School Crisis Response Manual
Student, Family & Community Support Department
San Francisco Unified School District
General Crisis Intervention Operating Guidelines

General Crisis Response Considerations

- Assess the circumstances before responding.
- Call 911, if necessary.
- Identify the type of incident and verify the facts.
- Mobilize the School Site Crisis Response Team (CRT).
- Notify the appropriate Assistant Superintendents:
  - Elementary School: 241-6310
  - Middle School: 241-6607
  - High School: 241-6478
- Contact School Health Programs Nurse of the Day at 242-2615 if further technical assistance is needed.
- Remember: NEVER announce a crisis over the intercom system or at an assembly.

Refer to Crisis Specific Section in the School Crisis Response Manual
COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL for SFUSD INCIDENTS*
(FIRST HOUR)

During a school site crisis, departments coordinate to help school sites respond to the event and communicate to the public.

SCHOOL WIDE INCIDENT

Example: fire in school

Site manager or principal contacts LEAD

LEAD calls Deputy Superintendent for ISJ & OPOC (always) & SFCS & Dept. of Emergency Prep (sometimes)

Keep calling until a person is reached

SFCSD
Communicates to SFCSD staff about help needed

Update re: dept’s response at site

OPOC
Communicates to public (parents, media)

Deputy Superintendent communicates to internal stakeholders (Executive Team, LEAD & Board of Education, Risk Management)

OPOC

LEAD
Communicates back to school site

Site manager or principal

-- See other side for department definitions & duties --

DISTRICT-WIDE INCIDENT

Example: earthquake

Superintendent or Department of Emergency Prep opens District Operations Center (DOC) and City-wide Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

DOC: Board of Education boardroom

Staffed by SFUSD Personnel:
- EOC Liaison
- PIO
- Safety Coordinator
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance
- Support Staff

Site managers and principals stay in communication with DOC personnel as needed

EOC: Turk Street

Staffed by SFUSD personnel:
- EOC Liaison
- PIO

*This chart relates only to communications during a crisis vs. incident and not all other aspects of crisis response. For a full overview of crisis response procedures, see SFUSD Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Crisis Response Manuals and Emergency Procedures.
CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS: DEFINITIONS & COMMUNICATION DUTIES*

**Leadership, Equity, Achievement & Design (LEAD)**
- Supervises school sites
- **DUTIES:**
  - Receives information from sites
  - Relays site information to Superintendent office, SFCSO & OPOC
  - Relays information back to school sites as needed
  - Staffs DOC as needed

**Superintendent & Deputy Superintendent**
- Communicates to Internal Stakeholders (Executive Team, Risk Management, LEAD & Board of Education)
- **DUTIES:**
  - Coordinate messaging with OPOC
  - Inform Executive Team
  - Inform site manager(s)
  - Inform Employees
  - Inform Board of Education
  - Staff the DOC (if activated)

**Public Outreach & Communications (OPOC)**
- Communicates to public
- **DUTIES:**
  - Coordinate messaging with Superintendent
  - Post on Twitter & Facebook
  - Post on website
  - Automate info to parents with text
  - Press briefings
  - Public information Officer at the DOC & EOC (if activated)
  - Monitors news

**Student, Family, and Community Support Department (SFCSO)**
- Communicates to SFCSO staff
- **DUTIES:**
  - Coordinates counseling at sites
  - Coordinates with LEAD for additional services from district departments, city or county departments and private volunteers
  - Staffs EOC as needed

**SFUSD Department of Emergency Prep**
- Coordinates Emergency Operations Center
- **DUTIES:**
  - Oversees ongoing EOC operations
  - Liaisons with City Department of Emergency Management

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*This chart relates only to communications during a crisis and not all other aspects of crisis response. For a full overview of crisis response procedures, see SFUSD Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Crisis Response Manuals and Emergency Procedures.*
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PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

This manual provides strategies for addressing crisis intervention within schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.

- The primary purpose of “crisis response” is to help students and staff cope with painful emotions and feelings resulting from a community or school related crisis.

- The second purpose is to assist schools to return to normal routines as quickly and calmly as possible following a major disruption of the educational process.

DEFINITIONS

SCHOOL CRISIS A reaction to, or perception of, a situation or event which causes psychological trauma to students and/or staff and requires immediate action because of its disruption or potential disruption to the educational process. A school crisis may impact a small group of students in one classroom or the entire school community.

Possible types of crises: death of a student or staff member, acts of violence, suicide attempt or completion, natural disaster such as earthquake, fire, toxic spill, automobile or other accident.

CRISIS RESPONSE Intervention designed to restore a school community to baseline functioning and to help prevent or minimize damaging psychological results following a disaster or crisis situation. It is important that during the immediate hours and days following a crisis, students and staff are helped to return to previous emotional equilibrium. If left unchecked, some emotional responses may become internalized and exhibit themselves in unusual behaviors.

Following a crisis: Students and staff require recognition of, and help with, their emotional needs. If emotional responses are not supported appropriately during the initial stages of a crisis, feelings may be internalized. This may result in an inability to concentrate, aggressive or reckless behaviors, or physical symptoms. A school site may attempt to do “business as usual” following a crisis. However, without addressing the crisis directly, students and staff will find it difficult to focus on the process of teaching and learning.
Checklist for Crisis Intervention

Annual Planning for Site Crisis Response

Below are considerations to prepare a school site before a crisis occurs. Review and revise the following information annually as an aspect of the site Safe School Plan.

- At the beginning of each school year, identify a Crisis Response Team (CRT) (see Section B, Crisis Response Team).
- Train/Update the Crisis Response Team (refer to the CR Manual).
- Conduct annual crisis response training for new and returning staff. Inform staff of the crisis response plan and introduce the CRT at that time.
- Include and train relevant program staff on site, including After School Program, Beacon Program, etc.
- Remind school staff that all staff members are Disaster Service Workers and review responsibilities.
- Develop a plan for emergency coverage of duties for CRT members.
- Ensure that appropriate incident report forms are accessible.
- Schedule a meeting at least once each semester to review the site’s crisis response plans.
- Establish a working relationship with community-based organizations. Maintain a list of resources to be kept in the resource chapter of this manual.
- Establish communication systems to contact staff and/or families (e.g. auto dialer, School Loop, emails, parent listserv, letters home).
- Identify spaces where service providers assisting in the crisis can see students for small group counseling.
- Review and revise forms, classroom support activities, and other materials that might be needed.
- Review/develop relevant educational resources regarding crisis, grief, loss, etc.
- Establish a code to alert staff to implement prearranged procedures, e.g. lock down.
- Regularly practice crisis response drills.
- Check Weekly Administrative Directive (WAD) regularly for updates regarding crisis response.
Checklist for Crisis Intervention

General Action Steps in the Event of a Crisis

☐ Assemble the CRT, review information and details of crisis, and create an action plan. Use Reporting Form on page A-4 as a guide.

☐ Make an initial determination of the capacity of site staff to respond to the crisis.

☐ Contact the Nurse of the Day at School Health Programs (242-2615) if technical assistance or on-site support is needed.

☐ Notify appropriate District Offices (see General Crisis Intervention Operating Guidelines at the front of this manual). Keep the offices informed about steps being taken throughout the crisis.

☐ Verify the facts: Contact parent(s) or family member(s) of involved persons to obtain:
  • Accurate information
  • What information can be shared
  • Information regarding memorial services, etc., if there has been a death.

☐ Complete appropriate incident reports and fax to Pupil Services at fax # (415) 241-6213

☐ Determine how to inform and support students and staff closest to the crisis: teachers, classmates, sports team, group or club.

☐ Decide what information will be shared with students.

☐ Consider addressing concerns related to students using social media (Facebook, Twitter, cell phones, etc.) to communicate information regarding the crisis.

☐ Inform the rest of the staff and students in an emergency meeting or classroom setting. **Never announce a crisis over the intercom system.** (This procedure may depersonalize the incident and create chaos).

☐ Provide whatever crisis response support activities are necessary for students and staff. See “Supporting Activities” chapter for additional information.

☐ Identify students and/or staff who may need additional emotional support.

☐ Notify parents/caregivers in writing of the crisis so they can support their children. Telephone the parents/caregivers of any students severely impacted by the crisis, such as witnesses or close friends.

☐ Determine what additional support is needed to address the crisis, such as attending the funeral or memorial service, writing letters and/or planning a site memorial activity.

☐ Meet daily or more frequently, if necessary, as a CRT to review plans, provide updates, prioritize needs, plan follow-up actions, and debrief team members.

☐ Hold a final debriefing to review the management of the crisis, ensure that team members’ needs have received proper attention, complete all necessary records, and bring closure for the team.

☐ This CRISIS MANUAL can be accessed online at www.healthiersf.org under Resources & Publications tab; Click on Crisis Response, and then Forms tab, or on home page under Top Resources for Principals.
Crisis Management Reporting Form

San Francisco Unified School District
School Health Programs • 1515 Quintara Street, San Francisco, CA 94116
Tel. 415-242-2615 • Fax: 415-242-2618

* See Crisis Intervention Checklists throughout the manual for steps to consider in the event of a crisis.

For School Health Programs (SHP) staff purposes only
Person completing this form ________________ Person contacting SHP ________________

Background of Incident

The purpose of the Crisis Management Reporting Form is to assist a site Crisis Response Team (CRT) to organize a comprehensive response. It is also utilized by School Health Programs staff when providing phone technical assistance.

Site Person / Position ________________________________ Phone No. ____________________

School ___________________________ Time of Call _______________ Date of call __________

Incident (include dates, names of students/grades most impacted):

How were the facts of the incident confirmed?

Were appropriate incident reports completed and submitted?
eg. Child Abuse reporting forms or SFUSD sexual harassment forms.
Role of the Crisis Response Team

Determine the responsibilities of the members of the Crisis Response Team. See pages B-1 and B-2 for role responsibility descriptions.

Does the site Crisis Response Team need technical assistance?
If technical assistance is needed, contact the Nurse of the Day at 242-2615.

Notifying Departments and Key Persons

Which LEAD was notified?

Have close friends/family at the site who might be most impacted been identified?

Have other school sites that may have been impacted by the crisis been notified? (e.g. siblings)
Informing staff and students

**Never Announce A Crisis Over The Intercom System Or In An Assembly.**

Plan to inform:

What is the plan to inform the **staff** of the crisis?

What is the plan to inform the **students** of the crisis?

What is the plan to inform **parents/guardians** of the incident? See sample letters throughout the Crisis Manual.

Support Activities

Plan for Support

*See Section H, "Classroom or After-School Support Activities"

What is the plan for supporting **staff**?

What is the plan for supporting **students**?

What is in place to support students and staff closest to the crisis who may need additional assistance?

Follow Up

What is the plan for debriefing the Crisis Response Team?

What is the plan for evaluating the school’s crisis response?

*Important considerations in the event of a death of a school community member:*
  - What are family’s wishes about memorials or student responses, etc.?
  - Who will remove the personal items of the person who passed away?
  - If a student has died, who will stop notification regarding student activity (report cards, attendance, school events) from being sent to the student’s home?
Informing the School Community about A Crisis

The site administrator must consider the following before informing a school community about a crisis:

- When the announcement will be made,
- What the content of the announcement will be,
- What method will be employed to make the announcement,
- What reactions may arise as a result of the announcement.

The following points should be considered before making an announcement regarding a crisis:

❐ KNOW THE FACTS
Before informing students, faculty, or families about a crisis, be sure of the facts of the crisis. In addition, be sure which facts can be shared publicly. Reports regarding a potential crisis should be researched before information is disseminated.

❐ CONSULT
Before acting, assemble the site Crisis Response Team, and if necessary, contact the Nurse of the Day for technical assistance regarding how to proceed when informing the school community of the incident.

❐ USE CLASSROOM SETTING TO INFORM STUDENTS.
DO NOT USE SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES OR PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS
These methods of sharing information are impersonal and can compound the crisis, making the crisis response more difficult to manage. Having classroom teachers read an announcement or letter in the context of a classroom discussion exercise is the most effective way to inform students. Provide staff with a short script to read verbatim. The same announcement should be made simultaneously in each class.

When determining what information will be shared, consider addressing concerns related to students using social media (Facebook, Twitter, cell phones, etc.) to communicate information regarding the crisis. Urge students to use discretion in sharing information on-line. See Section H, “Support Activities” for additional resources.

❐ RESPOND QUICKLY
Do not delay. Delaying the announcement creates the possibility that rumors will replace the facts of the crisis. Not informing the school community promptly with accurate information also leads to anger and frustration. Students, faculty, and families may think that information is being withheld deliberately, leaving them to feel “no one cares.”

See individual sections within the manual for concrete suggestions regarding the content of the announcement.

❐ KNOW THE PLAN
Make information available only when there is a clear plan in place to respond to the needs of individual students, faculty, or family members. Lack of a comprehensive plan compounds the crisis.
The Crisis Response Team

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Assembling A Crisis Response Team

A working team is imperative for a school site to implement a comprehensive response to a crisis. An effective Crisis Response Team will make decisions as a team and will have various roles/responsibilities assigned to individual team members. **Team members should be identified prior to a crisis.** In addition, team members should know where the Crisis Response Manual is located, and should receive training as a Crisis Response Team Member.

The size of a CRT will depend on several issues including the number of students, staff configuration, and the type of crisis.

**The Site Crisis Response Team may include:**
- Administrator or Designee (Team Leader)
- Secretary
- Wellness Coordinator
- School Social Worker
- School District Nurse
- Counselor(s)
- Dean(s)
- Teacher(s)
- School Resource/SFPD Officer
- Other appropriate on-site staff, which may include: Elementary Advisor, Parent Liaison, Peer Resource Coordinator, Wellness Coordinator, security guards, custodian, etc.

Some key roles and a description of the responsibilities are listed below:

**Team Leader:**
- Convenes CRT when a crisis occurs
- Coordinates efforts with emergency services if they have been called
- Directs the site’s response utilizing the Crisis Management Reporting Form as a general guide
- Ensures that all team members fulfill their responsibilities
- Arranges for staff coverage as needed
- Plans CRT meetings regularly during the crisis to report on response of students and staff and actions taken
- Completes necessary reports and documentation
- Spearheads evaluation of the site response and oversees any necessary changes to improve site response in the future
- Ensures that the manual is updated each time revisions are received from School Health Programs

**Media Contact Person:**
- Staff should refer all media calls to one source, under the guidance of the Office of Public Outreach and Communication
- Consults as needed with Public Outreach and Communication and potential for media interest and follows guidelines offered by Public Outreach and Communication
- Serves as point person if the crisis attracts media attention
- Notifies school to avoid media interviews, stressing the use of “discretion”
Support Activity Coordinator:
- Assesses the impact of the crisis and supports the needs of students and staff
- Prepares and distributes classroom support materials
- Informs staff of counseling plans
- Arranges for additional classroom support facilitators, if needed
- Arranges for individual and/or small group counseling, if necessary
- Prepares a schedule of counseling staff or outside counselors available for crisis counseling
- Schedules space for small group counseling
- Arranges for CRT debriefing sessions throughout the crisis

Parents/Caregivers/Community Lead:
- Serves as a liaison between the site and families of any student(s) directly involved in the crisis (e.g. rape, suicide, injury, death)
- Responds to telephone calls from parents/caregivers
- Prepares letter and attachment(s) for parents/caregivers
- Arranges for distribution of materials to go home
- Arranges parent/caregiver meeting, if crisis warrants
- Arranges for availability of translators to respond to parent/caregiver telephone calls
- Helps to coordinate translation of documents: SFUSD Translation Department (415) 241-6081

Building/Grounds Lead:
- Secures building if crisis warrants;
- Arranges change in bus schedule, if necessary;
- Arranges bell schedule change, if necessary.
To maximize the functioning of the site Crisis Response Team (CRT), team members should provide support to one another and an opportunity for reflection among the team. Care providers in a crisis perform at their best when their responses to a crisis are articulated.

The following guidelines are provided to assist school site CRTs with their own debriefing.

- **MAKE THE TEAM A PRIORITY.** Take adequate breaks and monitor each other’s functioning. Make certain that leadership is supported and/or that leadership is rotated. Create tasks that are reasonable.

- **ESTABLISH A CENTER FOR THE TEAM.** This allows for situational updates and clear communication. It also provides a safe place to be and to get away from the crisis.

- **SPEND ADEQUATE TIME ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF.** Take time to listen to staff, community members, and students to learn what they believe will be a helpful response.

- **DEVELOP A PLAN BASED ON NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY.** As new information surfaces, reprioritize the response.

- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** Become aware of your personal needs, vulnerable areas, and responses to others. Monitor your receptivity level. If you are feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, or helpless, take a break. Eat well, exercise well, and rest well.

- **RECONVENE THE TEAM AT THE END OF THE DAY.** See Section H, “Classroom or After-School Support Activities” for suggestions for the debriefing process.
Resources for the Crisis Response Team

SFUSD PERSONNEL

LEAD:
❖ Elementary School: 241-6310
❖ Middle School: 241-6607
❖ High School: 241-6478

Associate Superintendent for Student, Family, and Community Support Department
(415) 522-6738

Office of Public Outreach and Communications: (415) 241-6565

Legal Department: (415) 241-6054

School Health Programs Nurse of the Day: (415) 242-2615

Translation and Interpretation Unit: (415) 241-6081

School Health Manual (Section A): Contains a list of frequently requested numbers which can be accessed at www.healthiersf.org under FORMS and PUBLICATIONS tab, click School Health Manual and then open Section A.

OTHER RESOURCES

SF Emergency/Ambulance: 911 (Landline); 553-8090 (Cell Phone)

SF Police Department: Note your District Station

- Central (415) 315-2400
- Southern (415) 553-1373
- Bayview (415) 671-2300
- Mission (415) 558-5400
- Northern (415) 614-3400
- Park (415) 242-3000
- Richmond (415) 666-8000
- Ingleside (415) 404-4000
- Taraval (415) 759-3100
- Tenderloin (415) 345-7300

Comprehensive Child Crisis Services: (415) 970-3800
Death, Dying and Loss

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Section C
Checklist for a Crisis Involving Death

☐ Assemble the CRT and relieve members of routine responsibilities. Review information and details of crisis, and create an action plan. Use Reporting Form on page A-4 as a guide.

☐ Contact the Nurse of the Day at School Health Programs (242-2615) if technical assistance or on-site support is needed.

☐ Notify the appropriate LEAD:
  ❖ Elementary School: 241-6310
  ❖ Middle School: 241-6607
  ❖ High School: 241-6478

☐ Contact appropriate family member(s) to obtain accurate information. Determine from family what information can be shared, including information regarding memorial service/family wishes.

☐ Complete appropriate incident reports and submit forms to Pupil Services Department, if necessary.

☐ Contact other sites if involved student or staff have relatives attending other schools.

☐ Determine how to inform and support students and staff closest to the crisis: teachers, classmates, sports team, group or club. Provide relief if teachers are unable to continue with their duties. Follow up as needed.

☐ Decide what information will be shared with students. Consider addressing concerns related to students using social media (Facebook, Twitter, cell phones, etc.) to communicate information regarding the crisis.

☐ Inform the rest of the staff and students in an emergency meeting or classroom setting. **Never announce a crisis over the intercom system.** Refer to sample letters in this section for assistance in wording announcements.

☐ Provide whatever support activities are necessary for students and staff. See “Support Activities” chapter for additional information.

☐ Refer students and/or staff who may need additional emotional support to community based organizations, or onsite Student Support Staff.

☐ If it is a student death, notify attendance office to stop all intrusive calls and letters home; arrange for removal of personal belongings from school site.

☐ Notify parents/caregivers in writing of the crisis so they can support their children. Telephone the parents/caregivers of any students severely impacted by the crisis, such as witnesses, or close friends (refer to sample letter in this section).

☐ Determine if additional planning is needed to address the crisis, such as attending the memorial service, writing letters, planning a site memorial activity, etc.

☐ If a student or staff member is absent for an extended period of time due to the death, plan for re-entry and support services.

☐ During the crisis, CRT should meet as necessary to review plans, provide updates, plan follow-up actions, and debrief. CRT should also hold a final assessment meeting to review the management of the crisis and bring closure for the team.
(DATE)

Dear Staff,

There are times when it is necessary to communicate news that is painful. During those times we must be prepared to support each other as we deal with the many feelings that we might experience. It is with great sorrow that I inform you that (NAME OF PERSON) at (SCHOOL NAME) has died.

Death can be difficult for us to understand, especially when it is sudden. We may feel different emotions: shock, sadness, confusion, even some anger. What is most important is that we care for and support each other.

Sometimes students are affected by the death of someone important to them, and they may need to express their feelings. Please contact appropriate Student Support site staff if you notice a student who appears to be having more difficulty with his/her feelings than might be expected.

In memory of (NAME), indicate here what activity or activities the school is planning. (SCHOOL NAME) administration will keep you updated as more information is given us at the school.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
(DATE)

Dear Students,

I have asked your teacher to read this letter to you because I want to make sure that all students get the same information about a recent sad event at our school. I am sorry to inform you that (NAME), a (teacher student/friend) at (SCHOOL NAME), has died (DAY/DATE). (Insert what information can be shared about the cause and circumstances of the death).

Death can be difficult for us to understand, especially when it is sudden. We may experience many different feelings, such as shock, sadness, and confusion. I want you to know that we, the (SCHOOL NAME) staff, care about you and your feelings and that all feelings are normal.

Please know that we want to support you. If you would like, staff will be available to meet with you in (PLACE) to help you with any feelings you may have. You might wish to share memories you have of (NAME). Staff members are available at any time to help you. (Insert here specific information on how students can access support service staff and collaborating agencies for support). I want to encourage those students who are very upset to meet with a staff member or adult whom you trust.

This difficult time can be stressful and confusing. We especially want you to know of our care and support.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES
FOLLOWING A DEATH

(DATE)

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

I am sorry to inform you that a staff person/student/friend, (NAME), at (SCHOOL NAME) has died (DAY/DATE). (Insert what information can be shared about the cause and circumstances of the death).

Death can be difficult for us to understand, especially when it is sudden. We may feel a variety of emotions: shock, sadness, or confusion. What is most important is that we care for and support each other.

The Crisis Response Team at (SCHOOL NAME) has made plans to respond to the emotional needs of all students (Spell out what is being done: grief counseling, classroom debriefing, and referrals to support service staff and community based organizations). Students have been informed and staff members will be available to provide support as needed.

If your family has experienced a death or similar loss recently, the death of (NAME) may bring up feelings about that death. While this may be a normal experience, we want to provide assistance if needed. Please let your child’s (teacher or counselor) know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

This difficult time can be stressful and confusing. A sudden death may be disturbing to you as well as to your child. It is for this reason that we especially want you to know of our care and support.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
**Common Stages of Grief**

**COMMON STAGES OF GRIEF***

Below is a list of common stages attached to a grief reaction. Remember that students or staff who have been impacted by experiences of trauma will be impacted by that experience as well. Complex trauma may lead to a more intense response triggered by the crisis event.

**DENIAL:** This stage may be expressed by feeling nothing or insisting there has been no change. It is an important stage and gives people “time out” to organize their feelings and responses. Children/adolescents may make bargains to bring the person back or hold fantasy beliefs about the person’s return. Children/adolescents in this stage need understanding and time.

**FEAR:** A crisis that results in death or a crisis that is the result of violence can instill fear in children. A child or adolescent might fear that those whom they love might die after the death of someone in the school community. Children need reassurance that they will be taken care of during this stage.

**ANGER:** The sudden shattering of the safe assumptions of young people lies at the root of the grief response of anger. It can be expressed in nightmares and fears as well as in disruptive behavior. Children in this stage need opportunities to express anger in a positive and healthy way.

**DEPRESSION:** Children may exhibit depression either through frequent crying, lethargy and/or withdrawal from activities, or even in extreme situations avoidance behavior (“running away”). This can be a healthy, self-protective response that shields children/adolescents from being overwhelmed by the emotional impact from the crisis. Children need to know that others understand and that all things change, including their sadness.

**ACCEPTANCE:** Acceptance of a loss and hope as seen through renewed energy signals entrance into the final stage of grieving. Before children can return to equilibrium, they need permission to cease mourning and continue living.

*Adults experience these stages also. Depending on individual needs, an individual, whether a child or an adult, may stay in one stage for a long time, move back and forth from one stage to another, or move through each stage in the order listed.*
Tips for Families to Help Youth with Grief

General Information
Your child has recently experienced a loss at school, either through the death of a classmate or staff person, or has a classmate that has lost a family member. Each child grieves differently, and it may take time for a child to express their feelings of loss.

It is most important that children get sympathy and nonjudgmental responses from their family members. Keep communicating with your child to create a safe, supportive environment. Talking about feelings is very important. When children see adults expressing their feelings about a loss in a healthy way, they learn how to do it too.

Possible Behavioral Changes
- Restlessness and change in activity level
- Expression of security issues: Will this happen to me or others
- Clinging to parents, fear of strangers
- Withdrawal and unwillingness to discuss the loss
- Fearfulness, especially of being left alone
- Regression to younger behaviors—bedwetting, thumb sucking
- Symptoms of illness: nausea, loss of appetite, diffuse aches and pains
- Feeling guilty that it is their fault

Response of Parents/Caregivers
Children need a sense of security when a loss occurs.
- It is important to maintain the family routine as much as possible.
- Give more personal attention at bedtime.
- If this is a death that has received publicity, limit access to media such as TV and radio

- Listen to your children. Communication about death is easier when children believe they have “permission” to talk about the subject. Very young children can only absorb a limited amount of information. Answers to questions about death should be brief and simple.

- Simple answers to such questions as, “When will you die?,” “Can I get sick too?,” or “Does everyone die?” will provide reassurance to children.

Adults can seek further information to learn what the child’s concern is, “Are you concerned that I might not be here to care for you?” or “Are you worried you might die soon too?”

Brief answers based on fact are best: “I don’t plan to die for a long time. I hope to take care of you as long as you might need me,” or “We all die. However, I don’t think you need to worry that you will die yet. We are going to try and keep you safe for many years.”

- Share your own feelings with them. Comfort them and hold them when they cry. Don’t hesitate to share your own confusion: “I don’t know why they died. Some things in life don’t seem to make sense to me either.”

- Everyone in the family needs reassurance. Children may ask endless questions. They need information and reassurances given repeatedly. Extra play may be needed to relieve the tension related to their grief.

- It is also important to explain to children that the crisis is not their fault.
TIPS FOR TEACHERS TO HELP A STUDENT AFTER A DEATH

The following are some suggestions for helping students who experience loss.

• **Remember that adults can make a difference** helping students handle feelings and thoughts about death, because most of them have faced the death of loved ones and other significant losses.

• **Listen and empathize.** Make sure you hear what is said.

• **Maintain a sympathetic never-shaming attitude** toward the student’s response.

• **Respond with authentic feelings.** It is acceptable to express sorrow to a child.

• **Create a safe space for students to express emotions.** “Go ahead and cry, it’s all right.” Permission may be necessary, since public expression of many feelings are considered unacceptable; some students are taught not to express emotions publicly. Extreme responses of grief may mean a student might need personal assistance.

• **Remember that ignoring grief does not make it go away.** Research shows a relationship between antisocial behavior among adolescents and unresolved grief over the death of a loved one.

• **Assure younger siblings that they are not responsible** for the person’s death although they might have had negative feelings about him or her at some time.

• **Refer students for help when necessary.** At times, normal grief may look like mental illness. When a teacher observes behavior such as unusual swings in emotions, moods, or thoughts that indicate a loss of contact with reality, it is time to refer that student for support and assistance.

• **Recognize that grief may last over an extended period of time.** When grief is openly expressed, the first six months constitute the most stressful period. Recovery begins during the first year and occurs gradually (refer to “Common Stages of Grief” on page C-5.). There is no magic timeline to defining an individual grief response. Normalizing the grief process can prove helpful.
**Resources for Death, Dying and Loss**

**PHONE NUMBERS/HOTLINES**
- School Health Programs: Nurse of the Day  
  *(415) 242-2615*  
  For consultation or assistance in managing crisis.
- California Youth Crisis Line  
  *1-800-843-5200*

**COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS**
- **JOSIE’S PLACE**  
  San Francisco Study Center  
  3288 21st Street # 139  
  San Francisco CA 94110  
  *(415) 513-6343*  
  [http://josiesplace.org](http://josiesplace.org)  
  Support groups for children, teens and their families grieving a death.
- **HOSPICE BY THE BAY**  
  1902 Van Ness Ave., 2nd Floor  
  San Francisco, CA 94109  
  *(415) 626-5900*  
  [www.hospicebythebay.org](http://www.hospicebythebay.org)  
  Offers grief counseling and bereavement support for individuals who are experiencing grief or who have had a loss. Offers individual and group therapy as well as on site presentations and grief groups at schools.

**BOOKS and CURRICULUM**
- **Elementary**  
  Wilhelm H.: *I’ ll Always Love You*  
  Varley, S.: *Badger’s Parting Gifts*  
  Buscalia, L.: *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*  
  Thomas, P.: *I Miss You. A First Look at Death*  

- **Secondary**  
  Bode, J.: *Death is Hard to Live with*  
  Grollman, E.: *Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love*  
  Kolf, J.: *Teenagers Talk About Grief*  
  Blume, J.: *Tiger Eyes*
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Assault/Harassment Introduction

It is always necessary to determine whether an incident involving assault or harassment is an individual crisis or a school crisis. Once this is determined, we can determine an appropriate response.

Individual Crisis Response:

If it is an individual incident affecting one student, it should be treated as such, which would include using great sensitivity and confidentiality. Refer to the attached checklists on page D-2 for possible responses.

School Wide Crisis Response:

If the incident affects the entire school community, the response will be different, and may include using the classroom crisis response lesson plan, accessing outside counselors, and informing parents/caregivers. A sample letter is included in this section. Refer to the attached checklists for possible responses.

In General:

Assault
If the assault is a rape, the incident should not be referred to as a rape publicly, but rather as an assault. Confidentiality of the victim must always be maintained.

The survivor does not have to disclose any information other than the fact that they have been attacked or assaulted. The person to whom the assault is reported must be prepared to believe the victim, file the appropriate incident forms, and contact the appropriate authorities who may include the police and Child Protective Services. It is not the role of school site administrators or counselors to investigate assault cases. The appropriate authorities will investigate allegations.

Harassment
The confidentiality of the target must also be maintained if the act is reported as harassment. SFUSD defines Sexual Harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, visual, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In addition, the district has a clear anti-slur policy that states negligent use of slurs based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability is not to be tolerated. Refer to the attached checklists and/or Complaint Procedures Regarding Sexual Harassment. SFUSD Incident Report Form and Hate Violence Form can be found under “Forms” section of the SFCSD website: healthiersf.org, “Forms.”

The following Checklist for a Crisis Involving Assault/Harassment is only a guideline given the various scenarios a case might present.
Checklist for Crisis Involving Assault/Harassment

Immediate Actions

☐ Determine condition of the assault/harassment victim and whether an ambulance is needed (on-site incident).

☐ Call the police: 911.

☐ Clear all persons from the immediate area. Do not disturb anything as a police investigation will follow (on-site incident).

☐ Determine whether the bell schedule should be changed if students should not go near the area of the assault.

☐ Prepare the announcement with the new schedule, if appropriate. e.g., “Third period will extend to 1:00 this morning. Please remain in your classes until then.”

☐ Call parents/caregivers of the assault/harassment victim to inform them of incident (on-site incident).

☐ Document case for future reference using Incident Report and determine if Child Protective Services needs to be consulted (415) 558-2650.

☐ Deny media request for information as ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.

Follow procedures used in all crises as listed below, and on the General Crisis Intervention Checklist.

☐ Convene the Crisis Response Team and review situation and roles.

☐ Notify appropriate Assistant Superintendent/LEAD:
  ❖ Elementary School: 241-6310
  ❖ Middle School: 241-6607
  ❖ High School: 241-6478

☐ Verify information regarding the assault/harassment.

☐ Complete and fax incident report (sample on p. D-6) to Pupil Services at fax # (415) 241-6213.

☐ Prepare a formal statement to staff, emphasizing CONFIDENTIALITY since a police investigation may follow.

☐ Announce time and place of emergency staff meeting.

☐ Determine what information will be shared with students and create a plan to communicate in classroom setting. (Never announce a crisis over the intercom system.)

☐ Consider addressing concerns related to students using social media such as Facebook or Twitter, cell phones, etc., to communicate information regarding the crisis.

☐ Identify student, staff and parents/caregivers likely to be most affected by news and plan for support.

☐ Assess need for additional community resources. See resources on page D-7.

☐ Establish support activity plan for all students and staff impacted by the crisis.

☐ Prepare and plan for distribution of a letter to families (refer to sample letter in this section).

☐ Update staff on a regular basis, including debriefing opportunities.

☐ Develop a plan on how the assault/harassment victim will re-enter the school: contact person, check-in times, counseling, make-up work, preparation of classmates and other student groups/teams of which survivor is a member.

☐ If appropriate, notify the attendance office to prevent automatic calls home.

☐ Debrief CRT, including assessment of procedures.

☐ Refer to the SFUSD Student Handbook for additional information, found online at www.SFUSD.edu and type in search tab “Student, Parent, Guardian Handbook.”
SAMPLE LETTER TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOLLOWING AN ASSAULT
(ELEMENTARY LEVEL)

(DATE)

Dear School Community:

This letter is to inform you that an assault on a student has occurred. (Insert information here regarding whether the assault/harassment took place on or off campus and any other information that can be provided without violating a victim’s confidentiality.)

We may feel a variety of emotions, including shock, sadness, and anger. I want you to know that we, the (SCHOOL NAME) staff, care about the feelings our students, families and staff may be experiencing.

The Crisis Response Team has made plans to respond to the emotional needs of the students. (Clarify what is being done: grief counseling, classroom support activity plan and referrals. In addition, list the school support services and collaborating agencies that are available for the child/family). In addition, the San Francisco Police Department is conducting an investigation on this case.

It is stressful any time violence touches us. If your family has experienced a trauma or loss either recently or in the past, this assault may trigger feelings about your trauma or loss. This is a normal experience. Please inform your child’s (teacher or counselor) if there is additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

Please feel free to call me at (SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
SAMPLE LETTER TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOLLOWING AN ASSAULT
(SECONDARY LEVEL)

(DEATE)

Dear School Community:

This letter is to inform you that an assault on a student has occurred. (Insert information here regarding whether the assault/harassment took place on or off campus and any other information that can be provided without violating a victim’s confidentiality.)

Some of us may feel a variety of emotions, including shock, sadness, and anger. I want you to know that we, the (SCHOOL NAME) staff, care about the feelings our students, families and staff may be experiencing.

The Crisis Response Team has made plans to respond to the emotional needs of the students.
(Clarify what is being done: grief counseling, classroom support activity plan and referrals. In addition, list the school support services and collaborating agencies that are available for the child/family). In addition, the San Francisco Police Department is conducting an investigation on this case.

It is stressful any time violence touches us. If your family has experienced a trauma or loss either recently or in the past, this assault may trigger feelings about your trauma or loss. This is a normal experience. Please inform your child’s (teacher or counselor) if there is additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

Please feel free to call me at (SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
Procedure Regarding Sexual Harassment

SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Definition
Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other written, verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made to a person of the same or opposite sex.

Examples of Sexual Harassment
- Touching, pinching, and grabbing body parts
- Visual forms of harassment such as derogatory posters, letters, poems, graffiti cartoons, drawings, “sexting,” Facebook entries, etc.
- Making suggestive or sexual gestures, looks, verbal comments or jokes
- Spreading sexual rumors or making unwanted sexual propositions
- Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome
- Being cornered, forced to kiss someone or coerced to do something sexual
- Pulling-off articles of someone else’s clothes
- Attempted rape or rape (mandatory police report)

Procedure

Step I: Informal Resolution
- Attempt to resolve the conflict through discussion, or other means, with the alleged offender, counselor, other adult, or friend if the target feels safe and is comfortable with this process of resolution.
- If you have been unsuccessful in using informal resolution or you do not wish to confront the alleged offender, proceed with Step II.

Step II: Formal Resolution
- Inform your counselor, teacher, or administrator that you would like to file a formal sexual harassment complaint.
- With the help of your counselor, teacher, or administrator, complete appropriate incident report.
- The head counselor/dean will initiate and complete an investigation within 10 school days.
- This investigation may include interviews with the complainant, the accused, witnesses and other suspected victims.
- The parent/guardian/caregiver of the victim will be notified by the administrator/head counselor/dean that a sexual harassment complaint form has been filed.

Step III: Written Response
- After the investigation has been completed, the school site staff shall endeavor to issue a written response to the complainant within 10 school days.
SFUSD Incident Report

San Francisco Unified School District Incident Report

Location of Incident

Date of Incident

School

Names of Persons Involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim(s) &amp; Ethnicity</th>
<th>Assailant(s) &amp; Ethnicity</th>
<th>Witness(es) &amp; Ethnicity</th>
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<td>V1</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>W1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>W2</td>
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<td>V3</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>W3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>W4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST:

- Alcohol/drug possession
- Battery
- Hate Violence*
- Sexual Harassment**
- Tobacco use/possession
- Alcohol/drug use
- Burglary
- Property Damage
- Theft
- Weapon possession
- Arson
- Defiance/Disruption
- Robbery/Extortion
- Threats/Intimidation
- Assault w/deadly weapon
- Graffiti
- Sex offense
- Other

Describe Circumstances of Incident

Describe the Action Taken

Administrator Notified (name/title) Date/Time

Caregiver notified (Y/N) Prior to calling SFPD? (Y, N or N/A) Telephone Name

Name/Title of Person Making Contact

If the caregiver was NOT contacted, explain

Police called (Y/N) By whom (name/title)

SFPD Officer’s Name Star # SFPD Report #

Names of persons present during police interview of student(s)

SFUSD Student Injury Report Completed (Y/N) Attach if “Yes”

Name/Signature of Person Completing Report Date/Time

Title/Position

Name/Signature of Administrator Reviewing Report Date/Time

Title/Position

FAX 1 COPY TO APPROPRIATE OPERATIONS OFFICE.

FAX 1 COPY TO PUPIL SERVICES BY THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON DATE OF INCIDENT.

* Incident of Hate Violence requires a Hate Violence Report.
** Incident of Sexual Harassment requires a Sexual Harassment Report.

Form 1.0 (Pupil Services Department 9/02)
Resources for Assault/Harassment


SFUSD Safe School Line: (415) 241-2141; safeschool@sfusd.edu. A report can be submitted online at www.healthiersf.org under PROGRAMS (click on Safe School Line)

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Child Protective Services: P.O. Box 7988, San Francisco, CA 94120; HOTLINE (800) 856-5553 or (415) 558-2650

- Children and Adolescent Sexual Abuse Resource Center (CASARC) (415) 206-4478

- SF WAR (Women Against Rape): (415) 647-7273

- SF Child Abuse Prevention Center: 1757 Waller St., San Francisco, CA 94117 (415) 668-0494 www.sfcapc.org

- La Casa de las Madres: Teen Program (415) 503-0500/Fax (415) 503-0301

CURRICULUM

Available at School Health Programs. Contact Nurse of the Day to request: (415) 242-2615

- Safe Touch: A Sexual Abuse Prevention Curriculum (Grades K-5)
- Second Step: Violence Prevention (Grades 6-8)
- Talking About Sexual Harassment (Grades 5-9)
- Safe Dates: Prevention Program for Dating Abuse (High School)

BOOK

- Holmes, M.: *A Terrible Thing Happened: A Story for Children who have Witnessed Violence or Trauma* (Elementary)
# Suicide

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Checklist for a Crisis Involving Suicide

☐ If the suicide attempt is on site, contact 911. Consult with Child Crisis Services (if appropriate) at (415) 970-3800.

☐ Contact the Nurse of the Day at (415) 242-2615 for more information, or consultation.

☐ Convene the Crisis Response Team; review situation, assign/remind members of their roles, and create action plan.

☐ Notify the appropriate Assistant Superintendent:
  ☑ Elementary School: 241-6310
  ☑ Middle School: 241-6607
  ☑ High School: 241-6478

☐ Verify information regarding the suicide attempt by contacting appropriate sources. Determine what information can be shared.

☐ If suicide is completed, refer to protocol for crisis involving death (Section C).

☐ Prepare formal statement to faculty/staff: Remember CONFIDENTIALITY issues may apply.

☐ Convene emergency staff meeting.

☐ Prepare formal statement or announcement for students in classroom setting (NEVER announce a crisis over the intercom system or at a school assembly).

☐ Establish support activity plan for all students and staff impacted by the crisis.

☐ Prepare and plan for distribution of letter to families if suicide attempt becomes public knowledge.

☐ Identify students, staff and parents likely to be most affected by news.

☐ Assess need for additional community resources.

☐ Assign trained staff and/or community professionals to specific duties necessitated by the nature of the crisis and staff and student response.

☐ Provide coverage for absent/substitute teacher, if suicide was by a teacher (Refer to Section C).

☐ Update faculty on a regular basis, including processing opportunities.

☐ Notify Attendance Office to forestall intrusive calls home; arrange for removal of personal belongings from school site.

☐ Debrief Crisis Response Team and assess procedures.

Student Re-entry Checklist: Consider a comprehensive plan if the student who attempted suicide is to return to school.

☐ Designate a school contact person for student re-entry following a suicide attempt.

☐ Plan when and where the student will check-in with site contact.

☐ Anticipate the need for additional counseling. Consider what resources are available for on-site counseling support if needed.

☐ Obtain an authorization to release medical information to coordinate with outside service providers.

☐ Inform necessary teachers regarding the student’s absence and re-entry plan. Teachers should work with the student to make up missed assignments.

☐ If key students are affected by the student’s absence, provide them with appropriate resources and/or information.

☐ Clarify the plan for regular contacts with a parent/guardian if appropriate.

☐ Clarify with student’s family regarding what information (if any) they feel appropriate to share with student’s peers/classmates and teachers.

☐ Plan/coordinate with School Health Programs staff if needed.
SAMPLE LETTER TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOLLOWING A SUICIDE

- If suicide was completed, Use SAMPLE LETTER for DEATH found in Section C.
- In the letter, NEVER INCLUDE the METHOD OF the SUICIDE.
- If suicide was attempted, and it is appropriate to send a letter, use the template letter below:

The sample letter below can be edited depending on the intended audience.

(DATE)

Dear School Community:

I am sorry to inform you that a staff person/student/friend, (NAME), at (SCHOOL NAME) has tried hurting him/herself on (DAY/DATE). (Before stating this is an attempted suicide or a death by suicide, be sure of the accuracy of the report, and if the family will allow this information to be shared. Only then insert the information regarding the cause and circumstances regarding the death.)

This incident can be difficult for us to understand. Some of us may feel a variety of emotions: shock, sadness, fear, even some confusion. What is most important is that we care for and support each other.

The School’s Crisis Response Team has made plans to respond to the emotional needs of the students. (Spell out what is being done: grief counseling, classroom debriefing, and referrals)

If your family has experienced something similar to this event, this incident may bring up a number of feelings. This is a normal experience.

Students may be overwhelmed by this incident. Please let your child’s (teacher or counselor) know if there is additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

This sudden death may be disturbing for you and your child; it is for this reason that we want you to know of our care and support.

Be sure to include appropriate resources for families. See the resource page in this section or Section I for possibilities.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
Assessing for Suicide Potential

If a student approaches someone to discuss suicide, assume that the student is considering harming him or herself, and is interested in seeking help. Always consider accessing appropriate assistance when working with a student who may be expressing suicidal thoughts. The questions below are meant as a guideline in order that an adult can get a student the care he/she needs if suicidality is a concern.

See the Resource Section for more information about suicide that may be helpful.

If the student has answered yes, even hesitantly, to any of the following questions:

“Are you thinking about killing yourself now?”

“Do you have a plan?”

“Do you have means to complete the plan?”

“Have you ever considered suicide before?”

Then the student is at risk for committing suicide. Do not leave the student alone.

- Inform the counselor and site administrator of the suicidal intent
- Inform parent/caregiver.
- Call Comprehensive Child Crisis Services at (415) 970-3800 if an evaluation is needed immediately.
- You can also contact the Nurse of the Day during school hours at (415) 242-2615.
- Document the contact for future reference.

If the student is removed from school because of a suicide intention or attempt, a plan should be established prior to school re-entry. See the Checklist for Crisis Involving a Suicide for consideration, on page E-1.
Suicide Contagion

Probable High Risk Students After a Suicide

While many students have the resources to cope with the emotions that may arise after a member of a community dies by suicide, it is important to remember that all students, staff, and parents/caregivers, will need some attention in addressing the loss.

If a school community experiences a death by suicide, there is a heightened risk that it may contribute to further suicidal ideation or suicide. It is imperative that school staff identify other students who may be at-risk, and access additional assistance to keep students safe.

- Any students who participated in any way with the completed suicide: helped write the suicide note, provided the means, were involved in a suicide pact, etc.
- Any students who knew of the suicide plans and kept it a secret
- Siblings, other relatives or best friends
- Any students who were self-appointed therapists to the deceased student and who had made it their responsibility to keep the student alive
- Any students with a history of suicidal threats and attempts
- Any students who identified with the victim’s situation
- Any students who had prior reason to feel guilty about things they had said or done to the student prior to the student’s death
- Any students who observed events which they later learned were indicative of the victim’s suicidal intent
- Other students in need of support who now see suicide as a viable alternative

Probable High Risk Times

- Anniversary of the suicidal death
- For the families of the deceased: birthdays, holidays, expected graduation date, etc.
- Birthdays
- School wide events: athletic events or performances, graduation where the deceased student would have had a role, etc.
## Indicators of Potential Suicide

The following list of risk indicators and symptoms will assist the school staff in determining the seriousness and level of risk of a suicide threat:

### High Risk Indicators

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Previous suicide attempt</td>
<td>Attempt at suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history of suicide</td>
<td>Attempt at suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifically determined suicide method</td>
<td>When questioned, expresses wish to die and indicates existing plan, available means, and specific time for completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived resources</td>
<td>Are there friends with whom to talk?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are parents/caregivers/other adults approachable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving away possessions</td>
<td>Distributes favorite belongings to special people saying good-bye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent loss or threat of loss</td>
<td>Extreme grief or trauma experienced in tragic loss (death, suicide, divorce, separation, breakup of relationship, change in family status or residence)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative change in health or appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronically self-destructive lifestyle</td>
<td>Drugs, used excessively, including alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High-risk activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Careless disregard for personal safety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-inflicted scratches and marks</td>
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### General Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbalizing suicide threats</td>
<td>Makes comments such as, “I don’t want to live any longer,” or “You’ll be better off without me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Says that friends and family will not miss him/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Threatens to hurt or kill self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting information on methods</td>
<td>Makes inquires regarding lethal weapons, pills and other methods used by suicide victims</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Indicators of Potential Suicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Indicators</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Expressing hopelessness, anger at self, helplessness</td>
<td>• Expresses that no one cares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Indicates feelings of failure and low self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has increased conflict with family, friends or authority figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is overwhelmed with current stress factors and states, “I can’t handle it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lacks ability to solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feels like quitting or running away from the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feels humiliated, experiencing loss of face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expresses themes of death or depression</td>
<td>• Conversation, writing, reading selections and art work focus on death and morbidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relates frightening dreams or fantasies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidences acute personality changes or activities</td>
<td>• Withdraws from family, friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Becomes sexually promiscuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is newly aggressive and irritable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has frequent crying spells, temper tantrums or extreme moodiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loses interest in appearance and grooming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Runs away from home</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demonstrates sudden, dramatic decline or improvement in academic, athletic or other performance activities</td>
<td>• Unable to concentrate, attend to or complete tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chronically tardy or truant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fidgety, hyperactive or hypoactive in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shows drastic drop or rise in grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidences physical symptoms, depression</td>
<td>• Appears apathetic, lethargic, bored or extremely fatigued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sleeps excessively or has insomnia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Suffers markedly increased or decreased appetite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Displays tension, nervousness or anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preventing Teen Suicide

Know the Warning Signs

What issues might make a teen more likely to attempt suicide? The risk factors for teen suicide include untreated depression, pressures to overachieve, sexual identity crises, serious conflicts with family and friends, abuse, and problems with school or the law. Many youth attempt suicide while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Look out for these warning signs for suicide in teens:

- Talking about or making plans for suicide—even jokingly
- A focus on themes of death
- Feelings of hopelessness, often with anxiety
- Giving away prized possessions
- Persistent boredom and/or difficulty concentrating
- Complaints of physical problems that are not real
- Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Unexplained, unusually severe, violent, or rebellious behavior
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Running away
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Unexplained drop in quality of schoolwork
- Unusual neglect of appearance
- Drastic personality change
- Threatening or attempting to kill oneself

Many youth who consider suicide simply want to find a way to end their pain or to solve a problem. They do not necessarily want to die, but they have not found another solution.

PARENTS: TAKE ACTION

If your child makes casual remarks about suicide, or if you suspect your child might be thinking about suicide, take action immediately! Suicide is preventable, but you must act quickly. Here are the steps to take:

1. Ask your child about it. Don’t be afraid to say the word “suicide.” And, don’t be judgmental. By speaking directly about the issue, you can help your teen realize someone has heard his or her cries for help.

2. Seek professional help immediately. Call your pediatrician, doctor, or school counselor for guidance. Or see the resource list on the back cover of this guide for local hotlines.

3. Support your child. Listen carefully to his or her feelings. Do not dismiss the problems or get angry. Remind your child that no matter how awful problems seem, they can be worked out—and you are willing to help.

4. Remove all lethal weapons from your home, including guns, pills, knives, razors, and ropes.

Important Resources:
- Child Crisis Line (assessment and care) 415-970-3800
- S.F. Suicide Prevention 415-781-0500
- Mental Health ACCESS (information and referral) 415-255-3737
- California Youth Crisis Hotline 1-800-843-5200
Resources for Suicide

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS/ HOTLINES

- Comprehensive Child Crisis Services
  (415) 970-3800
  Can help with consultation and assessment of suicidal ideation

- S.F. Suicide Prevention
  (415) 984-1900 (To have someone come to your school for educational presentations)
  (415) 781-0500 (24 Hour Hotline)
  24 hour crisis line. SF Suicide Prevention can also provide training and consultation. Link contains strategies for parents and teachers.

- Mental Health ACCESS
  (415) 255-3737
  Information and referral for families with MediCal.

- California Youth Crisis Hotline
  1-800-843-5200

- The Trevor Project Hotline
  A national organization focused on suicide prevention efforts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.
  1-866-488-7386

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSONS AND RESOURCES

- It Gets Better http://www.itgetsbetter.org/
- SFUSD LGBTQ website: www.healthiersf.org/LGBTQ

BOOKS

- Elementary
  Camarata, D.: Someone I Love Died by Suicide

  Available at School Health Programs. Contact Nurse of the Day to request:
  (415) 242-2615

  Buscalia, L.: The Fall of Freddie the Leaf

- Secondary
  Grollman, E. & Malikow, M.: Living When a Young Friend Commits Suicide Or Even Starts Talking about It

- Parents/Caregivers
  Mehren, E.: After the Darkest Hour the Sun Will Shine
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Checklist for a Crisis Involving A Physical Disaster

Following a disaster such as an earthquake, REFER TO THE SCHOOL SITE EMERGENCY PLAN MANUAL. The manual will delineate the procedures to follow in managing the logistical aspects of the disaster. The support activity planning for students and staff might not happen immediately because of the need to ensure the physical safety of everyone first.

☐ Assess safety of all students and staff.

☐ Assemble the Crisis Response Team (CRT), relieve members of routine responsibilities, and create action plan.

☐ Notify the appropriate Assistant Superintendent:
  ❖ Elementary School: 241-6310
  ❖ Middle School: 241-6607
  ❖ High School: 241-6478

☐ Make an initial determination of the capacity of site staff to respond to the crisis.

☐ Determine how to provide relief if staff members are unable to continue with their duties.

☐ Determine how to support students in closest physical proximity to the disaster or most affected emotionally.

☐ Plan activities for students until parents or caregivers are able to pick them up if the disaster occurred during school hours.

☐ Provide whatever support is necessary for students and staff.

☐ Beginning support activities might occur as early as several hours following a disaster or as long as several days if they are not able to return to school because of damage or relocation.

☐ Notify, in writing, parents/caregivers of the school’s response to the disaster and include information regarding children’s responses to disaster. Refer to sample letter in this section.

☐ Determine what additional support is needed for students and staff following the disaster.

☐ Meet daily, and more often, if necessary, as a CRT to review plans, provide update, prioritize needs, plan follow-up actions, and debrief.

☐ CRISIS RESPONSE Manual can be accessed online at www.healthiersf.org under RESOURCES and PUBLICATIONS tab: click on CRISIS RESPONSE
Notification Letter to Families
Following A Physical Disaster

SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES
FOLLOWING A PHYSICAL DISASTER

(DATE)

Dear Parents/Caregivers:

As you are aware, we have just experienced a (NAME TYPE OF DISASTER). (Insert specific information regarding how the disaster affected the school site. Give information on the activities the school took if the disaster occurred during school hours. Give information on the physical state of the school if the disaster occurred during non-school hours.)

A catastrophe like we experienced is frightening to children and adults alike. We will try to return to our normal routine while we provide support to students who may need it. The Crisis Response Team has planned some activities which hopefully will assist our students in coping with their experiences during and after the (NAME THE DISASTER). (Spell out what activities will take place and indicate if there is anything a parent or caregiver can do with their child in relationship to the activities.)

Attached to this letter is some information that might be helpful to you if your child is having difficulty handling the disaster. In addition, consider monitoring your child’s access to media since ongoing viewing can cause distress.

If you are concerned about your child’s response to this disaster, please feel free to call (add teacher’s, counselor’s or some specific person’s name).

All staff at (NAME OF SCHOOL) wants to ensure that our students emotional needs are cared for so that the jobs of teaching and learning can resume at the earliest time.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
Common Responses to A Physical Crisis

Such as Earthquake or Fire

FEAR AND ANXIETY

Fear may be a normal reaction to danger which threatens life or well-being. After a disaster, a person is often afraid of a reoccurrence, injury, or death, being separated from family, or being left alone. It is important to remember that emotional needs continue after the immediate physical well being of the family has been established following a disaster.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

• If possible, it is important for the family to remain together.
• Children learn from our actions as well as our words. Listen to the child’s fears and feelings. Demonstrate patience with a child’s fears and anxieties.
• Explain the disaster to the child and answer their questions which may be repeated several times. Reassurance comes with repeated explanations. This is a child’s way of trying to gain control, which is a healthy sign.
• Maintain the family routine as much as possible.
• Parents/caregivers should indicate to the child that they are in control of the situation.
• Parents/caregiver should be aware of their own fears and uncertainty and of the effect they can have upon a child.
• Children may overhear adult conversation. Be aware of how adult conversations could affect children’s sense of security.
• Children respond to praise, and parents/caregivers should make a deliberate effort not to focus on any immature behavior which often occurs during or in reaction to a crisis. Often, children try to cope by returning to the familiar.
• Extra play may be needed to relieve the tension related to the crisis.

POSSIBLE BEHAVIORS IN RESPONSE TO FEARS:

• Refusal to go to room or sleep alone
• Difficulty in falling asleep, waking up during the night, or having nightmares
• Repeated questions of whether another disaster will occur
• Regression such as bedwetting, clingingness, thumb sucking
• Specific fears such as refusal to go to school, fear of the dark or imaginary creatures
• Symptoms of illness: nausea, loss of appetite, diffuse aches and pains
• Withdrawal and unwillingness to discuss the disaster
• Restlessness and change in activity level

Such behaviors can last several weeks. If any behavior lasts longer, it might be good to ask for professional advice. Contact your physician, religious advisor, or school official for direction for you and professionals to talk with your child.
Resources for Physical Crisis

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

• Referral Source for Bay Area resources: 211 or (800) 273-6222

• 72hours.org
  Suggestions to prepare for an emergency

• American RED CROSS Bay Area Chapter: 85 Second Street, 8th Floor, SF, CA 94105
  1-800-4-HELP-BAY Fax: 415-427-8104

• Asian Pacific Islander Family Resource Network
  Lead Agency: Asian Perinatal Advocates, 638 Clay Street (415) 617-0061
  Asian and Pacific Islander families with children ages 0-14.

• Bayview Hunters Point Family Resource Center
  Lead Agency: Urban Services YMCA 1601 Lane Street (415) 822-7728
  Families with children ages 0-14 residing in the Bayview Hunters Point community.

• Chicano/Latino Family Resource System
  Lead Agency: Instituto Familiar De La Raza 2919 Mission Street (415) 229-0550
  Chicano/Latino families with children ages 0-14.

• Neighborhood Emergency Response Team
  www.sf-fire.org
  Training to prepare for a neighborhood response to an emergency.

• Oceanview/Merced/Ingleside Family Resource Center
  Lead Agency: YMCA Urban Services 156 Broad Street (415) 406-1370
  Families with children ages 0-17 residing in the OMI community.

• Potrero Hill Family Resource Center
  Lead Agency: Economic Opportunity Council 85 Turner Terrace (415) 206-2133
  Families with children ages 0-14 and homeless individuals.

• Support for Families with Children with Disabilities
  2601 Mission Street, Suite 606 (415) 282-7494
  Families with children with special health needs/disabilities.

• TalkLine Family Support Center
  Lead Agency: San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center 1757 Waller Street
  (415) 441-KIDS (5437)
  Families, parents and caregivers with children under age 18.


CURRICULUM/BOOKS

Elementary
• Stallone, L.: The Flood that Came to Grandma’s House
Intruder on Campus

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Intruder on Campus/School

Lockdown Introduction

INTRUDER ON CAMPUS

An intruder on campus is defined as an unauthorized individual who loiters or creates disturbances on school property.

While the purpose of the School Crisis Response Manual is to provide strategies to address the emotional needs of school communities following a crisis, the section on intruders is meant to provide a clearer understanding of the steps to take should an unauthorized person appear on the schoolcampus. The safety of every member of the school community is the primary concern when dealing with an intruder.

When approaching an intruder, always assess the situation for your safety.

This section of the crisis manual is taken directly from the San Francisco Unified School District School Site Emergency Plan Binder, section 5. Please review this section of the Emergency Plan Binder for further information.

An Intruder on Campus Drill can be found on page G-6, if school sites would like to practice a lockdown process.

EVACUATION

Possible reasons for an evacuation to be initiated: incident after lockdown, fire, natural gas leak, hazardous chemical leak inside building, localized flooding, fumes from an unknown source.

The need to evacuate a building on the campus should occur after the decision has been made that it is unsafe to remain in the building. Off campus evacuation is implemented after a decision is made that it is unsafe to remain on campus and evacuation to an off-site assembly area is required.

Schools should develop plans that identify the location of potential evacuation sites. In addition, schools must plan for assisting students, staff, and visitors with disabilities. See the San Francisco Unified School District School Site Emergency Plan Binder, section 6 for further information.
Checklist for a Crisis Involving an Intruder on Campus

A campus intruder is defined as an individual who loiters or creates disturbances on school property. An “intruder” may be known, as in the case of a parent/guardian or neighbor, or may be a stranger. If an intruder is found on campus:

☐ Assess the situation and if it appears safe to approach the intruder, greet the individual in a polite and non-threatening manner.

☐ Identify yourself as a school official.

☐ Ask the intruder for identification.

☐ Ask them what his/her purpose is for being on campus.

☐ Advise the intruder of trespassing laws.

☐ Ask the intruder to leave the campus or invite him/her to accompany you to the office if further discussion appears warranted.

☐ If the intruder refuses to respond to your requests, inform him/her of your intention to summon law enforcement officers.

☐ If the intruder gives no indication of leaving the premises voluntarily, call 911 and provide a description and location of the intruder. Notify staff to lock down.

If an intruder appears on school grounds during recess or lunch:

☐ Outdoor supervisors should immediately notify the School Administrator and guide all students to nearby buildings.

☐ Lock all doors and windows.

☐ Wait for further instructions from school officials or SFPD.

In the event the intruder is inside a classroom:

☐ Staff should take a leadership role and perform the following actions:

• Remain calm, reassure, and quiet others (students/staff).

• Remember staff actions will influence others.

☐ Staff should attempt to actively diffuse the situation:

• Attempt to move students away from the perpetrator.

• If deemed safe to do so, staff should approach the perpetrator in a calm, nonconfrontational manner and ask him/her to leave the campus.
Checklist for Crisis

In the Event of a Shooter

☐ School staff should move students into classrooms and buildings and call 911.

☐ Begin lockdown procedures including covering windows, turning off lights, and seeking cover under or near furniture and away from windows.

☐ Use appropriate communication methods (i.e., phones, radios, etc.) to contact the School Administrator.

☐ Take roll and identify all students and staff in the classroom.


☐ Be prepared for an evacuation at any time.

☐ Place a red card under the door or in the window if someone in the room requires medical attention.

☐ Follow the directions of San Francisco Police Department.
Obtain authorization from LEAD to activate the Emergency Communications message created by the Public Outreach & Communications Office and request that it be sent to all parents/caregivers or in written form indicating the following:

- The exact nature of the emergency
- Area impacted
- Who and what is affected
- How long the area will be impacted (determined from consultation with SFPD)
- Projected time for resolution
- Safe staging location for parents/caregivers
- When will lockdown be modified to allow movement on campus?
  - Inside secured buildings
  - Bathroom trips with supervision
  - Food delivery or pick up in cafeteria by class
  - Free movement inside the fence line

Communicate with the LEAD staff and request support for:

- Additional resources from LEAD staff and Central Offices
- Crisis Response Team
- Public Outreach & Communications Office
- Office of Environmental Health & Safety
- Transportation to move students, if necessary
- Sending additional Communication messages to parents
- District personnel to meet with parents at safe staging area to relay information
- Request and Reunification process (see SFUSD School Site Emergency Plan Appendix D)

Activation of an all clear notice when advised by the SFPD that the site is safe

In the event that a lockdown is lifted prior to auto dialer authorization, LEAD may direct an auto dialer as a courtesy to parents, after the incident.
Notification Letter for Intruder on Campus/School Lockdown

(DATE)

Dear School Community:

This letter is to inform you that an incident involving an intruder on campus (or a lockdown) has occurred. (Insert information here with appropriate details regarding the intruder on campus and/or lockdown that took place and any other information that can be provided without causing further anxiety and/or without obstructing any investigation that may be a result of the incident). I want to assure you that all efforts were made to remove the intruder and keep the students and school community safe.

A variety of emotions, including shock, sadness, fear, and anger could affect us. I want you to know that we, the (SCHOOL NAME) staff, care about the feelings our students, families, staff may be experiencing.

The school’s Crisis Response Team has made plans to respond to the emotional needs of the students. (Clarify what is being done: grief counseling, counseling related to anxiety, trauma, etc., classroom support activities, referrals. In addition, list the school support services and collaborating agencies that are available for the child/family). In addition, the San Francisco Police Department is conducting an investigation into this case. As the investigation unfolds and we are able to release information to families, I will do so.

This recent school emergency may prove stressful for your family, especially if your family has experienced a trauma or loss recently. This recent incident may trigger feelings about your trauma or loss, and is a normal experience. Please inform your child’s (teacher or counselor) if there is additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

Please feel free to call me at (SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

(PRINCIPAL’S NAME)
Below is a suggested check list to employ in a school-wide lockdown drill informing school staff in advance of a lockdown procedure is imperative if the lock down is to be successful.

- Review drill procedures and scenario with staff prior to drill.
- Inform parents/caregivers prior to the drill via letters home/auto dialer, School Loop, etc.
- Inform students of the plan to conduct a drill.
- Administrator announces “Lockdown” or a previously agreed upon code word meaning the equivalent via the intercom, such as “staff secure your rooms.”
- Staff and students initiate lockdown procedures.
- During the drill, administrators and campus security roam the building during the lockdown to ensure that the following procedures are followed:
  - Students and staff are inside of the appropriate room/classroom
  - Doors are closed and locked
  - Windows are closed and locked
  - Drapes and curtains are closed
  - Hang signs (red and green cards) on doors/windows. Red cards are being used to indicate students requiring medical attention.
  - Students are quiet and in “safe places” in classrooms/rooms.
  - If possible, students are not visible from windows
  - Lights and computer monitors are turned off
  - Roll call of students and staff
  - Rooms designated for people to go to during a drill
  - Staff designated to call 911 and the Assistant Superintendent/Lead
- Administrator lifts the lockdown via the intercom.
- CRT convenes to review and assess drill and procedures, and determine if further training is needed for students and staff.
**Resources for Intruder/Lockdown/ Evacuation**

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE AGENCIES:**

Ambulance 911  
San Francisco Fire-Rescue Department 911  
San Francisco Police Department 911

**Hospitals**  
San Francisco General Hospital 415-206-8111

**SFUSD**  
Assistant Superintendent:  
❖ Elementary School: 241-6310  
❖ Middle School: 241-6607  
❖ High School: 241-6478

Associate Superintendent’s Office of Student, Family, and Community Support Department 415-241-6121  
SFUSD Emergency Planning Office 415-355-6927  
School Health Programs Nurse of the Day 415-242-2615

**CITY AND COUNTY DEPARTMENTS**  
Department of Public Health 415-554-9000  
San Francisco Animal Control 415-554-6364  
San Francisco Poison Control 1-800-876-4766  
San Francisco Child Protective Services 415-558-2650

*Refer to Section H for Support Activities for students*
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Support Activities Plan

Crisis Response Team

The Crisis Response Team is responsible for setting up the support activities for staff and students following a crisis. Support activities should be implemented as soon as possible and appropriate.

OBJECTIVES

Staff and students will be able to:

- Separate the facts involving the incident from the rumors
- Discuss their thoughts and feelings related to the incident
- Understand ways that they might respond personally after the incident (nightmares, fear, trouble concentrating, headaches)
- Understand what the site/district has done and will do
- Know how to receive additional support services and information

TIME

For staff:

- Staff support activities should occur prior to student support activities
- Staff support activities may occur before school, after school or at lunchtime
- Additional support activities sessions may be necessary depending on staff needs

For students:

- Take a minimum of one class period
- Additional classes may be needed, and this can be determined following the initial classroom discussion. While no further formal discussions may be dedicated to the crisis, remember that it may not be feasible for teachers to return to their usual instruction immediately. There may be the need for quiet classroom reading, projects, etc.

Implement classroom support activities during the same period school wide to ensure that all students receive the same information at the same time

MATERIALS NEEDED

The Crisis Response Team should provide the following to every staff person who will be implementing support services with the students:

- Staff and Student Notification Letters regarding the crisis
- Relevant background information from the relevant section in the Crisis Manual (i.e. Information Sheet for type of crisis, Common Reactions for type of crisis, etc.)
  - Copy of Notification Letter for Parents/Caregivers
- Relevant Supplemental Resources (refer to Resource Section of Crisis Manual)
  - Counseling/Information Resources (on and off site)
  - If at all possible, the materials should be given to the teachers the day before.
Support Activities Responsibilities of Crisis Response Team

Classroom Support Activity

PREPARATION

• The CRT should assess whether there are any teachers not able to facilitate support activities for their class and to provide coverage in those classrooms if necessary.

• Staff and/or interns familiar with the students should facilitate the classroom support activities.

• Substitutes should not be expected to provide support activities.

• Identify space that can be used for individual or small group support activities that might be necessary.

• Staff who can provide individual and small group support activities should be identified and assigned space in the event students need additional support following classroom support activities.

It is imperative to provide support activity opportunities for staff prior to their facilitating classroom support activities with the students. Those providing care to others need to be taken care of to ensure their emotional health as well.
 Classroom Crisis Response

Support Activity

OBJECTIVES

Staff and Students will be able to:

- Separate the facts involving the incident from the rumors
- Discuss their thoughts and feelings related to the incident
- Understand ways that they might respond personally after the incident (nightmares, fear, trouble concentrating, headaches)
- Understand what the site/district has done and will do
- Know how to receive additional support services and information

TIME

Take one class period. Additional classes may be needed depending upon the severity of the crisis and student response to the incident.

VOCABULARY

After reviewing the lesson plan, some vocabulary may need to be altered, depending upon the grade level of the students.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION NEEDED

The Crisis Response Team should provide the following to every staff person who will be providing support activities to the students:

- Notification Letters for Staff and Students regarding the crisis
- Relevant background information from the relevant section in the Crisis Manual (i.e. Information Sheet for type of crisis, Common Reactions for type of crisis, etc.)
- Copy of Notification Letter for Parents/Caregivers
- Supplemental Resources
- Counseling/Information Resources (on and off site)

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

1. Share the plan for the class period:

Share that the usual schedule in class today will not be followed so that a discussion about (name the incident) can take place, including:

- Identifying the facts
- Separating rumors from facts
- Sharing thoughts and feelings about (name the incident)
- Identifying reactions that might be experienced
- Learning what the site has done/plans to do
- What to do to get help if needed
2. Review the ground rules: (Have rules written on the board, or write them as they are reviewed.)

- Share that the purpose of the ground rules is to make it safe for everyone to ask their questions and share their thoughts and feelings.
- Everything said is confidential (that means that no one will use anyone’s name outside the class period when talking about what was discussed). The only exceptions are if someone reveals intent to harm him/herself or another, or someone is experiencing physical or emotional abuse.
- Respect one another’s thoughts and feelings.
- Everyone has a right to pass.
- Listen to whoever is talking. No side talking is allowed because it is disrespectful.
- Add any other ground rules that the students suggest.

Note: If any student exhibits difficulty at any time during the debriefing, refer the student to the CRT. The CRT should have provided the staff the plans for referring students for additional support.

3. Discuss the facts known about the incident. Depending upon the age of the students and how widespread the incident was, the discussion of facts can take place in one of two ways:

A. Ask the students what is known about (name the incident). Having the students report what they know/have heard might assist in airing the rumors so that they can be dealt with immediately. Or,

B. Read the facts from the Incident Fact Sheet provided by the Crisis Response Team that includes all the facts that can be shared at the time.

Ask if everyone agrees with these facts as discussed/read. Take time to separate the facts from the rumor. Any time a student says something that does not reflect the facts, refer back to the Incident Fact Sheet. When a question is asked for which you do not have the answer, let them know that if there is an answer, you will find it and let them know. (Be sure to follow through).

If some of the students were directly involved or witnessed the incident, attempt to make sure that what they saw/experienced is consistent with the facts. There may be differences which can be explained. It is a known fact that when several people witness the same event, different, sometimes even contradicting facts are reported.
Classroom Crisis Response

Support Activity

4. Begin discussing students’ thoughts and feelings:
Once the students have separated facts from the rumors, ask if anyone wants to share what thoughts/feelings they had when they witnessed or first heard about the (name the incident). (It can be helpful to you as the facilitator as well as the students to write the thoughts/feelings down on the board so that they can be reviewed. This strategy can also demonstrate how many different thoughts and feelings can result from one crisis. If possible, make two separate lists, one for thoughts and one for feelings).

Give all students an opportunity to share their thoughts/feelings. If one student has a great need to express his or her thoughts repeatedly, it might be necessary to say something like: “You have many thoughts (feelings) about what happened. Let’s find out if other students had the same thoughts (feelings) or some different ones.”

Conclude the discussion by reviewing some of the primary thoughts and feelings. Point out if they were similar (to normalize the thoughts or feelings) or different (to show how people can respond differently to the same situation).

5. Discuss the possible reactions students might experience, using the Common Reactions to Crisis Sheet (Section I). If a day(s) has passed since the incident the students can be asked if they would share any reactions they have experienced. Again, it is important to normalize whatever physical or emotional feelings are being experienced by the students.

6. End the Classroom Support Activities by sharing the school Response Sheet to inform students of the school site plans.

Empowering the students to take some positive action can be healing. Students can also be asked what they would like the school to do in response to the crisis. If you get some ideas, be sure to share them with the CRT.

Homework/ Extension Activities/ Follow Through

Review any additional educational material that is distributed for extension activities. This may include providing information regarding the particular crisis that allows the students to address the crisis in later classroom discussion.
Reflection Questions

Name __________________________________________ Date ________________

Directions: Draw a picture and/or use words to answer each of the questions.

What happened?

What can make people feel better?
Reflection Questions

Name ___________________________ Date _________________

Directions: Answer each of the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will not be graded. You may also draw a picture to describe your thoughts/feelings on the back of this sheet.

1. What happened? Briefly describe the recent events.

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

2. How do you feel about what happened?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

3. Is there anything or anyone that may help?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

4. Is there anything else you would like to share or ask?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Reflection Questions

Name _________________________________________ Date _____________________________

Directions: Answer each of the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will not be graded.

1. What happened? Briefly describe the recent events.

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

2. How do you feel?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

3. What else would you like to share?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

4. What questions do you still have?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Mindfulness Exercise

This activity could be used during a lockdown or another time post crisis.

TARGET
Activity is appropriate and can be adapted for all levels K-12.

PURPOSE
Introduce students to mindfulness, or relaxation exercises as an effective, widely practiced activity that can reduce stress.

MATERIALS
Seated exercise in a chair or on the floor.

CONTENT
A number of schools practice mindfulness exercises during the day. Introduce this exercise by explaining that this form of mindfulness or meditation is practiced throughout the world as a way to remain focused and calm when people are confronted by stress. Consider checking in with students by show of hands how many have done meditation before (e.g. in martial arts practice, at a temple, in a church).

Explain to students that through this activity they will calm their body and mind.

OPTIONAL: If the mindfulness is practiced regularly at the school, and students are used to comparing heart rates before and after mindfulness exercises, have students take their heart rate before the activity begins and then after the meditation exercise.

Instructions:

Warm up

1. Begin by sitting comfortably, balanced, and relaxed (if seated in a chair, feet on the ground).
2. Breathe easy and from the abdomen/“belly breathing” (not chest breathing).
3. Practice a few deep breaths with the group.
4. Rotate the head in easy, slow circles; change direction and rotate in slow, easy circles.
5. Look up; tilt your head way back. Look down; put your chin on your chest.
6. Drop your arms and hands to the side and shake them gently and easily.
7. Raise your feet off the floor and gently and easily shake the knees.
8. Straighten your spine while breathing.
**Simple Meditation**

**Practice (repeat two times)**
1. This is done SILENTLY.
2. When teacher says, “Close your eyes,” (or “look down”) close your eyes. [Students can also look down at their desk. Once your eyes are closed, simply relax your mind and do not make an effort to think about anything; slowly your mind will clear and relax]
3. When teacher says, “Open your eyes,” (or “look up”) open your eyes.
4. Now, sit straight up, relaxed, and balanced.
5. “Close your eyes” (two minutes elapse)
6. “Open your eyes”
7. Check in with students: how was that? (Students may give thumbs up or thumbs down.)
   *Now everyone practice it again.*
8. Repeat exercise: “Close your eyes”...two minutes elapse...

**“Open your eyes”** (Optional: take heart rate and compare to heart rate before meditation)
   Check in with students.

**Extension:**
Teacher may follow-up by having students practice this exercise at other times during class. Encourage students to practice meditation on their own to develop the habit of using meditation for stress reduction and overall health. Have students teach this relaxation method to a friend or family member.
Deep Breathing Exercise

BELLY BREATHING

Audience: Activity is appropriate and can be adapted for all levels K-12
Purpose: Students practice deep breathing techniques as part of stress reduction

Materials: No materials needed

Content:

Teacher/facilitator introduces and demonstrates the concept of deep breathing as a stress reduction strategy that can be used in the present moment as well as an excellent skill to master to more effectively cope with future stressors. Teacher/facilitator has all students stand with comfortable space between each other or seated in a chair.

Provide students with the following directions:

1. Stand straight up with feet shoulder-width apart
2. Arms and hands are relaxed downward or placed gently on the abdomen.
3. Body is relaxed
4. Eyes closed
5. Focus on lower abdomen (belly) and imagine a small balloon in that space
6. Breath in slowly and deeply through nostrils, imagining the balloon inflating (getting bigger/larger/growing) slowly, hold a few seconds
7. Slowly exhale through the mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating (getting smaller, shrinking); blow out of the mouth as if blowing out a candle
8. Tip: Place a hand over the lower abdomen to feel it go up and down, and make sure you’re not breathing with the chest
9. Repeat at least 10 times

Ask students how different their bodies feel after the exercise. (Are they more relaxed/calm? Do they feel lighter? Great? Tired?)

Extension:

Practice several times with the class until they achieve a comfortable competence with deep breathing. Encourage students to practice on their own as well (e.g. while they are waiting in line for something, sitting on the bus to school, at bedtime, etc.). Have students teach the deep breathing technique to a friend or family member. Once students develop this habit, they can automatically go into deep breathing mode to relax.
Post-Crisis Incident

Extension Activities

It may be appropriate for students to discuss a crisis after a delayed period of time has passed. There are certain moments or events that may trigger a reaction and a subsequent need to reflect on the crisis. This may include the anniversary of an event, the birthday, or day of a memorial for someone who has passed.

Classroom or homework activities that relate the traumatic event to course study can be one way to help students process their experiences and observations. Follow up classroom activities are not always necessary.

Some considerations for when follow up support may be needed:

- The students continue to discuss or refer to the critical incident.
- The class has not yet returned to pre-crisis functioning.
- There are significant updates and/or developments concerning the critical incident.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

It may be appropriate to facilitate extension activities only with smaller groups of students who are more directly impacted by the crisis.

You are the teacher, not the “therapist.” There is a difference between being a therapist and being a therapeutic friend. A therapist is responsible for providing treatment, while a therapeutic friend—either a peer or an adult—offers support and friendship and facilitates referral for additional support. Listening, showing you care, and assisting a person in getting appropriate help, are the most effective ways to help students cope with crisis.

Be aware of your own need to discuss the crisis versus the student’s need. Occasionally, adults within the school community are more impacted for longer periods of time than the students. When making decisions regarding follow-up for the class make sure it is an appropriate response.

Activities should be altered to reflect the academic and developmental level of the class. Refer students who may need additional support, to a counselor or review the Resource section of this manual for community services.
PLAY REENACTMENT
For the younger children, availability of toys that encourage play reenactment of their experience and observations during the traumatic event can be helpful in integrating experiences. Toys might include ambulances, dump trucks, fire trucks, building blocks and dolls.

PUFFETS
Play with puppets can be effective in reducing inhibition and encouraging children to talk about their feelings and thoughts. Children will often respond more freely to a puppet asking about what happened than to an adult asking the questions directly. Help or encourage the children to develop skits or puppet shows about what happened in the event. Encourage them to include anything positive about the experience as well as those aspects that were frightening or disconcerting.

ART AND DISCUSSION GROUPS
Do a group mural on butcher paper with topics such as, “What happened in your neighborhood (school name, or home) when ________.” This is recommended for small groups with discussion afterward, facilitated by an adult. This type of activity can help them feel less isolated with their fears and provide the opportunity to vent feelings. Have the children draw individual pictures and then talk about them in small groups. It is important in the group discussion to end on a positive note, e.g., a feeling of mastery or preparedness; noting that the community or family pulled together to deal with the crisis.

DISASTER PLANS
Have the children brainstorm about their own classroom or family disaster plan. What would they do if they had to evacuate? How would they contact parents/caregivers? How should the family be prepared? How could they help the family? (This activity helps children regain control over their environment.)

READING
Read aloud or have the children read stories that talk about children or families dealing with stressful situations and demonstrate families pulling together during times of hardship, etc.

CREATIVE WRITING OR DISCUSSION TOPICS
In a discussion or writing assignment, have the children make up a “happy ending of a traumatic event/disaster.” Have children make up a disaster in which their favorite super-heroes “save the day.” Have the children describe in detail a scary, intense moment in time and a happy moment. Create a group story recorded by the teacher about a dog or cat that was in an earthquake, flood, etc. What happened to him? What did he do? How did he feel? You can help the students by providing connective elements; emphasize creative problem solving and positive resolution.

PLAY ACTING
In small groups, play the game, “If you were an animal, what would you be?” You might adapt discussion questions such as “If you were that animal, what would you do when ______?” Have the children take turns acting out an emotion in front of the class (without talking) and have the rest of the class guess what the feeling is and why he/she might have that feeling. (Use good as well as bad feelings.)
OTHER DISASTERS
Have the children bring newspaper clippings on disasters that have happened in other parts of the world. Ask the students how they imagine the survivors might have felt or what they might have experienced. “Have you ever had a similar experience or feeling?”

TENSION BREAKERS
A good tension breaker when the children are restless is a “co-listening” exercise. Have the children quickly pair up with partner. Child #1 takes a turn at talking about anything he/she wants to while child #2 simply listens. After three minutes they switch roles and child #2 talks while child #1 listens. When the children are anxious and restless, any activities that involve large muscle movements are helpful. You might try doing your own version of jazzercise (doing exercise to music), skipping, jumping, relaxed breathing, etc.

LUNCH TIME
Allow the students to eat in the classroom during the lunch period. Eating together may help provide further emotional support through the “family” atmosphere of the classroom.

RECESS OPTIONS
Provide students with the choice of either going out on the playground or staying inside the classroom during the recess periods. Offering such a choice may allay feelings of apprehension associated with the disaster particularly for those boys and girls who are typically without friends during recess activities.

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS
Establish a “buddy system” by pairing students for routing school events such as running errands to and from the office, trips to the bathroom and travelling to and from other classrooms which can work to relieve students of the concern regarding being alone.
**Secondary Extension Activities**

**HOMEROOM CLASS/ADVISORY**
Group discussions of their experiences of the event are particularly important among adolescents. They need the opportunity to vent as well as to normalize the extreme emotions that may have come up for them.

The students may need considerable reassurance that even extreme emotions and “crazy thoughts” are normal in a traumatic event/disaster. It is important to end discussions on a positive note.

**CREATIVE WRITING**
Ask the students to write about an intense moment that they remember clearly. Make up a funny disaster. Pretend you are a “super-person” and have the opportunity to save the world from a terrible calamity. Write a story about a person who is in a disaster and give it a happy ending.

**LITERATURE OR READING**
Have the students read a story or novel about young people of families who have experienced hardship or disaster. Have a follow-up discussion on how they might react if they were the character in the story.

**PEER COUNSELING**
Provide special information on common responses to traumatic events. Use structured exercises utilizing skills they are learning in class to help each other integrate their experiences. Point out that victims need to repeat their stories many times. They can help family and friends affected by the event by using the listening skills they are developing in class.

**HEALTH EDUCATION CLASS**
Discuss emotional reactions to the event and the importance of taking care of one’s own emotional well being. Discuss how exercise and healthy eating assist a body’s response to stress/crisis. Discuss health hazards in a disaster, e.g., water contamination, food that may have gone bad due to lack of refrigeration, discuss health precautions and safety measures. A guest speaker from Public Health and/or Mental Health might be invited to the class. Invite someone from the Fire Department to talk to the class about home safety.
**General Resources for Crisis Response**

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Introduction
This section provides more detailed information you may need in the event of a crisis. Attached are crisis hotline phone numbers, information about local community based organizations that may provide assistance, and detailed information about traumatic stress, developmental responses to crises, and suicide prevention. Some of this information may be reflected in previous sections. Your on-site Student Support staff of School District Nurses, School Social Workers, Wellness Staff, or interns, may also be able to provide more site specific resources.
Crisis Response/Community Resources

24 Hour Crisis Lines

Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse Resource Center (CASARC)
Crisis Services for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse, Assault or Incest
Children up to age 18
995 Potrero Ave., Bldg. 80, Ward 82,
2nd floor, Room 239
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 206-8386  Fax (415) 206-6273

Comprehensive Child Crisis Service
Children under 18 years old
3801-3rd St., Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94124
(415) 970-3800  Fax (415) 970-3855

Drug Line Information
(415) 362-3400
Relapse line (415) 834-1144

Huckleberry Youth Programs
Huckleberry House
Children 11-17 years old
1292 Page St.
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 621-2929  Fax (415) 621-4758

San Francisco Women Against Rape
Counseling/Support
3543-18th St., #7
San Francisco, CA 94110
Business line (415) 861-2024
Crisis line (415) 647-7273

Suicide Prevention
(415) 781-0500

Community Resources

Chinatown Child Development Center (CCDC)
720 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 392-4453  Fax (415) 433-0953

Mission Family Center
759 South Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 695-6955  Fax (415) 695-6963

Mobile Assistance Program
Open 24hrs/7days
Provides transportation for emergency service systems
(415) 431-7400  Fax (415) 241-1176

Vietnamese Youth Development Center
Children 10-18 years old
150 Eddy St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 771-2600  Fax (415) 771-3917

Westside Integrated CYF Services
Mental Health/Drug Intervention/Family Counseling
1140 Oak St.
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 431-8252 Fax (415) 431-3195

SFUSD School Health Programs
Crisis Resources

Nurse of the Day
1515 Quintara St.
San Francisco, CA 94116
(415) 242-2615  Fax (415) 242-2618
## Response / Intervention to Crisis

### PRESCHOOL THROUGH SECOND GRADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helplessness and passivity</td>
<td>1. Provide support, rest, comfort, food, opportunity to play or draw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cognitive confusion, do not understand that the danger is over</td>
<td>3. Give repeated concrete clarification for anticipated confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Difficulty identifying what is bothering them</td>
<td>4. Provide emotional labels for common reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lack of verbalization</td>
<td>5. Help to verbalize general feelings and complaints, so they will not feel alone with their feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sleep disturbance</td>
<td>7. Encourage them to let their parents and teachers know. Let caregivers know it is normal if symptoms occur for less than a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Anxiety related to incomplete understanding about death</td>
<td>10. Give explanations about the physical reality of death.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Response / Intervention to Crisis

### THIRD THROUGH FIFTH GRADE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preoccupation with their own actions during the event, issues of responsibility and guilt</td>
<td>1. Help express their secretive imaginings about the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Specific fears, triggered by traumatic reminders of being alone</td>
<td>2. Help identify and articulate traumatic reminders and anxieties; not generalize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Re-telling and replaying the event; cognitive distortions and obsessive detailing</td>
<td>3. Permit them to talk and act it out; address distortions and acknowledge normality of feelings and reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fear of being overwhelmed by feelings of crying or being angry</td>
<td>4. Encourage expressions of fear, anger, sadness, etc., in order to prevent feeling overwhelmed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Impaired concentration and learning</td>
<td>5. Encourage letting their parents and teachers know when thoughts and feelings interfere with learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sleep disturbances, nightmares, fear of sleeping alone</td>
<td>6. Support them in discussing dreams; provide information about why we have bad dreams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Concerns about their own and others’ safety</td>
<td>7. Help to share worries, reassure with realistic information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Altered and inconsistent behavior, unusually reckless</td>
<td>8. Help them to cope with the challenge to their own aggression or impulse control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Somatic complaints</td>
<td>9. Help identify the physical sensations felt during the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Close monitoring of parents’ responses and recovery; hesitation to disturb parents with own anxieties</td>
<td>10. Offer to meet with the family to help children let parents know how they are feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Concern for other victims and their families</td>
<td>11. Encourage constructive activities on behalf of the injured or deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Feeling disturbed, confused and frightened by their grief responses; fear of ghosts</td>
<td>12. Help retain positive memories as they work through more intrusive traumatic memories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Response / Intervention to Crisis**

### ADOLESCENTS (SIXTH GRADE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Detachment, shame and guilt, similar to adult response</td>
<td>1. Encourage discussion of the event, feelings about it, and realistic expectations about what could have been done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-consciousness about fears, sense of vulnerability and other emotional responses, fear of being alone</td>
<td>2. Help them understand the adult nature of these feelings; encourage peer understanding and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Post-traumatic acting out behavior, drug use, delinquent behavior, sexual acting out</td>
<td>3. Help them understand the acting-out behavior as an effort to numb their responses, or to voice their anger over the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Life-threatening reenactment; self-destructive or accident-prone behavior</td>
<td>4. Address the impulse toward reckless behavior in the acute aftermath; link it to the challenge to impulse control associated with violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Abrupt shift in interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>5. Discuss the expected strain on relationships with family and peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Desires and plans to take revenge</td>
<td>6. Elicit their actual plans for revenge; address the realistic consequences of these actions; encourage constructive alternatives to lessen the traumatic sense of helplessness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Discuss the expected strain on relationships with family and peers</td>
<td>7. Link attitude changes to the event’s impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Impulsive decision making</td>
<td>8. Encourage postponement of radical decisions in order to work through their responses to the event and to grieve.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>