

TRAUMA RESPONSE PLAN
Stewart Hawke School
(updated September 06)

TRAUMA RESPONSE MEMBERS

1. Coordinators-Principal/DET
2. Resource/Counselling-Vice Principal/Counsellor
3. Reception Area Coordinators-Librarian/Secretary

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

R. C. M. P.	865-5550
D.C.R.E.	1-800-487-8640
HBCH Response Team	865-2267 (2812)
ARS	865-4211
Victim Services	865-5592
Hospital	865-2219
Medical Clinic	865-2238
Division Office	1-888-752-5741
Ministerial Association (Rev. Nancy Steinbach)	865-3322

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. To reduce the after effects of trauma and to mediate against possible post- traumatic stress reactions.
2. To facilitate the normal process of grieving by creating an understanding of and climate for children, adolescents and the community.
3. To promote safe, accepting atmosphere in which to grieve.
4. To prevent further deaths, accidental or suicidal.
5. To prevent further suicidal or self harm behaviors through identifying, assessing, and intervening with at-risk persons.
 - a) To decrease anxiety by providing information and providing opportunities for the expression of painful thoughts and feelings.
 - b) To identify, assess, and intervene with at risks persons.
 - c) To educate adolescents, parents, and caregivers to recognize possible suicidal behaviors and seek help in intervening.
6. To recognize that tragic events have both immediate and long term impacts and that effective response must be provided not only during the crisis, but also in the weeks and months that follow.
7. To challenge existing societal taboos about suicide and death so that more healthy and compassionate responses will become the norm.
8. To empower the community to collectively develop further strategies to respond comprehensively and calmly to tragic events and to prevent, as much as possible, further tragedies.

TRAUMA RESPONSE TEAM

The Trauma Response Team provides immediate support and direction in the event of a tragic event (acts of violence, self-destruction, accidents involving death or injury, witnessing/discovering events, acts of God, such as tornadoes). The team will be available to assist with the practical aspects of the situation and to provide support to staff and students in the event of a traumatic event.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF POSTVENTION

1. Do nothing to glamorize or dramatize the event.
2. Doing nothing can be as dangerous as doing too much.
3. Students cannot be helped until staff is helped.

GOALS WILL BE MET BY:

1. Maintaining structure and some school routine.
2. Permitting and facilitating the expression of grief in a supportive and organized way.
3. Facilitating risk assessment and referral as necessary.

EIGHT KEY COMPONENTS TO CRISIS INTERVENTION

1. Rapid intervention.
2. Stabilizing of the situation.
3. Mobilization of resources.
4. Getting traumatized people to talk about the trauma event.
5. "Normalization" of the event.
6. Restoration of social work.
7. Practical stress management information/education.
8. Return to normal functioning as soon as possible.

ROLE ASSIGNMENTS OF TRAUMA TEAM MEMBERS

1. Trauma Response coordinators
2. Media coordinator- Director of Education or NESD Executive Council designate
3. Resource/Counselling coordinator
4. Reception Area coordinator

PROCEDURES FOR TRAUMA RESPONSE COORDINATORS

1. Confirm traumatic event with RCMP.
2. Write down details for reference.
3. Contact the family or family representative and discuss the need of the school to share the details of the traumatic event. Stress that this information is important in assisting staff and students in coping with trauma.
4. Determine which staff members require special consideration when being informed about the traumatic event. Make arrangements to inform all other staff members. Do not forget support staff, bus drivers and substitute teachers (where applicable). Contact other Trauma Response coordinators to determine what arrangements might need to be made to assist staff and students.
5. Prepare a written statement concerning the event (which could be read as written to the students by all classroom supervisors). Avoid use of the intercom for conveying information. Classroom supervisors should be made aware that they are expected to provide students under their supervision an opportunity to discuss their feelings and response to the event. Respect the feelings of those supervisors who are not comfortable with facilitating this discussion and arrange for an alternate supervisor. The written statement may include:
 - who died
 - an accurate account of the circumstances of the death; eliminate rumors, exaggeration, etc.
 - if the death has been declared a suicide by the RCMP, refer to it as such
 - the individual's relationship to the school
 - a personal sharing of feelings of grief and remembrance
 - a request for a minute of silence, if appropriate
6. Arrange for a staff meeting. Remind staff that all media will be handled by the Director or designate. Relate information to staff, with a written copy for each member to ensure that details are accurate and the same for everyone. Give instructions regarding sharing this information with students.
7. Arrange for any alternate classroom or recess/noon supervision that might be required.
8. Review any upcoming events that may need to be cancelled.
9. Decide on the necessity of and appropriate method of informing parents.
10. Decide if other schools may be involved and contact the school principal.
11. Notify the Resource/Counselling coordinator of at-risk students and staff.
12. Set a staff meeting for an appropriate time later in the day for debriefing.

PROCEDURES FOR RESOURCE/COUNSELLING COORDINATORS

1. On the advice of the Trauma Response coordinators, contact the necessary outside resource personnel. Arrange for them to be at the school as soon as possible.
2. Assign suitable spaces for resource personnel to work. Make sure the Reception Area coordinator is aware of these locations.
3. At the initial staff meeting, ask teachers to send students needing help to a predetermined area (such as the library) where the Resource/Counselling coordinators will be available to direct students to resource personnel.
4. Be available to assist students and staff who need to talk with resource personnel to locate appropriate personnel to suit their needs. If there is a large demand, assign counselling services where there seems to be the greatest need. If possible, bring in more personnel.
5. Provide coffee, juice or snacks if considered necessary.
6. Monitor students who seem in need of follow-up counselling and/or more immediate intervention.
7. Evaluate the need for the continuation of counselling services on upcoming days.
8. Ask teachers to suggest any at-risk students. If necessary, talk to the students about seeing resource personnel (confirm with parents).
9. Report end of day status to Trauma Response coordinators to be prepared to evaluate effectiveness.

PROCEDURES FOR RECEPTION AREA COORDINATOR

1. Remain in the office to take phone calls, direct inquires and help resource personnel find where they have been assigned (as determined by Resource/Counselling coordinators).
2. Determine what information can be released (as designated by the Trauma Response coordinators).
3. Remember all media inquires go to the Division Office.
4. Contact the Trauma Response coordinators re: phone inquires or someone from outside the school coming into the school.
5. Contact the Resource/Counselling coordinators if staff or students are asking about counselling/support personnel, etc.
6. Make sure lists of students, parent's phone numbers, alternate contact numbers, etc. are available.

At the conclusion of the crisis, the team should come together to evaluate the process that was used. During this closure, the team must participate in bringing positive and negative feedback to the response team. From this information, the team will be able to evaluate what worked and what did not. Ideas may have to be altered to be more effective. This group process should be completed within a week of the response.

INFORMING THE STUDENTS

The method used to inform students will vary according to the situation.

***CERTAIN STUDENTS SHOULD BE NOTIFIED PRIVATELY.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM PROCEDURES DEALING WITH SUICIDE AND TRAUMA

1. Three concepts/principles:

-**SUPPORT**- Listen and acknowledge feelings and thoughts.

-**CONTROL**-Convey sense of calm and control by taking charge. Facilitate the expression of grief in a controlled and organized way. (i.e. direct discussion, provide necessary information, summarize)

-**STRUCTURE**- Maintaining structure provides a sense of control which has been disrupted by an event. (i.e. maintain structure and order of school routine.) Organized order provides support around which other responsibilities can be organized.

2. Facilitate grief process by:

- Acknowledging the impact of the event.
- Providing an opportunity for the discussion of thoughts and feelings.
- Explaining the process and predicting possible future reactions to loss.
- Physical expression can be helpful for some.
- Allow for the pain of remembering.

ACTION PLAN

1. Inform students of the death as agreed to at the initial staff meeting.
2. Allow students time to sort out their feelings and accept the death.
3. Allow the students to express as much grief as they are able or willing to share.
4. Listen and empathize. Make sure you hear what is said and not what you think the student ought to have said.
5. Share your own feelings and tell about your own memories of the child but don't idealize or criticize the dead child.
6. Organize activities that allow students to tangibly express their grief (i.e. memorials, letters, etc.).
7. Identify AT RISK students and refer them to the Counsellor Coordinator of the Trauma Response Team.

REMINDERS

TEACHER DO'S

1. Be aware of the facts of the tragic event prior to any discussion with students or parents. Provide only the information given by the Trauma Response Team and the principal.
2. Feel comfortable asking for help.
3. Provide an environment in which students feel safe and confident in receiving honest answers.
4. Use correct terminology related to death. Avoid euphemisms such as “passed away”. Stress the terms “death and died” – speak of death as final and lasting. If the death has been termed a suicide and the family has given consent to reveal the nature of the death as a suicide, use the term or an age appropriate term such as “took her/his own life-killed him/herself”. Fashion your response according to developmental levels.
5. Allow the students to express as much grief as they are able to willing to share with you.
6. Share your own feelings and tell about your own memories of the student but don't idealize or criticize the dead student.
7. Say “I don't know” when you don't know and request further help as required.
8. Recognize that classroom routines and management may be disrupted. This is natural; be flexible. Consider, however, that some structure must be maintained.
9. Maintain an empathetic attitude toward the student's age appropriate responses.
10. Organized activities, if appropriate, that will allow students to tangibly express their grief (i.e. memorial, letters, journal writing, art work, role playing).
11. Refer media request to Media Coordinator – Director of Ed. or designate.
12. Be concrete, accurate, honest, direct.
13. Stress sensory experience of child rather than intellectual response.
14. Encourage talking about the loss, thereby strengthening memories.
15. Respect and acknowledge child's feeling and fears.
16. REMOVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOSS FROM CHILD.
17. Physical contact can be helpful for some. Ask permission to touch.
18. Understand and manage your own feelings.

TEACHERS: DON'T

1. Don't feel you must handle this alone. Ask for help as required.
2. Don't force a child to participate in a discussion about death.
3. NEVER link suffering and death with guilt, punishment and sin.
4. Don't be judgmental and don't lecture. This is not the appropriate time to discuss morals-yours or anyone else's!
5. Don't force a regular day upon grieving students; however, don't allow the class to be totally unstructured. Offer choices of activities such as letters, journals, and/or discussion.
6. Don't say, "I know how you feel" unless you truly do.
7. Don't expect "adult" responses from some students. Grief responses are individual and may seem in appropriate to you.
8. Don't ask students to postpone, deny, delay, or cover up feelings.

Do not give statements concerning the deceased or pictures of the deceased to the medias; refer all media requests to the media coordinator.