

Initial Contact People

List home phones for the following for after-hours notification. Be certain to contact appropriate people, whether during or after school hours.

Name:	Work Ph:	Home Ph:
Team Coordinator	_____	_____
Superintendent	_____	_____
Dist. Contact Person	_____	_____
Dist. Back-up Person	_____	_____
"In House" Team	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

To begin the process of calling in the Flight Team, call the team coordinator as soon as you are aware of a possible need so Team Members have lead time.

Be prepared to give the Flight Team Coordinator the following:

- *Name of the victim -- basic information about him/her.*
- *Age of child -- grade/classroom or staff person's assignment*
- *What building did child attend? In what district?*
- *Cause of death or nature of tragedy.*
- *Whether you've contacted your superintendent.*
- *How you are notifying staff.*
- *Whether you plan a before-school meeting, place and time for this.*
- *Other buildings who might be affected by this loss.*
- *What kind of assistance and number of Team Members you'd like.*
- *Special circumstances, information on siblings, any predicted obstacles.*

SUPPORTING YOUTH IN GRIEF

Keep in mind that students need or may benefit from any of the following:

- **The truth** about what has happened. If there are aspects of the death or event which are simply too gory or for some other reason too difficult to talk about, it is better to be honest about that than to whitewash the event with a cover story. This shows respect for the students' integrity as is essential for your credibility.
- **The opportunity to talk about the event** as well as other similar events in their lives. This helps "normalize" the event as they hear that others, too, have had similar experiences. Too, talking eases the pressure we feel inside.
- **Understanding that this event might be a "trigger"** which is causing them to re-experience feelings they had in the past at times of danger, threat or fear. It helps for them to know that this reaction is not unusual for people with something frightening in their histories.
- **Staff and other adults in their lives understanding that**, if they come from a dysfunctional home, their abilities to cope with grief is likely diminished.
- **Being allowed to use the Safe Room** even if they didn't know the deceased. Many students will have been triggered by this event and will not be able to focus on school work until they've had the opportunity to process some of the newly reactivated grief. Suspend judgment about who needs to go to the Safe Room and let the staff there send back students who are not using the grieving process.
- **To find meaning in the event.**
- **Help understanding what to expect at the funeral or memorial service.** As the details of the service are known, take time to talk with students about whether they've ever been to a funeral, what it was like, and what to expect with this one.
- **Continued structure in the schedule for the day.** It is usually better to continue to have students stay at school, where they can grieve with others. They can benefit from walking through the usual class schedule and showing up for all or many of their usual classes, because there is a sense of routine. Suspend the academic expectations long enough to process the meaning and impact of the event. In some cases, that may last the whole class period, in others, all day.
- **Consistency in discipline**, with flexibility. Often at these times, students feel life is out of control. They feel even more unsafe if peers' behavior is not within the usual realm of the classroom. Exceptions may be made in regard to expectations of how much academic work gets done for a day or two, or other aspects of school life which do not put others at risk or leave them feeling a loss of structure.

Students do **not** need for you to become an instant counselor. They **do** need for you to "be there for them" by letting them talk about their fears, concerns and feelings. They need to feel safe and not judged. If your school is going through a tragedy or trauma, the first day or two may be a bit of a roller coaster ride with emotions. Encourage students to:

- **support each other** for the next while and help each other get through the day.
- **put extra energy into friendships.** Exchange phone numbers with each other.
- **take good care of themselves** by eating well and getting lots of rest.

Crisis Day Guidelines For Counselors

Students know where to find you in your office, and that there may be more benefit to your being there than helping to staff the Safe Room. Any students who have check-in programs with you still need their chance to check in. If you are in your office, those students who are most in need of having some one-to-one time with you have a chance to do so. If you are in the Safe Room or moving about the school, sometimes those students are a bit at loose ends. Keeping the chaos level down is best facilitated by having as little disruption as possible and providing a stable environment. That includes knowing that you're still there for them in the same way.

The purpose of the Safe Room is to allow students to talk among themselves while they try to give meaning to the loss. If there are students who are particularly disturbed or in need of counseling support from you, the Flight Team will send them to you if they come into the Safe Room. It is not the Flight Team's goal to take over your role; it is their goal to facilitate a space where students who are not ready to return to academics can congregate and begin healthy grieving. It will be very helpful for them to be able to send you those students who are most devastated.

Try not to overextend yourself too much today -- the Flight Team may only be here for a day or two. You will be picking up the pieces for a long time to come. Staff and students will be turning to you for some time. Consider turning anything over to the Flight Team you can for today... ask whether your needs are within their scope.

Invite students about whom you are most concerned to stop by your office during the day. There is a form on the following page. Have them delivered to students' rooms during the day or hand them out at the before school staff meeting to their teachers.

The Flight Team usually sets up meetings for specific groups with whom the deceased was involved. This often includes sports teams, debate, drama, or other special activities in which the person participated. The Team members have ideas as to what makes those meetings work well and what some of the pitfalls tend to be. It is very helpful if you can participate in those group meetings, because long after the Flight Team is gone, those groups will still be grieving. If you are there at the initial meeting, they identify with you as already knowing what they're going through.

Encourage teachers to keep lists of those students whose behavior, academics or attendance changes in the near future, or students of concern. You could organize some informal "lunch bunches" or grief groups as a follow-up to this event.

The staff people most apt to be overworked and given least space for their own needs around these kinds of events are the counselor, clerical staff and the administrator in charge. People have come to depend on the counselors in many ways, and this is apt to be a very demanding time. Go on record with your staff as being a "regular" person with real needs, and ask for support or breaks when you need them.

Check the section on memorial activities if you might end up being the person who oversees the planning of that activity with students. Call on Flight Team members for suggestions. There are some wonderful outcomes of having a memory activity -- we suggest it almost always. There are some pitfalls to be avoided, too.

Be kind to yourself and ask the Flight Team to help in any way you wish! Your school is fortunate to have you, especially now.

Crisis Day Guidelines For Teachers

Remember this! You don't have to become an instant counselor. Students simply need you to be there for them. They need time to explore the meaning of this death. Be consistent about discipline so there is enough structure for them to feel safe. Allowing them to see your grief is a gift as you model expressing feelings.

A Flight Team member can read the announcement to students if you'd prefer, but remain in the room so you can see students' reactions. After the announcement, do some processing. Share your own feelings. Avoid blame or guilt. Help students make "I" statements ("This is how it is for me," rather than, focusing on others.)

After the announcement you might mention to students that this will be a tough day for some, and that you expect all students to be responsible in their behavior and respectful toward others. Give examples, such as when one person is speaking, all others need to listen. No teasing. Ask students to give other examples of being respectful and responsible. Then lead discussion time. Lead-ins might include:

- *Had some of you already heard about this? How did you hear?*
- *How many of you have lost others to death before this?*
- *Let's make a list of the kinds of reactions and feelings people have at times like this.*
- *What kinds of things have people done that was helpful for your families at times like this?*

Don't force students to talk, but be sure all who wish to speak have the opportunity. Realize the importance of truth. That can be difficult. If there are aspects that are inappropriate for students to hear, don't tell them a "cover" story. Be honest in saying that you aren't able to talk about that part at this point. Because students are thirsting for information, this sometimes makes them angry or frightened. It is OK to ask them how it is for them when they can't have all of the details. Validate their frustration. It is based in a very basic need to know... we really can't begin grieving effectively until we know enough details to know what it is we are grieving. Grief from a suicide is very different than grief from an accident. This is a good time to remember that you can't take away their pain. You can just be there for them.

Avoid being judgmental, giving advice, or giving your own answers. Stick to the truth and then encourage students to explore it and come up with their own answers.

Allow quiet time, time to write or draw pictures about this, time for students to gather with peers to talk (in adult-supervised places), reminiscing and memory-sharing, curiosity about death, funerals, etc., and any feelings which a students have. Accept the feelings ("It makes sense to me that you might feel that way."). Realize that some students may have negative feelings about the deceased. Allow those feelings to be expressed, also. Support the honesty. Allow the day to move in and out of processing and academics as student needs seem to dictate.

Encourage students to use the Safe Room as needed. Getting the neediest students to the Safe Room allows your class to return to homeostasis more easily. Get students out for recess -- they need the break and the physical exercise. Help kids network. Encourage any who wish to give input on the memory activity to do so. Participation on any level gives the memory activity much more meaning for kids, thus it meets a real need well and provides a point when the "official" grieving period is over.

In the coming weeks, watch for signs of depression or changes in attendance, academic performance or behavior. Refer students of concern to the counselor. Ask for breaks and take good care of yourself!

Needs Assessment

In regard to the recent death, tragedy or crisis, we are attempting to organize follow-up.

Please indicate names of people who may need support due to this situation:

Student(s) _____

Staff _____

Family/
Friends _____

Former
Students _____

What would be supportive for you or your class at this point? _____

Other concerns? _____

PLEASE RETURN TO _____ ASAP - THANKS!
(usually the school counselor or administrator)

<p>Crisis Evaluation Staff Questionnaire</p>

In order for us to improve our school crisis plan and to provide feedback to the Crisis Response Team, please take time to complete this evaluation. Thanks!

Please return to _____ by _____

In what capacity do you serve this school? (Job title) _____

Scale: 1 = Very Helpful 2 = Helpful 3 = Not Helpful NA = not applicable

Notification prior to school (phone tree)	1	2	3	NA
Before-school staff meeting	1	2	3	NA
Availability / function of Safe Room	1	2	3	NA
Crisis Response Team Members presence	1	2	3	NA
After-school meeting	1	2	3	NA
Presentations by Team during meetings	1	2	3	NA
_____	1	2	3	NA

- *Were Flight Team members approachable and supportive?*
- *What was most helpful about the response?*
- *Suggestions for improvement of the team or of the response?*
- *Are there students you think might need some follow-up?*
- *Is there inservicing or training that would help in future crisis response?*
- *Further comments?*

Flight Team Nondisclosure Statement

The members of the Flight Team affirm their belief in the worth and dignity of the individual and believe that it is their professional responsibility to fully respect the right to privacy of staff and students involved in Flight Team responses. What occurs in the Safe Room is confidential.

Confidentiality of personally identifiable information includes, but is not limited to:

- Student or staff names
- Names of the student or staff members' family
- A personal identifiers, such as address, social security number
- Any other information which would reveal the student or staff member's identity

Confidentiality will not be abridged by the Flight Team Member except:

- Where there is a clear and present danger to the student, staff or other persons
- To consult with Flight Team coordinators (e.g., school principal, designated team leader, Flight Team Coordinator, ESD supervisor, Mental Health supervisor) when it is in the interest of the student/staff member.
- When the student/staff member waives this right in writing
- During confidential Flight Team debriefings for staff development purposes

When Flight Team members respond to a school's crisis call, they are acting in a volunteer role and are therefore required to follow that school's policies and procedures and defer to the decisions of the building administrator. ***Flight Team Members have the same professional responsibility to be certain that all child abuse or other situations for required reporting reach the appropriate agency.***

Professional ethics and confidentiality are most important. Flight Team volunteers are expected to comply with all rules and regulations set forth by the district.

My signature below certifies that I have read, fully understand and agree with the information above and agree to abide by these procedures. My signature also indicates that I understand that the good will of the flight team depends upon, among other things, keeping information confidential.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Flight Team Member	Date	Flight Team Member	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
Flight Team Member	Date	Flight Team Member	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
Flight Team Member	Date	Flight Team Member	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
Flight Team Member	Date	Flight Team Member	Date

Safe Room Evaluation

Date _____

School _____

*(To be filled out by Flight Team Members who staff the Safe Room
or who responded to a school site.)*

What worked well?

What could be improved?

What about the room arrangement or environment was particularly helpful or could have been better structured another time?

Any other suggestions for future Safe Rooms? Other comments?

Your name (Optional) _____

Your role (Safe Room? Staff room?)



SCHOOL-WIDE MANAGEMENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF TRAUMA

Because trauma differs fundamentally from grief, the needs of the student body and school-wide management requires specific considerations.

Group hysteria or students "feeding off" each other is not uncommon. Management of contagion depends upon calm leadership and consistency in discipline. This is not a time to make major exceptions regarding expectations of student behavior.

Rumor control requires having one specific person who is clearing and verifying information. Encourage students to take their rumors and thoughts directly to the individual in charge of this process and discourage them from spreading rumors amongst themselves. Assure them you will get back to them with the truth as soon as possible.

Model your belief that action can be taken and is being taken which will bring things back toward homeostasis. Take appropriate steps, keep students informed of these and organize physical (observable) activities which begin to address the aftermath. Actions such as immediately having people cleaning up a part of the school damaged in the event signals to students that corrective action is already being taken. This brings about a sense of control.

Students will not go back to learning until they feel safe in the school environment. This includes having the opportunity to talk about their own reactions, knowing that the event is not likely to recur, that the perpetrator has been apprehended, or any other information which might be helpful in creating feelings of safety.

Help students gain a sense of what is yet to come. The National Organization of Victim Assistance speaks of "predict and prepare". A key element in what makes events traumatic is that people felt out of control, and that things were not predictable. Do whatever is possible to give people a sense of what is to come.

"Normalize" for people the usual reactions to trauma. It is not unusual for people to have physical, emotional and cognitive symptoms to traumatic events. Often people think they are going crazy or "losing it". Just knowing that their reactions are not uncommon can make them less apt to feel like the symptoms are just one more sign that things are out of control.

Give students and staff opportunity for putting words to their reactions and fears. Moving the experience from the memory center to the language center of the brain begins to give a sense of mastery over something which has seemed out of control and overpowering. These might be informal times of processing or may be interventions or debriefings held by professionals who have expertise in the field of trauma.

Find the means to allow for personal action. We sometimes feel less immobilized if we are able to take some kind of corrective action, even if it is minimal. Although it may be dangerous for students to be involved in cleaning up debris, there may be other errands or tasks which would be appropriate for them. **Do not have peer helpers or other student organizations be involved in leading the discussions for students.** That is like having the walking wounded helping the newly injured. All students need to be supported and not be expected to provide support to others. Besides, these kinds of events are overwhelming to nearly everyone and are beyond the scope of what student self-help program training addresses.

