

Crisis Manual



Hamilton R-II School District

(updated Fall 2026)

Table of Contents

Statement of Purpose	4
Chapter 1: Preparedness	
• District Responsibilities	6
• Administrators Checklist for Responding to an Emergency/Crisis.....	7
 Chapter 2: Crisis Interventions	
• Guidelines for Understanding and Responding to a Crisis	13
• Suggestions for Visits to Classrooms	15
• Discussion Suggestions Do's and Don'ts	17
• Tips for Students in Crisis	19
• Tips for Working with Students in Crisis	20
• Topics for Discussion at Teacher Meeting	21
• Teacher's Handout- All Levels	22
• Handling Crisis Situations: Tips for Teachers	24
• Tips for Parents of Students Who Are Experiencing Crisis	25

• Tips for Counselor/Crisis Team Members When Assisting in a Crisis Situation	26
• Suggestions for Communicating with the Media	27
• Script for Announcing Event	28
• Sample Announcements	30
• Individual Counseling Contacts	31
• Discussion Starters	32
• Young People and Grief	33

Chapter 3: Crisis Evaluation

• After a Crisis Occurs	35
• Crisis Team Evaluation	36
• Group Counseling Summary	38
• Activities Summary	39

Chapter 4: Special Circumstances

• Grief Counseling	40
• Crisis Plan/Memorials and Memorial Services- Sample Board Policy	43
• Handling a crisis	45
• Appendix	55

• Emergency phone numbers	55
• Area Counselor Phone Numbers	56

Introduction

When a young person dies, whether from an accident, suicide, or violence, the school community is left in turmoil. In today's society, educators are continually faced with situations that can cause education to come to a complete standstill. Because schools are committed to providing for the well being of their students, the counselors in Missouri have joined together to help each other help schools in crisis.

This handbook is a collection of materials and suggestions. Some of it was developed by SMSCA, some of it comes from trainings SMSCA has had, some from resources listed at the end of this booklet, and some of it from districts across the state, such as Mid-Missouri. Counselors are the best at helping each other, and this project is one of the best examples of counselors helping counselors help children. The original Missouri School Counselor's Crisis Plan was collated by Sonie Trotter, Retired Professional School Counselor of Cabool Middle School, Cabool, Missouri. With the help of counselors from various Missouri school districts, this manual was adopted and revised by the Missouri School Counselor Association.

Statement of Purpose

The leading causes of death for teenagers are accidents and suicides. In the State of Missouri, accidents are the leading cause of death among teenagers, and suicide remains the second leading cause of death. Schools are committed to providing for the emotional well being of students. 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 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 plan. The crisis plan should be kept in an easily accessible location, and it wouldn't hurt if several people at the school/district have a copy so it can be accessed quickly, if the need arises.

Having a specific crisis plan already spelled out allows for a school/district's comprehensive and thorough response. In the heat of the moment, it's easy to have important steps overlooked or forgotten. Creating a crisis plan when not in the midst of a crisis allows time for careful planning, consideration and reflection about what is best for the school community.

Below, you will find a template for creating a crisis plan. It would be best to work through this document with your Crisis Team, discussing the various sections and what needs to be included for your particular site.

Crisis Intervention Plan

District Responsibilities

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

Date:

1. School and Administrator Contact Information School: Hamilton R-2 School District Superintendent Billie McGraw	Phone: 816-583-2134 Cell Phone: 660-247-2583
2. Contact Building Administration: Penney High School, John Schieber Hamilton Middle School, Lauren Lehane Hamilton Elementary School, Ashley Ford	Cell Phone: 816-465-0645 Cell Phone: 660-247-2949 Cell Phone: 816-935-0143
3. Contact District Counseling Coordinators: Rena Wattenbarger, High School Jan Wilkerson, Middle School Deanna Wiederholt, Elementary School	Cell Phone: 816-262-3323 Cell Phone: 660-973-2467 Cell Phone: 660-853-0972
4. Contact Crisis Team Members Mindy Pulliam, School Nurse Heather Evans, BSN, RN, Lead District School Nurse	Cell Phone: 816-465-0239 Cell Phone: 816-284-5232
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. Dorothy Silvey b. Jessi Green c. Amy Walker	Cell Phone: 660-605-1095 Cell Phone: 816-204-6257 Cell Phone: 816-516-7299 MS/HS Security Cell Phone: 816-649-8055 Cell Phone: (816) 465-0675 Cell Phone: (816) 284-1158 Cell Phone: (816) 695-6945

*Volunteer Coordinator - works with PTO, booster clubs, retired teachers, and/or ministerial alliance to provide food, assist with extra supervision such as during lunch shifts, recess, halls, bathroom checks or dismissal. Provide and deliver supplies for meeting rooms (Kleenex, water, paper, pens, pencils, markers, etc.).

*Administrative Assistant - On hand to assist office staff with possible influx of visitors. Will assist in directing media personnel, non-approved volunteers, or other non-approved visitors to exit the building. Will call the police dept. if necessary.

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 1. Contact necessary agencies to confirm death a. Coroners office b. Sheriff's office c. Victim's family
_____	B	Notify affected building administration where siblings and/or other family members are enrolled or employed. Confirm family information from them if necessary.
_____	C	Activate building crisis team.
_____	D	In the event of a crisis... • Refer to administration checklist _____ • Refer to office staff checklist _____ • Refer to crisis team checklist _____ • Refer to volunteer checklist _____

II. Administration Checklist

_____	A	Communicate with the family involved to express condolences and to check facts from rumors. If there is a death of a student or faculty member, the family should be contacted by the building administrator regarding details the family wishes to be shared. If possible, this information should be recorded, received or confirmed in writing. 1. What details does the family want shared with the staff? 2. What details does the family want shared with the students? 3. Discuss with the family the details around the individual's items left at the school and what to do with them. Items can be left at the school for no more than 2 days then picked up by the family or taken to the family.
-------	----------	---

		4. Provide other options for services if the family requests assistance. 5. Only if approached, discuss options for memorial. Repeat the information back to the family member who will serve as the contact person for the family.
—	B	Prepare scripted response to outside calls for office staff. 1. Be sure to state what we are doing to keep our students'/children safe 2. Give time and place, if parents meetings are scheduled. 3. Ask if parents have received notification of the incident/crisis via email or TextCaster. 4. Any changes to dismissal procedures, if needed.
—	C	Contact staff at their homes 1. Send personal email to all staff members of approved script and necessary staffing details. Follow up with a textcaster message requesting all staff to check detailed email. 2. If an emergency/crisis occurs during the school day, meet with faculty as soon as possible after the event. 3. Include in the faculty meeting agenda: a. A printed statement approved by the family to be read verbatim by the classroom teacher and/or designated crisis team member. Decide 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 review covering recommendations for dealing with a loss in the classroom. c. An announced plan for disseminating further information during the day, e.g. email, runners, further faculty meetings. d. The name and location of person in the building who can be called upon for accurate and current information regarding general day-to-day operations (for volunteer crisis team members) e. An assessment of the individual faculty members' comfort levels in reading the prepared statement and discussing the situation with students. f. An evaluation of the need for substitute personnel from other building teams. g. As needed, a schedule of times and location for faculty to process loss, 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 crisis team. i. The space available for small group counseling sessions. j. The plan for handling the media i. Spokesman will be the superintendent or designee as stated in School Board Policy KB ii. Where would the media be located? iii. Who is responsible for building security in regards to media? iv. Media should not interrupt the school's procedures. v. Suggestions for media contact for superintendent: ● 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. • Do not give details or the name of the people involved. • Avoid judgment statements or opinions. k. Any other pertinent information
--	--	---

III. Volunteer Coordinator

_____	A	Once activated by the crisis team, using prepared statement, begin contacting volunteers. 1. Attend Staff Meeting 2. Gather Information 3. Contact Volunteers 4. Set meeting times with volunteers 5. Attend debriefing
-------	----------	--

IV. Follow up activities

_____	A	Crisis Team Members review items listed in MSCA Crisis Manual Chapter 3
_____	B	Crisis Team Evaluation/Feedback and plans for the next day
_____	C	Crisis Team and Staff Self Care Check

Volunteer Call List

Organization/ Contact Person	Phone Number	Desired Donation	Time of Arrival	Comments
Ministers		Counseling Alternative Locations		
Medical Personnel Elissa Zorn	816-752-1042	Medical Needs		
Retired Teachers - Tim Schieber Allison Ford Troy Ford Alternate: Traci 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

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- Could something like this happen again? Will something like this happen again?
 - Grief- Sadness, crying, a deep sense of personal loss
 - Anxiety- A difficulty in explaining or understanding the tragedy; things are not the same at school or in my class
 - Depression- emptiness, unhappiness
 - Guilt- An irrational feeling of responsibility for the event. What could I have done to prevent it?
 - Anger- Why did someone do violent, senseless things? Why did others let it happen? Anger can be directed toward a specific person or persons or be a more general feeling of anger.

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- Their minds are preoccupied with other thoughts and feelings that would usually be very enjoyable may not have much appeal.
 - Greater dependency- A need to feel protected may result in their wanting to do more with you or not have you away from them for long periods of time; some kids may not want 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- adults may need to talk about a tragic incident over and over again, asking questions that may be unanswerable but needing to ask them anyway. This repetition is often a

healthy way of working through the grief process; on the other hand, a student may not want to talk about it much 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 through this difficult time.

- Listen- Don't interrupt, he/she needs to be heard.
- Accept feelings- They are valid feelings for this student, even though your feelings may not be similar.
- Empathize- Let the child know that you recognize his/her sadness, confusion, anger, or whatever feelings he/she has about the tragedy.
- Reassure- The student is not responsible for what happened.
- Accept- The student may not want to talk about the trauma right away. Let him/her know you are willing to listen whenever he/she wants or needs to talk about it.
- 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, the school staff or an outside professional.

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

Suggestions for Visits to Classrooms

1. Briefly explain why you are there... "If you are wondering why there are some strange- faced adults 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. Because we were not as close to the person as you are, we are not suffering the way you and the teachers 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. Let all kids know that whatever they are feeling is okay. It may be anger, sadness, fear, confusion, guilt- anything, or even a mixture of these and/or other feelings.
4. Help them 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 them 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 them eventually share about some of their positive experiences they have had with (use the person's name)- fun time, etc.
 10. Compliment them for being supportive of each other and really 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.**

Discussion Suggestions Do's and Don'ts

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.

1. It's hard to say what we feel, but it's important to do so.
2. Is it OK to feel _____, since I didn't even know them?
3. What do I tell outsiders when they ask me, "HOW can you stand to go to the school?"
4. Is it OK for me to cry?
5. What are things back to normal?
6. Is it OK for me to be happy- I don't have strong feelings, didn't know the victims, was absent..."

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 of 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

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.
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

Tips for Working with Students in Crisis

All of us, at some time in our lives, experience a trauma or crisis. It may occur in various forms: an earthquake, a tornado, a fire, a car accident, severe physical injury, rape, or the death of a friend or love ones.

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.

- 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

Topics for Discussion at Teacher 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. Attached is a copy of "Young People and Grief (see handout)." This information may be helpful to you as you work with students in helping them deal with their feelings.
2. 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.
3. Please be especially observant for those students who experience a high level of distress and/or whose behavior indicates a strong grief reaction (see description of possible grief reactions in "Young People and Grief"). Bring or have students escorted by a staff member to the support room. Names of students who should be monitored or seen for follow-up should be given to counselors.
4. 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.
5. 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. 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

-
- e. Consider using an activity as suggested in the packet on Dealing with Death.
6. 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.
 7. State and reinforce the stability of a routine: "School will go on." Allow appropriate time for sharing of feelings and discussion, but return to scheduled instructional activities each day.
 8. See counselors for additional materials if necessary
 9. 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. Before classes find out all the information you can and, according to the instructions from administrators, share facts with students.
2. Give as much information as the students need to know. Cognitive and emotional development will determine how much and in what manner to share.
3. 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.
4. Look for signs of distress in individual students 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.
5. Allow time for a break or recess after discussing and sharing. In cases of a continuing crisis remember to allow times for breaks.
6. Listen to your students' feelings.
7. Remember that everyone experiences and reacts to grief and crisis in a different way. There is no one-way to act.
8. Some students may express various religious beliefs about the 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.
9. 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.
10. 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. Sometimes students are more angry if they are not given time to grieve.
11. Removal of student's personal belongings should be arranged by the school's administrator.

-
12. Keep students informed. If it is an ongoing situation, let your class know any relevant information as soon as you receive it, even if it means interrupting the class occasionally.
 13. In the case of a student's death, remove their name from your roster to 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.
2. Watch for signs of distress. Loss of appetite, aggression, acting out, being withdrawn, sleeping disorders, 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.
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.
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 if necessary.

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

1. Keep your life in balance.
 - 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.
7. Debrief with the Crisis Team members and/or administration before going home.

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 is to be called?
- Who should make the contacts?
- Who is to communicate with the media?
 - No one had to speak with the media
- Where the media is 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

- 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.
- Do not give details or the name of the people involved.
- Avoid judgment statements or opinions.

- [illegible]

- Allow for discussion time. Points to consider in discussion:

- Not everyone will be comfortable leading a discussion; if help is needed, contact the Crisis Team Coordinator.

-
3. How to respond to feelings students might experience.

Take every complaint and feeling the person expresses seriously. Do not dismiss or discount the person's concerns, however; reassure the person that all perspectives need to be considered.

4. Look for signs of emotional reactions over several days that may need attention and then refer to counselors or 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)
5. Escort students in distress to a designated room for assistance.

Sample Announcements

Announcement information should be approved by family and building administrator(s)

Sample announcement that only affects one classroom: (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 will be very sad for a long time. Perhaps we can discuss some ways John might be feeling and how we can all help him.

Sample announcements for a school-wide 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. We will have counselors available for anyone who needs to talk. Please keep Elaine's family in your thoughts.

Individual Counseling Contacts

Team Member _____

Date	Time	Name	Problem- Impressions/Intervention
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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...

Young People and Grief

The grieving process is a normal, natural, and healing result of loss and pain is to be expected. 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
- 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 the death.
- 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 your 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. Any report 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. Maybe you need to take some time for yourself. Do it.
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:

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

Very

Somewhat

Not at all

NA

Comments:

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

Very

Somewhat

Not at all

NA

Comments:

Group Counseling Summary

Team Member(s) _____

Date/Time _____

Purpose of the Group _____

Intervention strategies utilized _____

Brief Summary _____

Students Present _____

Activities Summary

(To be completed by team during closure)

School: _____ Date form Completed: _____

Principal: _____

Nature of Crisis: _____

Dates of 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 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 that will be considered will address memorials 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 and not for others can be very hurtful and confusing, and can be avoided with advance planning by the school district.

Personal Possession Plan

As soon as possible, a member of the administration goes to the student's locker and other areas where he/she may have possessions to collect the contents for family. This keeps a mass of students from witnessing removal of the possessions.

Follow Student Schedule

Purpose: To talk specifically with the class 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 student's counselor and another member of the Crisis Team, will follow the deceased student's, or the student involved, 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 the procedures involved in using.

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.

Hamilton R-II School District School Board Policy Crisis Intervention Plan (EBCA)

The Hamilton R-II School District has a crisis intervention plan to help school district administrators and faculty deal effectively with crises that could interfere with the normal daily operation of school. This plan outlines and describes the district's guidelines for responding to most crises. All staff members with a need to know will be provided in-service training concerning these guidelines. Specific information regarding the crisis intervention plan is available in the central and building offices upon request, unless it is considered a closed record pursuant to the Missouri Sunshine Law.

The superintendent or designee shall develop a comprehensive all-hazards emergency response plan. The plan must identify potential emergency situations that may impact the district, include procedures for responding to those emergency situations and address the transition back to pre-emergency status. The plan will be developed based on recommendations from the Missouri Center for Education Safety, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) or other appropriate entities that provide expertise in emergency planning. In addition,

the plan will be developed with cooperation from local public-safety first responders and, to the extent possible, will be compatible with city and county plans. The emergency plan will include provisions addressing the needs of special populations of students and will assume a potential shelter-in-place period of up to 72 hours.

Reporting

All district staff are required to report potentially dangerous situations immediately. Each building in the district will foster an environment in which students feel comfortable sharing with a responsible adult any information regarding potentially threatening or dangerous situations.

Community Emergency Plan

The Board directs the superintendent or designee to recommend an emergency preparedness plan, subject to Board adoption, to address the use of school resources (including school facilities, commodity foods, school transportation and equipment) if a natural disaster or other community emergency occurs. The plan will authorize the superintendent or other designated school official to approve the use of school resources to provide relief to the community if an emergency occurs.

The use of school resources under this section shall be subject to review by the Board within 30 days of authorization or as soon as reasonably possible.

Crisis and Emergency Plan Records

In accordance with law and district policy, the district will close records pertaining to school security guidelines, policies and response plans; structural plans of real property; security systems; and access and authorization codes for security systems.

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 work completion and grading.

- Discuss with your administrator how to ensure the security of student records, and how those records should be accessed

- 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 and parents informed

- 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

- Identify with administration the ways the counseling program can assist in the transition to virtual learning.

- Prepare handouts, resources and other information ahead of time to have ready

- 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, 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 your 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.”
 - Prepare lessons that students can do from home both with or without the internet. This is a good time to utilize Missouri Connections and/or have students work on their ICAPs.
 - Prepare these ahead of time and have them ready
 - Include information about how and when to contact you with the lessons 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
 - Secondary and Multilevel school counselors: discuss how senior grades, graduation, prom, awards night, testing will be handled
 - Discuss with your administrator how IEPs and 504s will be handled, in consultation with

Special Education (i.e. how meetings will be held, who leads, how interventions/accommodations will be handled)

- 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. meeting forms, 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 (including 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 that values available methods 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 activities you typically offer that will not be provided remotely (redirect to appropriate contact if applicable)
 - Any restrictions that stakeholders should know about (i.e. district policy on contact using virtual platforms)
 - Investigate how you might deliver the school counseling program electronically to help alleviate worries and fears (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; this may be part of a building- or school-level system to have regular check-ins with all students, monitor "absences," etc.
 - Teaching coping skills using posted videos and other information on websites, social media, Youtube, etc.

- To the extent possible, post vetted and public resources on your website where they can be accessed by a variety of stakeholder on an as-needed basis

- Supporting school staff with their own self-care and/or how they can best supports 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 weekly teacher check-ins

- Help students transition to online or livestream format.
 - Giving study techniques and tips on social media or websites
 - Reach out to students who have special identified learning needs- work with the special education department
 - Assist families to access free internet services (be available via phone specific hours for those who do not have internet)
 - Provide additional ideas and resources to parents/caregivers about how they can best support their students in distance learning; consider offering relevant information and resources for parents/caregivers on coping with distance-learning, managing stress, etc.
 - Being available via text, phone, or email for students who have questions about grades, college/career issues (financial aid, A+, letters of recommendation, scholarships, ICAPs, etc...)
 - Promoting the use of MoConnections or other such tools that the school uses to help them focus on the future.

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 other counselors in your building/district, if applicable) about how you should address concerns about exceeding your defined workload. If possible, schedule a regular check-in with your administrator to discuss your workload and opportunities for improvement.
 - 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..)

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>

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 Daviess, 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
Katie Crabtree		Pattonsburg R-II Elementary	kcrabtree@pattonsburg.k12.mo.us	660-367-2111
Deanna Wiederholt	641-223-0942	Hamilton R-II Elementary School	dwiederholt@hamilton.k12.mo.us	660-853-0972
Jan Wilkerson	660-973-2467	Hamilton R-II Middle School	wilkerso@hamilton.k12.mo.us	816-583-2173

*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