

Crisis Prevention and Management

Building-level teams

The building team will be composed of building staff. Team members should have an interest in crisis management, be willing to serve and have the time and flexibility to be trained and to respond. Members may include school administrators, counselors, classroom teachers, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, members of alcohol and drug abuse prevention teams and support staff. The principal will serve as coordinator of the building-level team.

All team members will be trained to serve as liaisons with specified groups within the school and community. Each team member will be responsible for one or more of the following: law enforcement agencies, medical practitioners, students, parents, public information/media, clergy, mental health agencies and funeral homes.

Building-level coordinator (principal)

General responsibilities:

- Plan and support teacher inservice activities regarding crisis prevention and management
- Plan presentations on identifying potential crisis situations
- Ensure that liaisons (listed below) provide for student education in prevention and management areas
- Promote close, respectful, warm communication between students and staff
- Identify and discuss confidentiality issues
- Explore ways that a signal or code could alert staff to a crisis
- Discuss and plan for effective and immediate ways to let staff members know what has happened so that they may make a clear, honest and direct statement to students to help dispel rumors and assure students that they are safe
- Educate the staff on the principles of psychological first aid and helping students to cope with the initial shock of a crisis
- Plan for possible need of aftermath services for staff and students affected by trauma

Crisis responsibilities:

Follow crisis procedure

- Identify those students most affected by the crisis and direct or have them escorted to the counselor's office as soon as the school is secured and safe
- Conduct an after-school faculty meeting to debrief and tend to emotional needs and clarify events
 - Conduct follow-up faculty meetings to continue to debrief, review and learn from past events
- Coordinate appropriate memorials and remembrances or compassionate assistance to the injured students and/or staff or surviving family

Media liaison

General responsibilities:

- Clarify building and district policy concerning the media
- Educate faculty and students on how to handle the media
- Investigate ways to contain the media and discuss whether they will be allowed on school grounds and, if so, in what portions of the building
- Identify the building liaison for all media contacts
- Decide under what circumstances media will be allowed to talk with students

Crisis responsibilities:

- Identify and prepare persons to be interviewed
- Emphasize an honest, clear, direct and cooperative interview
- Hold follow-up meeting with public information director and other media liaisons
- Conduct follow-up discussions with faculty and students who were approached by the media

Law enforcement liaison

General responsibilities:

- Evaluate building security and review district policy
- Develop relationships with local law enforcement agencies and guidelines for how and when to contact them and what support they need on arrival
- Educate personnel on district policies on security, what they can look for and who to contact for assistance
- Discuss ways to isolate a dangerous individual and cordon off parts of the building if necessary

- Have available diagrams of sites, campus boundaries and points of access to buildings and grounds

Crisis responsibilities:

- Contact significant district security, local law enforcement and other agencies in accordance with district policy and the severity of the situation
- Isolate dangerous or threatening individuals
- Review past events and analyze ways that improvement can be made

Medical liaison

General responsibilities:

- Identify school personnel who have training in CPR and emergency first aid
- Become familiar with local hospitals and ambulance services
- Identify the school entrance at which an ambulance will be directed to stop
- Discuss circumstances under which parents of an injured student will be contacted
- Discuss how students under the influence of drugs will be handled and contained
- Be familiar with the suicide detection program and alert to self-inflicted wounds and suicide attempts
- Contact counselor when appropriate

Crisis responsibilities:

- Assess severity of the situation and apply medical skills
- Contact hospitals and families if necessary
- Review and analyze the crisis event
- Follow up communications with hospitals to monitor the medical conditions of ill or injured students or staff members
- Provide correct and accurate information as to the condition of ill or injured students to the crisis coordinator for dissemination to students and faculty
- Coordinate cards and letters sent to hospitals

Clergy liaison

General responsibilities:

- Be familiar with school crisis plan

Crisis responsibilities

- Assist school in maintaining confidentiality
- Suggest appropriate funeral and memorial services

Parent liaison

General responsibilities:

- Enlist support personnel to answer phone calls and brief them on approach to use
- Discuss how and to whom phone calls will be referred
- Discuss under what circumstances students will leave school grounds and how parents will be notified
- Be prepared to discourage parents from coming to school to pick up their children, but if they insist, determine how that can best be accomplished
- Be prepared to tell parents directly and honestly the facts as known and to assure them that the school is doing all that it can to ensure the safety and well-being of students
- Discuss under what circumstances a written communication might be sent to parents and how this could be accomplished
- Discuss with the transportation director how parents and the school will be notified in the event of a bus accident involving students from the school

Crisis responsibilities:

- Follow crisis procedures
- Provide meetings for parents
- Review and analyze events with emphasis of improving building response
- Conduct follow-up meetings for parents if determined necessary

Counseling/psychological liaison

General responsibilities:

- Improve ability to detect seriously disturbed and suicidal students
- Learn crisis counseling techniques and psychological first aid principles

- Assess severity level of suicidal intent and contact parents to gain needed increased supervision and possible hospitalization
- Assist in the development of a plan to deal with large groups of students who have experienced a crisis
- Read and discuss materials on sharing after a death
- Explore ways to assist student liaison to improve communications and trust between students and faculty
- Sponsor and promote activities such as SADD and other support groups

Crisis responsibilities:

- Assist school personnel and student liaison to manage students immediately after a crisis
- Provide supportive counseling and psychological first aid to students and faculty
- Contact parents to recommend outside counseling for those students most seriously affected
- Contact the injured or deceased staff member or student's family to offer assistance
- Monitor student adjustment and provide long term counseling follow-up to those who need it
- Be aware of stressful times such as anniversary dates of the crisis and birthdays of the deceased and provide assistance to those who will be most affected

Student Liaison

General responsibilities:

- Educate students about the seriousness of bringing weapons to school and the importance of reporting them to school officials
- Taking threatening statements and behavior seriously
- Provide for student education in matters of conflict resolution, and recognizing and reporting indicators of problem behavior and security concerns
- Foster high morale, school spirit, improvement of self-concept, and close, respectful and warm communications between staff and students
- Promote and support SADD chapters and perhaps a school crisis hotline or other activities at periodic stressful points in the year such as the last month of school
- Promote curriculum emphasis in classes such as health, psychology and sociology on such topics as stress management, anger control, decision making and problem solving

- Promote safe and responsible student behavior both at home and at school
- Plan and practice evacuation of all or part of the school building under a variety of circumstances
- Utilize various administrative and physical education personnel to control crowds of students in various parts of the building
- Clarify procedures to release students to parents/guardians or designated adults and under what circumstances
- Present possible crisis situations and let building crisis team respond hypothetically

Crisis responsibilities:

- Utilize above activities to ensure student safety and contain or evacuate students
- Present an honest, clear, concise message to students concerning the nature of the crisis in age-appropriate terms
- Guide students toward productive, reasonable and meaningful ways to assist injured students or staff members or the surviving families
- Follow up to analyze crisis event and ways to improve communication between staff and students
- Remove belongings of deceased students or staff members and rearrange classrooms to assist students in getting their minds on the future