying to take it away or make it "better."
- Encourage the young person to talk about his/her feelings. Encourage communication first with family, but also be aware of other support people such as clergy, trusted adult, friends, and trusted peers.

- LISTEN. Listen with your heart. Listening to the feelings of the young person is most important. Listen through the silences. Just being present, showing you care by listening is more important than knowing what to say or even saying anything at all.
- Help the young person decide about attending the funeral. The funeral can be a way to say goodbye, but abide by the young person's wish and express understanding if he/she chooses not to go.

A Grieving Person's Needs:

- To cry
- To be held
- To talk
- To be listened to
- To feel caring around them, to be with people they care about
- To understand how others may react

Chapter 3: Crisis Evaluation

After a Crisis Occurs

The evaluation forms in this section may be found helpful in writing a follow-up report for the administration of a school/district. These reports could aid with revisions of adopted policies dealing with a crisis.

Announce any meetings for parents or the community that will be scheduled. Include any other information such as memorials or special activities that is important for the public to know.

Publicly thank any district employees, students, parents, or outside persons who played an important role in responding to the crisis and who deserve recognition. This may be most appropriate after the crisis has been resolved. The information can be part of the press release that provides an update on the situation. Press releases will need to be cleared by the school communication office.

Take Care of Yourself

1. Recognize and acknowledge your own feelings of loss and grief.
2. Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
3. Be realistic about what you can do. Remember that it's okay to take time for yourself.
4. Stick to a schedule as much as you can. It provides stability and the comfort of a normal routine when your feelings are out of control.
5. Give yourself permission to mourn. No matter what the nature of your relationship there is loss. Give yourself the same latitude you give your students.
6. Be kind to yourself. You don't have to "get it all together" right away. You don't have to do it all, be strong for everyone, or take care of everything. Treat yourself with the same gentleness and understanding you would anybody else.

Crisis Team Evaluation

School	_____
Date of Follow-Up	_____
Respondents	_____ _____ _____
Nature of Emergency/Crisis	_____ _____

Please complete this evaluation of the recent services provided for your school by the Emergency/Crisis Management Team.

1. Was the service delivery of the crisis team timely?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
Comments:	_____ _____ _____		

2. Did the services of the crisis team meet your school's individual needs?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
Comments:	_____ _____ _____		

3. Did faculty consultation meet your faculty's individual needs?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
Comments:	_____ _____ _____		

4. Was the in-service to the faculty effective?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
Comments:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

5. Was individual counseling provided to students a valuable aspect of the crisis team's service?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
Comments:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

6. Was group counseling provided to students a valuable aspect of the crisis team's service?

Very	Somewhat	Not at all	NA
Comments:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

Group Counseling Summary

Team Member(s)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Date/Time	<hr/> <hr/>
Purpose of the Group	<hr/> <hr/>
Intervention strategies utilized	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Brief Summary	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Students Present	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Activities Summary

(To be completed by team during closure)

School: _____ Date form Completed: _____

Principal: _____

Nature of Crisis: _____

Dates on Site: _____

Team Members on Site: _____

On-Site Coordinator _____

School Personnel Involved in Direct Service to Students:

Name: _____	Position: _____
Name: _____	Position: _____
Name: _____	Position: _____
Name: _____	Position: _____

Types of Services Provided by Team:

Team Contacts:

Number of students assisted individually or in small groups	_____
*Total number of student contacts	_____
Number of staff assisted	_____
*Total number of staff contacts	_____
Number of families assisted	_____
*Total family contacts	_____

* Includes multiple sessions with the same individuals

Team Recommendations: _____

Chapter 4: Special Circumstances

Grief Counseling

Crisis Team Roles and Procedures in the Event of a Student/Staff Death

Memorials

It is very important that school districts address the issue of memorials before the need for them arises. When a school suffers a loss through an accident or suicide, it is often suggested that the school become involved in memorializing that student.

It is strongly suggested that schools DO NOT become involved in the business of memorials. To have a funeral or memorial service at school is highly inappropriate and can cause problems for students and family members in the future. A school gymnasium is not a good place to hold services, and the school should have a policy in place to prevent this from being requested. However, in smaller communities a school-based memorial may be the only location large enough to accommodate a large number of memorial attendees. If a school-based memorial is unavoidable, this plan should be considered with great caution.

In addition, a board policy on memorials is very helpful in order to prevent confusion and pain when a crisis occurs. Memorialization might take place through a general scholarship fund or books donated to the library. To allow an elaborate memorial for some students /staff members and not for others can be very hurtful and confusing, and can be avoided with advance planning by the school district. What is done for one should be done for all!

Personal Possession Plan

As soon as possible, a member of the administration should go to the student's locker and other areas where he/she may have possessions to collect the contents for family. Best practice is to remove personal possessions on a weekend or when students are not in session.

In the case of a staff member's death, it's important to leave their belongings in place so students may honor them. If possible, in any case when personal belongings are being removed, notify students and staff ahead of time, if appropriate.

Follow Student/Staff Member Schedule

Purpose: To talk specifically with the members of the classes shared with the deceased, provide factual information, answer questions, clarify any misinformation, provide support, and identify students who may need individual or group support.

Mechanics: Two people, preferably the counselor and another member of the crisis team, will follow the deceased's schedule hour by hour. One person should talk and explain, and one person will identify students who are not coping well and escort them to the group support room.

What to Say:

- Review the facts of the death or situation.
- Answer any questions to dispel any rumors or misinformation.
- Provide information on funeral and visitation arrangements if available.
- Explain what funerals and visitations are like and what to expect.
- Suggest what type of things they can say to the family members.
- Explain that a wide range of emotions are involved and how each person may be feeling differently. All feelings are OK. Encourage them to express their feelings.
- Encourage students to talk about the deceased and the memories they have of him/her.
- If there is a seating assignment, deal with the “empty chair.” Provide alternatives such as a new seating chart, removing the chair, or leaving the chair alone. The students need to make a decision but can be allowed to decide at a later time with the classroom teacher.
- Remind students of the group support room and other areas of support and how to access these supports.

NOTE: At the high school level, talking to classrooms is usually more informational in nature than an exchange with feedback and reaction from students.

Hall Monitoring

Purpose: To keep students in the building and to seek out those who may be in need of support.

Mechanics: Hall monitors will check out the “nooks and crannies” in the building, bathrooms, hallways, etc., to locate students who may be seeking refuge away from the mainstream. If students are interacting in groups, it may be necessary to approach the group and encourage them to use the group room. This will aid in monitoring class attendance.

Group Support

Purpose:

1. To provide one specific area for students to receive support, comfort, and express feelings, all under the supervision of trained Crisis Team members
2. To keep grieving and upset students in the building
3. To identify students who may need attention and support beyond that provided by the Crisis Team

Mechanics: One room is designated the “group support room” and staffed with at least one or more crisis team members (depending on the number of students utilizing the service). Kleenex, water, and plenty of chairs with room to move around are necessary when setting up the room. Sign-in and sign-out forms are to be placed on a table near the door so students’ absences from class can be monitored. This information is given to teachers at the end of the day or the next morning.

What to Say: The role of the crisis team member assigned in the group support room is dependent on the makeup of the students present. Some students share, talk, and comfort each other without much encouragement from the crisis team members. Others will need some direction:

- Encourage students to express and talk about their feelings.
- Ask students to talk about memories they have of the deceased.
- Encourage students to ask questions and talk to each other.

Evening Follow-Up

Purpose: To follow-up on those students and staff who were identified as most affected by the traumatic event or those who are not coping well.

Mechanics: During the school day a list is compiled of students and staff described above. The list is divided among crisis team members and follow-up calls are made in the evening.

What to Say: Advise the parent/guardian of their child's situation. Check on current functioning, refer on to an outside counselor if necessary, or refer for further intervention by school counselor or crisis team member for the next day. A school counselor or crisis team member will need to follow through with this procedure.

RESOURCE: Crisis Plan/Memorials and Memorial Services (Sample Board Policy)

The Anywhere School District recognizes its responsibility to have effective written emergency procedures for crisis situations. These procedures will be outlined in a handbook that has received approval from the Board of Education. The handbook will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

It is very important that school districts address the issue of memorials and memorial services before the need arises. When a school suffers a loss through an accident or suicide, it is often suggested that the school become involved in memorializing that student.

It is the policy of the Anywhere School District to NOT become involved in the business of memorial services. To have a funeral or memorial service at school is not best practice as it can cause problems for students and family members in the future. A school gymnasium is NOT a good place to hold services and this policy will prevent this from being requested for student/faculty services. To allow an elaborate memorial for some students and not for others can be very hurtful and confusing and can be avoided with advance planning.

Memorial and Memorial Services shall be treated as follows:

1. Any memorial contributions generated by schoolmates will be limited to educational resources (i.e. books, videos, etc.), living memorials (i.e. trees, flowers, etc.) or items related to appropriate extracurricular activities. In no case will identifying labels, plaques, or pictures be an acceptable part of the memorial contributions by friends or families.
2. Memorial contributions made by family or friends can be directed to individual or general scholarships, educational resources, living memorials, items related to extracurricular activities or facilities. Scholarship plaques will remain as long as the scholarship is in effect.
3. No funeral or memorial service for student or faculty will be held on school property. However, the student body may participate in a brief time of remembrance. The family of the deceased will be notified.

Adopted: Date
Anywhere School District, Anywhere, Missouri

For additional information about crisis management in schools, contact the Missouri School Counselor Association www.moschoolcounselor.org or the American School Counselor Association www.schoolcounselor.org

HANDLING CRISES FROM VIRTUAL PLATFORMS

As we've all learned from recent circumstances, the possibility of schools being out for extended periods of time is a new reality. It's a reality that must be incorporated into our crisis response procedures for students and staff. MSCA has drafted some tips and pointers for this new section in your crisis manual.

Pre-Planning

- Having a school team for this planning is essential. With the administration as the lead, key teachers, counseling staff, school nurse, school psychologist/social worker, school resource officer, head custodian and possibly someone from food service would be valuable members for this team.
- The school team should address equity and access issues of the students and come up with a plan for responding to all students in the event of a crisis.
- Discuss with your administrator how to ensure the security of student records, and how those records should be accessed and, possibly, removed.
- With your administrator, develop a list for continuity of operations that includes who the primary and backup individuals are for the responsibilities outlined in your planning
- Have discussions with your administrator and crisis team to identify resources and responsibilities for keeping students, staff and parents informed during a crisis.
 - Prepare handouts, announcements, etc. ahead of time to have ready
 - Create a calendar of meetings for the faculty with the administration so updates/check-ins can be shared. Specific dates are not necessary; something as simple as "Mondays are faculty meetings; Tuesdays are meetings with the counseling department; Wednesdays are team meetings", etc. can help create continuity of communication and forward motion.
- Discuss with your administrator the expectations of the counseling department. Clearly define the scope and function of your role in concrete terms.
 - Develop alternative plans in the event of illness and/or changes in leadership/staff. Designate one person to be the crisis team leader.
- Identify with administration the ways the counseling program can assist with crisis response during virtual sessions.
 - Prepare handouts, resources and other information ahead of time to have ready; keep a set at home.
- Review your district's social media policies.
 - If your district requires specific procedures for talking with students from a virtual platform in the event of a shut-down during a crisis event, discuss how to get those procedures enacted with appropriate stakeholders and when the best time would be to do so.
- Get training on virtual counseling (webinars, online courses, MSCA or ASCA presentations).
- Make a list of items that you want to bring home for school counselor activities (i.e. DFS referral information, suicide ideation paperwork, referral/resource list, phone number of emergency personnel, ASCA Code

of Ethics, your building's Crisis Manual).

- Most of these can be prepared and gathered ahead of time. Put them in a folder or packet where you can just "grab and go."
- Include information about how and when to contact you so everyone knows how to reach you in case of need. (e-mail, text messaging, phone, virtual platform).
 - This information can be readied ahead of any event
 - Add any documents to your packet of items to be taken home
- Put important forms and documents into electronic formats with which the staff is familiar so people who need them can get easy access (i.e. forms for student issues such as suicide, abuse, etc.).
 - Consider creating a list or spreadsheet of all electronic documents/forms with details about who can and should access what (include their role, as well as name). Share this list with your administrator or supervisor.
- Put copies of all important forms, manuals, information on a flash drive as a back-up.
- Identify the district/building guidelines on student contact and devise a plan for connecting with students based upon those guidelines and honors counselors' private information.

Procedures for the School Counselor

- Prepare your website/social media accounts and communicate pertinent information to your stakeholders. It may be helpful to create a stand-alone document with this information that can easily be shared/posted on multiple platforms and easily referenced (e.g., in a shared Google drive, via social media from you and your school administrator). This information should include:
 - Emergency procedures, including a clear directive to call 911 if there is an emergency
 - Emergency phone numbers and other resources, including child abuse and neglect hotline information
 - The hours you will be working
 - How people may reach you
 - Any activities you will be providing
 - Any restrictions that stakeholders should know about (i.e. district policy on contact using virtual platforms)
- Investigate how you might deliver the crisis support electronically (work together with all the counselors and administrators in the school district):
 - Check-ins with vulnerable students via live-stream or texting or email
 - Work with your administrator and other school personnel to determine how vulnerable students will be identified and monitored, including when/how you'll be contacted and by whom.
 - To the extent possible, post vetted and public resources on your website where they can be accessed by a variety of stakeholders on an as-needed basis.

- Supporting school staff with their own self-care and/or how they can best support students and their families
 - Staff may need additional resources and coaching around social-emotional learning and/or identifying vulnerable young people who need further supports
 - Offer to host/participate in teacher virtual meetings and/or do periodic teacher check-ins
- Provide additional ideas and resources to parents/caregivers about how they can best support their students during a crisis event; consider offering relevant information and resources for parents/caregivers on coping, grief, and managing stress, etc.
 - Being available via text, phone, or email for students who have questions
- Take your folder of information home!
- Take care of yourself
 - You cannot be available 24/7. Make sure it is clear when you are available. Set specific office hours and honor them, as much as is possible.
 - Have an up-front conversation with your administrator (and crisis team members in your building/district, if applicable) about how you should hold crisis team debriefing meetings, and check-ins.
 - Exercise every day (take walks, stretch, lift weights, etc...). Get outdoors if you can.
 - Practice good coping skills. Don't over indulge (food, alcohol, tobacco, social media, video games, TV etc..).
 - Get enough sleep.
 - Connect with friends and family (call or video chat).
 - Be creative (whatever that is for you: crafts, photography, dance, music-singing or a musical instrument, etc..)
 - Pray, meditate, or get in touch with your spiritual side.

Protocol for Online Meetings

Online meetings can be efficient and effective ways to communicate with various audiences and to conduct business. In some cases, counseling sessions can also be conducted online. If you are using an online meeting platform for any reason, be sure to follow these important steps:

1. Get definitive instructions and expectations from your district/administration regarding online meetings of any type with students, staff, parents, and others. Make sure you are clear about expectations, limitations, accountability and liability.
2. Ask your teachers' association representatives about best practices for online meetings, your responsibilities and your liability.
3. For online meetings of any type, seriously consider having another educator in the meeting with you. If the meeting is with a student, it's very important to have the parent present, if at all possible. It's critical to have someone from your staff present who can attest to what happened, what was said/not said during the meeting.
4. You might consider asking students to have a parent at home if/when you connect with them virtually. This could be especially important if there is an emergency situation with the student, such as suicidal ideation.
5. Do NOT post pictures of students anywhere without the express approval of your administration!
6. Send communication to students through their parents'/guardians' email or through Google Classroom. Always blind copy yourself so you have a record of what has been sent.
7. Be extra cautious with what you write and say virtually. It's impossible to know who has access to this information.
8. Whenever you are on a virtual platform, make sure you are professionally dressed. Expect the same from the person(s) you are interacting with. If someone, especially a student, is not dressed appropriately, end the meeting immediately. Tell the student you will contact them later in the day and that you expect they will be dressed appropriately. Let your administrator know what happened and document the situation in your notes.

How To Handle A Potentially Suicidal Student

If you are **currently working with a student** who appears to be experiencing a suicidal crisis **begin at Step 1**.

If you are **informed of a student** who may be having a suicidal crisis by another member of the school community, **proceed to Step 2**.

Step 1: If a student you are working with appears to be having a suicidal crisis use active listening to:

- Establish a trusting relationship with the student
- Decrease the intensity of the student's emotions
- Ask about the student's current state of mind, if he/she has a plan, if he/she has a way to carry the plan out, and when (date, time) the student intends to carry out the plan

Step 2: Inform parents/families

If you are in direct contact with the student in crisis, maintain video/voice contact with the student while this contact is made, if possible. For example, you might ask the student to bring the phone/laptop to the parent/guardian/another adult, if the parent/guardian/another adult is in the same place as the student.

If the parent/guardian is NOT in the same place as the student:

- **For the safety of the student, talk with another adult who is currently with the student:**
 - Share the information you have with the adult
 - Tell the adult you are calling 911 for a wellness check at the address they are currently at
 - Ask the adult to stay with the student until emergency responders are with the student
 - Contact the parent/guardian to let them know where the student is at and that you have called 911 and asked for a wellness check

If the parent/guardian is WITH the student:

- Share the information you have with parent/guardian
- Tell the parent/guardian to stay with the child until the 911 Emergency Responders/Crisis Team arrives for an assessment
- Verify the address and phone number the student is currently at
- **Call 911 (if you believe the student is in imminent danger or you are unsure. Call the crisis line if you do not believe the student is in imminent danger, but does require an evaluation: 866-495-6735**

- Notify 911 or Crisis Line of your concerns regarding the student. Have as much of the following information as possible available from your Student Management System or parent/guardian:
 - Student's name
 - Student's birthdate
 - Name(s) of parent/guardian who has custody
 - Phone numbers and addresses of parent/guardian(s) who have custody
 - Address and phone number(s) of people student is currently with

If the parent/guardian is not available, the risk to the student is high, and/or the student is alone:

- Verify the address the student is at and the phone number
- **Call 911 and ask for a wellness check at the address the student is currently at**
- Stay on the line with the student as long as possible, or until emergency responders arrive. (If you have a second phone available, contact 911 with one phone while keeping the student on the first phone)
- Give parent/guardian contact information and addresses to emergency responders
- Continue to try and contact family members regarding concerns

Step 3: Document information received, decisions made and actions taken

- **Document the statements you received from the student, family, other adult, Crisis Line and/or 911 dispatcher and first responders. Also document the time you talked with the student, called parents/guardians, called 911 or Crisis Line, contacted administrator and/or school counselor.**
- Contact your administrator to alert him/her regarding concerns and actions taken
- Notify the school counselor your building so they can follow up with the student and family:

If you have concerns about any student, the student is not in imminent danger, and you aren't sure how to proceed, please call your administrator or one of the counselors. If the counselor for your building isn't available, please contact another counselor on the list.

Adapted from: ASCA FAQ's Virtual School Counseling Ethics, March 25, 2020

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/legal-ethical/faqs-virtual-school-counseling-ethics>

Handling a Death of Student or Staff Member

- Follow the protocol you have for a death under normal conditions
- Family contact
- Sharing of information with students/staff
- Family wishes for remembrance
- Confer with your Crisis Team members via Zoom or in whatever format you feel is best
- Notify relevant individuals, such as specific teachers, parents, students
 - Consider extending whatever system you've established for checking-in with vulnerable students to individuals affected by the death, including students, families, and school personnel
- Provide students, parents and staff members with any restrictions that may be in place due to the event.
- Share your office hours and the hours of others on your team who would be appropriate to provide counseling and support; think about extending those hours for a set period of time
- Discuss having virtual opportunities for grief sharing; perhaps include grief specialists from the community
- Discuss if/how to honor the individual, the means, the timing, and how to notify people
- Provide information from various community resources
- Debrief with fellow Crisis Team members and do frequent check-ins with one another

Returning to "Normal" Schooling

- Before transitioning back to business-as-usual, talk with your crisis team (and others as needed) about any potential implications of school resuming for vulnerable/impacted individuals in the school community (including students and all adults), keeping in mind how circumstances may have affected "typical" grief processes and how much experiences may vary from person to person.
 - Consider opportunities for informal events to help reorient the entire school community to business-as usual
 - School counselors and members of the crisis team can make plans to be highly visible in the hallways and entrances to school and classrooms; stop in to greet teachers and staff members
 - Consider/plan ideas for classroom meetings for teachers to use in the first few days back to school
 - Participate in planning meetings to fully prepare school staff for student re-entry based on current circumstances (i.e. teachers could easily become overwhelmed when trying to meet students where they are after long periods of absence with inconsistent access to learning during the absence - be mindful of how other factors, such as SES, may exacerbate those differences)
 - Work with your school administrator and other school counselors to develop a plan to acknowledge and address the trauma individuals (students and staff) may have experienced or been exposed to (i.e., prolonged periods of isolation, depression, social anxiety, grief). Be prepared to address a possible spike in reports of child abuse and neglect.
 - Make a list of students for whom you have high concern; make checking in with them a priority once school resumes
- Call a meeting of your crisis team to discuss what worked in the plan and what needs to be adjusted

- Talk with your administrator about having debriefing meetings with teachers/teams of teachers to discuss the successes and challenges they felt during the time the virtual platform had to be used
- If school is closed for the remainder of the school year, it's possible that some staff members may not be returning in the fall; this makes saying goodbye an issue. Consider putting together a video of brief messages from those staff members and/or a booklet of written messages from staff members who may be leaving. This could be highly valuable to students and staff alike.
- Go back through the Pre-Planning section of this document to see what needs to be put in place before a lengthy cancellation might become another reality

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

If you are experiencing an emergency, please contact the appropriate services listed below:
Emergency: 911

Missouri Statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-392-3738

Suicide Prevention: 988; suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Trevor Hotline for LGBTQ Youth: 1-866-488-7386 thetrevorproject.org

Sexual Abuse: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) rainn.org

Child Sex Trafficking Text: BEFREE to 888-383-7888

Behavioral Health Response: 1-314-469-4908 24 hour mental health crisis hotline

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
National Helpline: samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline**

APPENDIX

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

General Emergency	911
Fire & Police Department	911
Caldwell Co. Sheriff	816-586-2681
Hamilton Police Department	816-583-7311
Caldwell Co. Ambulance	816-586-3801
Hamilton City Hall	816-583-4911
Juvenile Court Services	816-586-2771

School Numbers:

HIVAC	816-583-2134
High School Office	816-583-2136
Middle School Office	816-583-2173
Elementary Office	816-583-4811

Area Health Care Facilities

Hamilton Family Health Center	816-583-7839
Hamilton Medical Clinic	816-583-2151
Caldwell Co. Health Dept.	816-586-2311
Cameron Regional Medical	816-632-2101
Liberty Hospital	816-781-7200
Child Abuse Hotline	800-392-3738
Poison Control Center	800-366-8888
Family Guidance Center	816-632-616
No. Central MO Mental Health	660-359-4487

Area Counselors

NWMSCA Critical Incident Response Team:

Team E: serving Davies, Livingston, Ray and Caldwell Counties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Home phone</u>	<u>School District/ School</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>School Phone</u>
*Amy Walker	816-695-6945	Polo R-VII Polo Middle/High School	walkeram@polo.k12.mo.us	660-354-2524
**Rebecca Arway	314-359-1902	Polo R-VII	arwayr@polo.k12.mo.us	660-354-2200
Deanna Wiederholt	641-223-0942	Gallatin R-V K-6	dwiederholt@gallatin.k12.mo.us	660-663-2173
Jan Wilkerson	660-973-2467	Hamilton R-II Middle School	wilkerso@hamilton.k12.mo.us	816-583-2173
Sadie Steele	660-868-2103	Pattonsburg R-II School District	ssteele@pattonsburg.k12.mo.us	660-367-2111
Lendy Donoho	660-725-5861	Chillicothe Middle School	ldonoho@chillicotheschools.org	660-646-1916

*TEAM LEADER **ALTERNATE TEAM LEADER

For additional information about crisis management in schools, contact the Missouri School Counselor Association www.moschoolcounselor.org or the American School Counselor Association www.schoolcounselor.org