

Campbellsport School District
Counseling Department

Updated CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

Developed by

Counseling and Administration Faculty

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Campbellsport School District Crisis Response Plan

Table of Contents

BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
SUGGESTED LEVEL OF RESPONSE	5
EXPECTED DEGREE OF TRAUMA	6
CRISIS TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES (APPENDIX A-1)	7
CRISIS TEAM CHECKLIST (APPENDIX A-2).....	11
SAMPLE CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT	
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (APPENDIX B-1).....	15
JUNIOR HIGH (APPENDIX B-2).....	16
SECONDARY/HIGH SCHOOL (APPENDIX B-3)	17
LETTER TO FAMILIES TEMPLATE	
ELEMENTARY (APPENDIX C-1).....	18
JH/HS (APPENDIX C-2).....	19
ALERT NOW MESSAGE SCRIPTS	
OUT OF SCHOOL (APPENDIX D-1)	20
IN SCHOOL (APPENDIX D-2)	21
PROFESSIONAL STAFF VOLUNTEER CONTACT FORM (APPENDIX E)	22
HANDOUT FOR STAFF DURING CRISIS (APPENDIX F)	23
REFERRAL BEHAVIORS (APPENDIX G)	24
FOLLOW-UP CLASSROOM PRESENTATION OUTLINE BY COUNSELOR	
(APPENDIX H)	25
BASIC EXPECTATIONS STUDENTS NEED TO HEAR	
(APPENDIX I).....	27
RESOURCES	
TYPICAL GRIEVING BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (APPENDIX J-1)	29
CHILDREN’S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH (APPENDIX J-2)	30
EMERGENCY CALLING TREE	
CAMPBELLSPORT ELEMENTARY (APPENDIX K-1)	32
EDEN ELEMENTARY (APPENDIX K-2)	33
JUNIOR HIGH (APPENDIX K-3)	34
HIGH SCHOOL (APPENDIX K-4).....	35

Campbellsport School District

Crisis Response Plan

The purpose of the following procedures is to assist us, as educators, to respond appropriately, effectively and consistently to critical incidents as they might occur in the school community. Those incidents may include sudden death or other traumatic events involving students, staff or parents. An appropriate and timely response to such an event ensures that those affected by it receive needed services and the learning environment may return to normal as quickly as possible.

Building Administrator Responsibilities

The following procedures are meant to be carried out at/near the beginning of each school year and are the responsibility of the Building Administrator or that person's designee.

Prior to a crisis or other traumatic incident, the principal will:

1. Form a Crisis Team composed of the administrator(s), counselor(s), psychologist, police school liaison officer, and other regular or support services faculty as deemed appropriate.
2. Provide an orientation for the Crisis Team using the attached Appendices.
3. Develop a procedure (e.g. phone tree) for contacting Crisis Team members, including during those times that school is not in session.
4. Crisis Team procedures and phone trees should be placed in the staff handbook and reviewed annually.
5. Establish a staff "phone tree" to provide notification to staff. (Staff includes both teaching and non-teaching personnel.) This should be updated annually.

Immediately following a crisis or other traumatic event, the principal will:

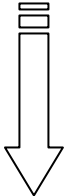
1. Verify the facts of the incident.
2. Be recognized as the Crisis Team Leader, or appoint a designee for this duty.

3. Assemble the members of the Crisis Team.
4. Identify a staff member to act as Coordinator. (See Appendix A, Section 8)
5. Implement phone tree to notify all staff of the incident. (See Appendix H)
6. Determine location and time of staff fan-out meeting.
7. Identify areas of the building available to be used by Crisis Team members for working with students of staff following a crisis event.
8. Decide upon the degree of involvement of non-faculty adult volunteers, e.g. clergy. Any class, group or individual counseling work should be carried out by school faculty.
9. Instruct office personnel regarding appropriate responses to inquiries from parents, community members and the media if a crisis event occurs.
10. Serve as the media contact. (The message from all Crisis Team members should be uniform, and at all times, respect the privacy of the family.)
11. Approve the statements prepared by Crisis Team members for staff distribution and for classroom presentations.
12. If deemed appropriate, prepare letter to be sent home for parents regarding the incident and the day's activities.
13. On the day of a funeral, or when appropriate, recognize a death by leading a moment of silence to be shared by the entire school.
14. Schedule faculty meeting to follow-up regarding the Crisis Plan process and to assess continued needs related to it.
15. Use judgment in defining the scope of the school's response to a crisis incident during the summer months. At minimum, a phone tree should be implemented.

Suggested Level of Response

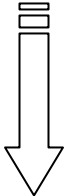
District Impact

- Death of Student
- Death of Staff
- Critical Incident (critical injury, threats, etc.)
- Death of former Campbellsport staff/student

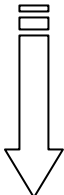


Building Specific Impact

- Death of student family member
- Death of staff family member

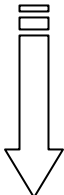


Gather and confirm information (DO Administration, Building Administration, PSLO, Building Counselors)



K-12 Assemble Crisis Team*

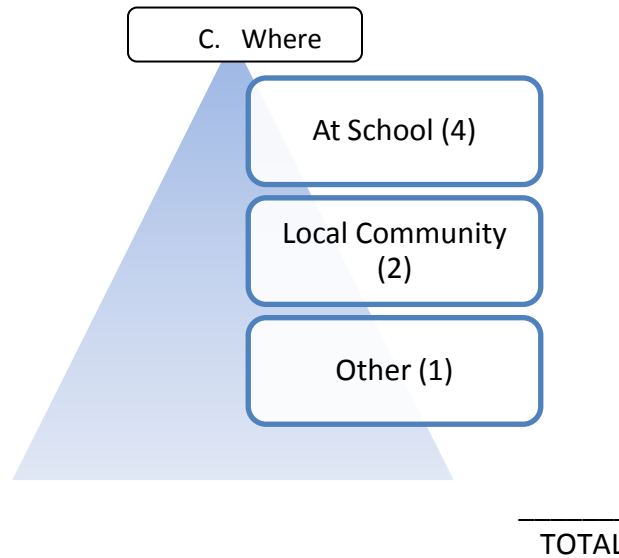
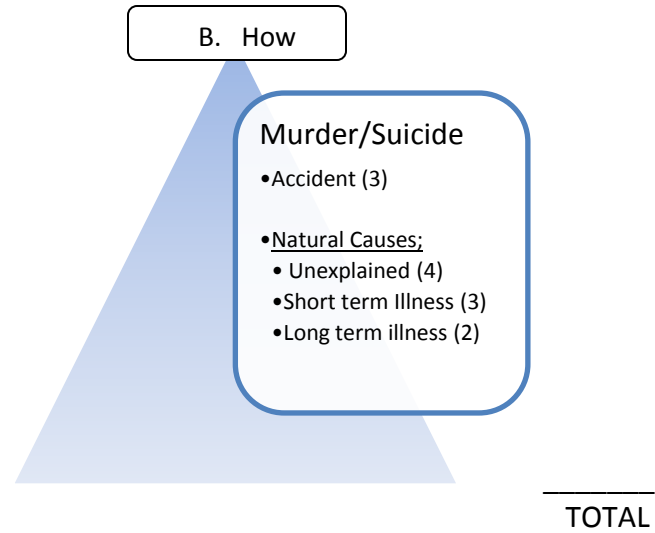
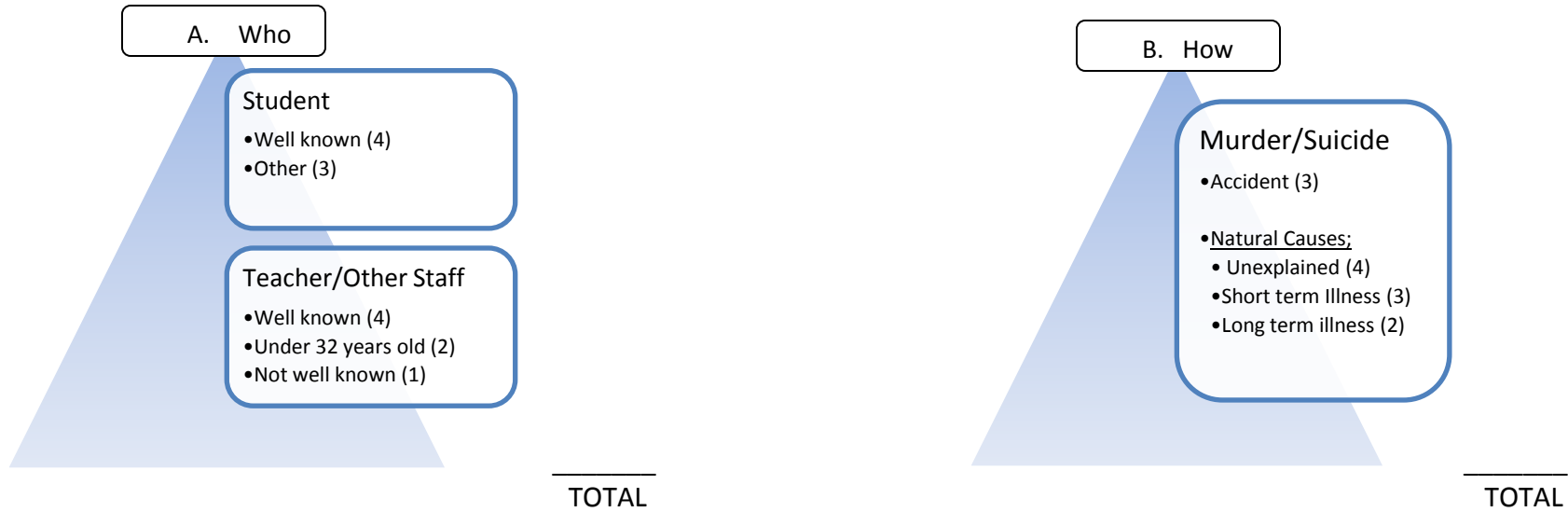
- K-12 Counselors
- K-12 Psychologists and Nurses



Building Administration Assemble Crisis Team*

- Building Counselors
- Building Psychologist and Nurse

Expected Degree of Trauma



Degree of Support
 High=use district team and LASS
 Moderate=use district crisis team
 Low=use high school crisis team

Degree of Trauma
 12+ High
 8-11 Moderate
 0-7 Low

Crisis Team Responsibilities

Appendix A-1

1. The Crisis Team will assemble immediately.
2. A member of the Crisis Team will verify the death.
 - a. A member of the Crisis Team (usually the student's counselor or other person who has a close relationship with the family) will contact the family of the deceased offering support and obtaining permission to share vital information with students. The school professional making this contact must be certain that the family is clear about what information will be shared.
 - b. During this contact, the Crisis Team member will also ask the family to share names of the deceased person's close friends or others who might be particularly affected.
 - c. Parents of close friends of the deceased person will be notified prior to information being shared with all students.
3. In order to support a member of the Crisis Team will contact the funeral home to cover the following:
 - a. Arrange for an additional mourning site for peers of the deceased person, if necessary.
 - b. Discuss the option of a student section at the funeral home.
 - c. Funerals will be held off school grounds.
 - d. Every few years, Counselors will visit funeral homes with visits in the fall.
4. The Crisis Team will prepare a written statement to be shared with all students simultaneously.
 - a. It should include accurate information regarding the death, funeral arrangements (if known) and instructions to staff members. (See Appendix B)
 - b. If information is to be sent home to parents, use Appendix C.
 - c. If additional student presentations are deemed necessary (e.g. in the case of suicide), implement Appendix E.
5. Additional contacts to be made include:
 - a. All other Crisis Team members in the school district.
 - b. Former school(s) if student is new to the current school.
 - c. Any other school where siblings may attend.
 - d. Specific community resources, if appropriate.
 - e. Other high schools in the area, if appropriate.
6. If the death occurs outside of the school day, the telephone calling tree will commence (See Appendix H). All faculty and staff members serving the affected school(s) will be called. They will be notified of the death and of the time/place of the faculty meeting.
 - a. The Crisis Team leader will notify all building principals of the death.

Appendix A-1

- b. All Crisis Team members will notify their respective building supervisors if they will be needed to assist at the affected building and thus not be present at their assigned buildings.
7. The Crisis Team will assign the following:
 - a. Team member(s) to be present in the deceased student's classroom(s) for the entire school day.
 - b. Assign District Crisis Team members to designated grieving areas.
 - c. Assign a person to serve as Coordinator of activities. (See duties below.)
 - d. If needed, assign Crisis Team member to ride the deceased student's bus.
 8. **Coordinator** responsibilities:
 - a. Know the location of all adult volunteers during the school day.
 - b. Keep track of students who report for counseling. Assign students to be available for adult volunteers.

***Students should stay with their assigned adult staff member and not travel from adult to adult.**

- c. Know when the Crisis Team members are leaving the building.
- d. Collect the "Professional Staff Volunteer Contact Forms." (See Appendix D) These are turned over to the Crisis Team Leader at the end of the day.
- e. Assumes the responsibility of contacting parents of students seen by an adult volunteer if that volunteer was unable to do so.

Pre-Staff Meeting

1. If possible, all District Crisis Team members and volunteers will meet prior to the faculty meeting. At this time, they will:
 - a. Be given room assignments (and maps of building if needed).
 - b. Be notified of their responsibilities regarding student and parent contacts.
 - c. Receive Professional Volunteer Contact forms. (Appendix D)
 - d. Be introduced to the Coordinator(s).

Staff Meeting

1. If a staff meeting is possible, the principal shall assemble the staff for the purposes of:
 - a. Distributing the statement to be read simultaneously to students.
 - b. Responding to questions.

Appendix A-1

- c. Offering assistance to those staff who are in need. In this case, a Crisis Team member may be assigned to any classroom to read the statement to students and answer their questions.
2. If a staff meeting is not possible, Crisis Team members will **personally** deliver the written statement to teachers.
3. Teams should be reminded that **if students ask to leave their class to go to the counseling office, they must be accompanied by someone.**

The School Day

1. Prior to the statement read to all students, those students who have been identified as most affected should be notified, in person, most likely in the counseling office.
2. Students who need support should report to the counseling office. The Coordinator will assign them to an adult volunteer.
3. Crisis Team members staffing grieving areas should make determinations regarding the emotional well being of each student and respond to all appropriate questions.
 - a. As a guideline, if a student is unable to return to class after two hours (clock hours; not class periods), the adult volunteer may recommend to a parent that the student go home.
 - b. Parents should be contacted to pick up any student who is not able to continue in the school setting.
4. Crisis Team members and any other adult volunteers will contact all parents of students they have seen. If a parent cannot be reached immediately, the Coordinator must be notified so that (s)he can accept this responsibility.
 - a. *We may also elect to send an informational Alert Now Message/email home to explain the circumstances, the school's response and to offer support, if needed. (See Appendix C-2)*
 - b. *A copy of letter will be posted online (See Appendix C-1)*

Visitation and Funeral

1. Crisis Team members should be available at the funeral home as appropriate for the purpose of:
 - a. Monitoring student behavior.
 - b. Providing support to grieving students.
 - c. Encouraging appropriate behavior.

Appendix A-1

2. A school representative should attend the funeral.

Follow-Up

1. Crisis Team members should use information for Professional Volunteer Contact forms and follow-up with affected students.
2. Crisis Team members should contact affected students who did not present themselves.
3. Counselors may offer evening support groups for parents, if needed.
4. The Crisis Team procedure should be reviewed following each incident.

Crisis Team Check List

Appendix A-2

Date _____

1. Crisis Team meeting called:

- Pass out Crisis Team Checklist
- Read ground rules

I'd like to thank all of you for coming today to help coordinate our response to the _____ (trauma situation). Team members are here to provide support to the administrators by helping organize the response process. A specific checklist will be covered to ensure all important responses are covered. In order for this meeting to proceed efficiently I'd like to ask that we all respect the process by:

1. Listening to others. All should focus on the one item on the table. Side conversations only impede the process.
2. All members remain at the table unless given a specific duty by the facilitator. The process is designed to cover general responses first and all present should contribute at this point. Individual schools will be given the opportunity to work on specific responses later.

2. Verification of Incidence:

- What is the crisis? _____
- When did it occur? _____
- Who else was involved? _____
- Where did it occur? _____
- Why? _____

3. Identify Students and/or Staff Involved:

- Name _____
- Age/grade _____
- Involved in which classes or organizations _____
- Print schedule
- Print picture of student
- Pull CUM file
- Contact Current Teachers _____
- Contact Attendance _____
- Should we have a current teacher present at Crisis meeting?* _____
- Create Student Profile (Personalized Student Information)

4. Family Contact:

- Which family member(s) have we had contact with? _____
- Who is the staff member in contact with the family? _____
- Do we have permission to release information? _____

Appendix A-2

5. Funeral Plans:

- Where? _____
- What time? _____
- Who will represent CHS at the funeral? _____
- Who will order flowers? _____

**Clear with Class Advisor prior to charging the flowers to their account.*

- * Contact "Ben Franklin Floral Dept" – 533.4090*
- * Arrangement with candle in the middle*
- * Prices range - \$50 - \$60*
- * Bill to: (Ex: CHS Senior Class of 2010)*

6. Staff Announcements:

- E-mail sent to staff? _____
- Phone calls made to staff? _____
- Printed Notice to staff – hand delivered or in mailboxes? _____
- Staff Meeting? (before, after school, or 10 minute Stand up mtg during B & C lunch) _____
- Agenda needed? _____
- EAP needed for staff? _____

7. Communication to Community:

- Post Family letter on District Website and School Website _____
- Temporarily remove family from Alert Now program to prevent them from getting message _____
- Send Alert Now message/email to parents of current students after students have been notified through crisis plan _____
- Script for speaking to the press _____
- After funeral, remove Family letter from both website locations _____
- How should attendance communicate the crisis? _____
- How will this be handled in the yearbook? _____

8. Student Announcements:

- Teacher script for each classroom? _____
- Counselor script for student's classroom? _____
- Which counselor(s) will go to the student's classes? _____
- If teacher is uncomfortable reading, who will go to the classroom? _____
- School map division _____
- PA announcement? _____
- Has information been in the press? _____

Appendix A-2

9. Notification of Others:

- Staff and students at former school(s)? _____
- Staff at Administration Office? _____
- Siblings in the CSD? _____
- Relatives of victim? _____
- Close friends of victim? _____

10. Student Support Plan: Determine degree of trauma (Expected Degree of Trauma form) **Copy in binder, page 6.**

- Staff member at entrance to counseling office? (Fill out contact forms. Passes for students) _____
- Bring in counselor from the Junior High Schools?
- *If yes, who is contacting the Junior High Counselor?* _____
- Bring in counselor from the Elementary Schools?
- *if yes, who is contacting the Elementary School Counselor?* _____
- Have the school psychologist present to help? _____
- *If yes, who is contacting the School Psychologist?* _____
- Bring in counselors from the Neighboring High Schools? _____
- *If yes, what schools are we contacting?* _____
- *If yes, who is contacting the Neighboring Counselors?* _____

11. Student Items:

- Empty hall locker and Phy. Ed. Locker _____
- Return schoolbooks, library books (any fines?) _____
- Any classroom projects, papers to be collected? _____

12. Registrar:

- Inactivate courses from Skyward, update csd records
- If Student is in Special Education, update File Maker Pro

13. Miscellaneous:

- Determine how the student body should be informed if school is on break

- Identify most affected staff and designate a Trauma Response Team member to intervene with each person individually or in a group prior to Fan Out Meeting. _____
- Determine need for substitute teachers (warranted?) and notify them of impending staff meeting. Could possibly use as "rovers" if needed.

- Inform non-district coaches and advisors (when appropriate) _____

Appendix A-2

- Determine status of upcoming school wide events. _____
- Designate a “relief” person who is responsible for ensuring facilitators take breaks, etc. Person responsible: _____
Location: _____

14. Reflection Meeting:

- Date and time of Recap Meeting _____

Statement made by facilitator, “At this time we will break and complete the tasks we have been assigned. All of us will gather back here at the following time”: _____

Checklist of all items needed to be completed.

Yes/No	Intervention	When/Where/Person Responsible
_____	Media Protocol Plan	_____
_____	Secretary Briefing (Script for phone calls)	_____
_____	Paraprofessional Briefing	_____
_____	School Board Briefing	_____
_____	LASS Briefing (See Folder)	_____
_____	Fan Out Meeting	_____
_____	Classroom Announcements (teacher-led) – (Appendix B)	_____
_____	Follow student’s class schedule/present announcement	_____
_____	Classroom Presentations (Facilitator led) – (Appendix G)	_____
_____	Parent Meeting	_____

Appendix B-1

SAMPLE CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT (death in school community)

Elementary

DATE:

TO: All Staff

FROM: (Crisis Team Leader)

RE: (Name of Deceased Person)

*****Space for picture of student*****

Please read the following announcement to all your students following general announcements today:

(If, for any reason, this is uncomfortable to you, let someone on the Crisis Team know and you will have help.)

On (date/time), we were given some sad news. _____ a (student parent, teacher) in our _____ school community, was (murdered, killed in a car accident, committed suicide, died suddenly). We do not have all the information at this time, but will inform you as we learn more. _____, was a student involved in...(list school and community activities) and had a particular interest in ... (Use this sentence to personalize the message.)

(Wait for a moment to let children absorb the information.)

_____’s (death, accident, injury) will upset some of you more than others and will upset you in different ways, just as it has the staff when we were informed. When someone (dies, is injured) you may have many different feelings. You might feel sad, confused, worried, guilty or even angry. You may feel numb. It is also okay to have no special feelings about this.

(Allow a couple of minutes here for reflection and to show respect.)

Sometimes we think about other losses in our lives. It can help you to talk about these feelings with an adult who you trust. Should you want to talk with someone about _____, and your reaction to his/her (death, accident, injury), please tell your teacher or stop in Counseling Office and arrangements will be made. We will send a letter home with additional information for your parents. It is OK to talk with your parents or other adult you trust about how you may be feeling. (Add a sentence here to give direction regarding how students may access help.)

(Allow a couple of minutes here for reflection and to show respect. If a student requests to see a counselor, please have another student escort him/her to the counseling office.)

Appendix B-2

SAMPLE CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT (death in community)

Junior High

DATE:

TO: ALL STAFF

FROM: (CRISIS TEAM LEADER)

RE: (NAME OF DECEASED PERSON)

****SPACE FOR PICTURE OF STUDENT****

Please read the following announcement to all your students in home room this morning.

(If, for any reason, this is uncomfortable to you, let someone on the Crisis Team know and you will have help.)

I have some sad news for you today. _____, a (student, teacher, parent) in our junior high community, died yesterday as a result of a (car accident, illness, suicide, etc.). We do not have all of the information yet, but you will be informed when we learn anything. _____ was in the (seventh or eighth) grade class and was involved in some activities like (basketball, student council, forensics, etc.). Many of you know (him/her) and got along well.

WAIT FOR A MOMENT TO LET STUDENTS ABSORB THE INFORMATION.

I knew (student's name) because (he/she was in my class, a part of orientation, on volleyball, helped me in the hall one day, etc.). (PERSONALIZE THE MESSAGE IN THIS PARAGRAPH.)

Death affects us all in different ways. Some of us might feel sad, confused, worried, or even angry. It is okay to have no special feelings about this, too. Whatever you are feeling, it is perfectly normal and okay.

Sometimes we think about other losses in our lives. It is good to talk about these feelings with an adult with whom you trust and feel comfortable. If you want to talk to someone today about your feelings concerning (student's name) (death, accident, etc.), please tell your teacher or stop in by Mrs. Schraufnagel, the counselor, and arrangements will be made. It is okay if you need to talk with someone.

ALLOW A COUPLE MINUTES HERE FOR REFLECTION, TO SHOW RESPECT, AND TO SHARE IF THEY WANT.

If a student requests to see the counselor, please have another student escort him/her to the office.

Appendix B-3

SAMPLE CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT (death in school community)

Secondary/High School

DATE:

TO: All Staff

FROM: (Crisis Team Leader)

RE: (Name of Deceased Person)

*****Space for picture of student*****

Please read the following announcement to all your students following general announcements today:

(If, for any reason, this is uncomfortable to you, let someone on the Crisis Team know and you will have help.)

On (Date/Time), we were given some sad news. _____, a (student, parent, teacher) in our _____ school community, was (murdered, killed in a car accident, committed suicide, died suddenly). We do not have all the information at this time, but will inform you as we learn more. _____, was a student involved in (list school and community activities) and had a particular interest in (Use this sentence to personalize the message.)

(Wait for a moment to let children absorb the information.)

_____’s (death, accident, or injury) will upset some of you more than others and will upset you in different ways, just as it has the staff when we were informed. When someone (dies, is injured) you may have many different feelings. You might feel sad, confused, worried, guilty or even angry. You may feel numb. It is also okay to have no special feelings about this.

(Allow a couple of minutes here for reflection and to show respect.)

Sometimes we think about other losses in our lives. It can help you to talk about these feelings with an adult who you trust. Should you want to talk with someone about _____, and your reaction to his/her (death, accident, injury), please tell your teacher or stop in Counseling Office and arrangements will be made. (Add a sentence here to give direction regarding how students may access help.)

(Allow a couple of minutes here for reflection and to show respect. If a student requests to see a counselor, please have another student escort him/her to the counseling office.)

(Date/Elementary)

Appendix C-1

Dear _____ (School) _____ Families:

It is with great sadness that we are writing to inform you that _____, child of _____, was injured (in a car accident on Saturday evening. She died at the hospital with her family around her. *(Use this paragraph to personalize message.)*

Today, all _____ (school) _____ students were informed of _____'s death. Counseling staff have been available throughout the day for children to talk to. Counseling staff will continue to be available for your child's and your support. Watching your child go through the grief process can be very hard for a parent, please feel free to contact the school counselor at 920 533 8032.

Death, especially when unexpected, can be hard for adults to cope with and understand. For children, it can seem impossible. Children may have varying reactions to death. They may exhibit sleep disturbances, fears, repeated questions, regressive behavior (clinging to home and family), sadness or anger. They may need to talk about past losses in their lives. It is also normal for your child to show no particular response. The best way to support your child is to acknowledge their feelings and let them talk to you. Answer their questions honestly. It's okay for your child to see your grief.

The following visitation and funeral arrangements have been made (if known)

Visitation:

Funeral:

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your child's reaction to this sad event.

Sincerely,

Principal

Counselor

(Date/JH/HS)

Appendix C-2

Dear _____ (School) _____ Families:

It is with great sadness that we are writing to inform you that _____, mother of _____, lost her battle with cancer on Sunday morning. She died at home with her family around her. *(Use this paragraph to personalize message.)*

Today, all _____ (School) _____ students were informed of _____'s death. Counseling staff have been available throughout the day for children to talk to. Counseling staff will continue to be available for your child's and your support. Watching your child go through the grief process can be very hard for a parent, please feel free to contact either of the high school counselors at 920.533.1285.

Death, especially when unexpected, can be hard for adults to cope with and understand. For children, it can seem impossible. Children may have varying reactions to death. They may exhibit sleep disturbances, fears, repeated questions, regressive behavior (clinging to home and family), sadness or anger. They may need to talk about past losses in their lives. It is also normal for your child to show no particular response. The best way to support your child is to acknowledge their feelings and let them talk to you. Answer their questions honestly. It's okay for your child to see your grief.

The following visitation and funeral arrangements have been made:

Visitation:

Funeral:

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your child's reaction to this sad event.

Sincerely,

Principal

Counselor

Counselor

Appendix D-1

Alert Now Message Script

Date:

Good Morning:

A notice that has affected our _____ Family has been sent to you via e-mail and placed on our _____ and district website. Please access this important information and spend some time with your child(ren) to discuss the information.

If you do not have access to the internet, please call the _____ office at (920-533-4811) for the accurate information. Counselors will be available for the _____ community. Please contact us with any concerns at _____. Thank you.

Appendix D-2

Alert Now Message Script

Date:

Good Evening:

During the school day today, your child and the rest of the student body were informed of sad news that has affected our school community. Please check our website for the accurate information. Counselors were available to students today and our counseling office will continue to be available to your family.

We encourage you to spend additional time this evening with your child(ren) to gain an understanding of how this event is affecting them. Sharing difficult information with a child is hard. Allowing your child to see your emotions and being completely honest with them can make the discussion with your child(ren) a positive experience. It is ok to not have all of the answers. Please utilize the counseling department for your family's needs. Thank you.

Professional Staff Volunteer Contact Form

Appendix E

NAME(S) OF STUDENT(S)	GRADE/TEACHER
-----------------------	---------------

TIME STUDENT(S) REPORTED _____ TIME STUDENT(S) LEFT _____

CONCERN(S) EXPRESSED BY STUDENT(S)

IS FOLLOW-UP NEEDED? EXPLAIN. (Indicate counselor assigned to this student.)

PARENT CONTACTED:

TIME _____ BY (staff person) _____

PROFESSIONAL STAFF VOLUNTEER'S NAME _____

DATE _____

Handout for Staff During Crisis

Appendix F

After reading the Classroom Announcement:

1. Ask students what they have heard about the crisis event. Restate factual information provided in the announcement, if needed. Report rumors to administrator or designee.
2. Ask students if they have any questions. Answer honestly. If you don't have an answer for a question, it's okay to say "I don't know but I will try to get an answer for you." Write the question down and ask for assistance from the Crisis Team. Let the student know you will have an answer that day or the next.
3. Express your grief, shock, or difficulty knowing what to say or feel right now. It's okay to show tears and emotions. This is a difficult time.
4. Ask students if they would like you to have someone come into class to talk with them. You may also make a decision to ask for this based on your observations. You know your students fairly well. If in doubt, error on the side of providing additional assistance. Contact the Crisis Team for this assistance.
5. Let students know that counselors have been trained to handle this situation and can help if they would like to talk to someone. Direct them to inform you and you will arrange for this as quickly as possible.
6. Understand that students may have difficulty focusing and attending. Homework is probably not a good idea for a day or two. If there are any scheduled tests, check with administration about delaying these tests.

There is no way to predict how your students will respond. Call for help from your Crisis Team if you are worried about what to do or say. They are available to help you. If you have any questions/concerns, please consult the Crisis Team.

Referral Behaviors

Appendix G

If a student exhibits any of the following reactions immediately or in the days following the crisis event, contact the Crisis Team immediately. Someone from the Team, or assigned by the Team, will come to you and escort the student to the appropriate location.

- Witnessed event or close friend of victim
- Any disruptive behavior
- Student making threats to harm others (most often happens, following a suicide, accident or violent incident)
- Any verbalization of suicidal thoughts/intent
- Uncontrollable crying
- Any behavior that appears unusual/inappropriate at the time
- Student persists in asking questions you cannot answer
- Student who is inordinately preoccupied with knowing all the details
- Student indicates (s)he wants to talk to a counselor or wants to be with friends who are talking to a counselor
- Student is in the same grade, knows the victim but appears detached, numb or indifferent
- Student talks about having nightmares, not being able to sleep, feeling jittery, confused, unable to concentrate
- History of emotional disturbance
- Confusion or disorientation
- Ritualistic behavior
- Extreme pressured speech
- Expresses concern for safety of self or others

Follow-Up Classroom Presentation Outline (Optional) Appendix H

(Completed by Counselor)

The following outline can be used regardless of the type of incident. Immediate presentations help diffuse unwanted student responses.

This outline does not include the different reactions survivors may have following different types of incidents such as: suicide, murder, non-violent trauma, grief, etc. Each situation will dictate a change in content presented.

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a very difficult time for us all. It is not easy to know what to say or how to act. Sometimes our own reactions frighten us because they are so new to us or seem so strong.

We are here with your teacher to talk about _____, to answer your questions if we can, and to tell you of some of the reactions you may have that are very normal.

2. BEGINNING

This is what we know so far _____

Have any of you heard anything different about (the way he/she died, was killed, injured, kidnapped, etc.)?

Did any of you play/spend time with or have conversations with _____ in the past couple of weeks? Tell us about that. What do you remember?

Have any of you had a similar incident happen to a family member or friend?

What upsets you most about _____'s (death, murder, injury, etc.)?

What questions do you have about what happened or even about what will be happening over the next few days?

3. NORMALIZE

Let us describe the kinds of reactions that most people have following this kind of situation. (Use appropriate survivor reactions, i.e. suicide, homicide, trauma. Briefly identify and explain the possible reactions and then relate the following.) You may already have experienced some of these reactions or you may experience them weeks, even months, from now. They are very normal reactions, so do not be alarmed. It will help, however, if you can talk to someone about them.

4. IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

This will vary somewhat depending upon the incident. If the incident is suicide, the students need to clearly hear what they are to do if a friend talks about ending his/her life. (For specific content the publication, [A Handbook of Interventions Following Suicide or Trauma in Schools](#) is recommended.) If the incident is murder, then messages about revenge are critical, and so on.

Basic Expectations Students Need to Hear

This is a time when it is not unusual for us to look for reasons why this happened. A lot of rumors can get started that are not at all helpful to the family or to close friends. If you hear stories that are different from the information we give, please let us know so we can check them out, correct them, or confirm them.

Sometimes we want to blame others. This is normal, but not something we want to do. It simply doesn't help and can, in fact, cause the person or persons being blamed to retaliate (want to fight back) and that doesn't help anyone.

Although it is very normal to be angry, it is not acceptable to seek revenge on those we think may be the cause of _____'s death. We simply will not accept anyone going after anyone else.

Sometimes situations like this cause us to ask many questions we never thought of before. It is important that you ask the questions. Some of your questions may be personal. You can certainly feel free to ask any one of us or your teacher. You can reach us by letting your teacher know or stopping in the Counseling Office.

Conclusion

Are there any other questions before we end? If at any time over the next several days you want to talk with someone, let your teachers know and we'll be contacted-or come and see us directly.

NOTE: Be prepared for silence. Students may not always know what to say or ask. They may not initially give you credibility or simply be so overwhelmed they can only listen. If students do not respond to your initial questions, ask and then answer the questions you anticipated students might have asked.

You may wish to express some of your own personal reactions initially. This sometimes gives students "permission" to open up.

Inform students of the related activities which are planned over the next several days and that they will be kept informed of new information and upcoming activities.

Appendix I

The classroom presentation may be as short as 25 minutes or last the entire class period with very vocal students. The important fact is that you are there trying to help. That makes you human and can help diffuse student anger and acting out that can occur when staffs do not sit down with students face-to-face. (The assembly method simply is not as effective as smaller classroom presentations.)

NOTE: If you are responding to a suicide, it will be critical to be very direct with students about suicide being an unacceptable choice, what they might do if they have friends who are talking about it, etc. ([A Handbook of Interventions Following Suicide or Trauma in Schools](#) text is highly recommended for its detailed descriptions of what students need to hear.)

Appendix J-1

Typical Grieving Behavior of Children and Adolescents

At the first staff meeting, the Crisis Team should inform the staff about the way students are expected to respond to the crisis situation. Following is typical grieving behavior at various developmental stages.

Children (5 to 11 years)

Shock/denial
 Anger/aggressive behavior
 Guilt
 Idealization of dead student/adult
 Sleeping/eating problems
 Headaches/stomach aches
 Withdrawal
 Sadness
 Poor concentration
 Unwarranted fears/worries
 Acting younger than their age (whining, clinging)
 School phobia or avoidance

Adolescents (12 to 18 years)

Shock/denial
 Anger/aggressive behavior
 Rebellion at school/home
 Feelings of guilt
 Fighting, withdrawal, attention seeking
 Poor concentration
 Loss of interest in peer/social activities
 Lack of feelings
 Decline of interest in opposite sex
 Completely consumed by the situation
 Sadness
 Idealization of the dead person
 Restlessness
 Giddiness/laughing/joking

Children's Understanding of Death

Death is difficult for all of us to understand. For children it is particularly hard to grasp. Young children have a hard time accepting the finality of death and may expect the deceased to be alive again soon. Their thinking is literal and need death explained in physical terms. As children develop, they begin to realize that death is final and that it is a part of every person's life cycle.

Children's reactions to death vary greatly. Their grief may be expressed as sadness, fear, anger and even silliness. They may fear the loss of another loved one and may want to remain closer to parents and/or other family members for awhile.

Although understanding of death may be limited, no child is too young to feel and respond to loss and sadness. Children need the support of warm, caring adults who allow them to experience their grief. The following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Accept the child's feelings. Respond to them by acknowledging the feelings and allowing the child to talk with you.
2. Don't be afraid of tears: allow your child to cry. It's a natural way to deal with grief.
3. Allow the child to see your appropriate, calm expression of feelings. It's o.k. for you to cry and to tell the child that you feel sad.
4. Children don't need all the answers: but they need to ask the questions. It's o.k. for you to tell the child that it's hard for you to understand, or that you are not sure of the answer.
5. Be honest in answering questions that you can answer. Answers should be appropriate for the child's developmental level.
6. Reassure a child that misbehaving, wishing things, or being angry cannot cause anyone to die.
7. Help a child to understand that death, in itself, is not painful. The deceased person feels no pain. Family and friends cry because they are sad about the loss of someone who will be missed.

Appendix J-2

8. Discuss death in exact terms. Use “die” and “death”. If you say “sleeping” or “passing” the child may associate that with sleeping or passing on to another grade, and may experience unnecessary fear.
9. Reassure the child. “It is very rare for a child to die. Usually people live to an old age. It is rare to know two people who die at or near the same time.”
10. Share your religious beliefs regarding death. Often this is reassuring to a child.

Special notes regarding childhood cancer

1. It’s important for the child to be told that childhood cancer is very rare.
2. Children need to know that cancer cannot be “caught” as cold, for example, from spreading of germs.

