Division of Student Services Crisis Response Team Manual

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
Misty Belford, Chairperson
John Craig, Vice Chairman
Tina Descovich
Matt Susin
Andy Ziegler

Acknowledgements

With appreciation for their expertise and generosity, the Brevard Public School District expresses sincere gratitude to the Miami-Dade County Public School District in the development of this crisis manual.

Adaptation for Brevard Public School District completed by:

Charles R. Eccleston
Assistant Director- Psychological Services

Paula Ferrell
SEDNET Project Manager

Ginny Gleason
Resource Teacher Title One Family Engagement

Janean Knight
Resource Teacher Students at Risk
PREFACE

Crisis events have the potential to create widespread impact on children, families, and school staff. Emotional reactions range from shock and disbelief, fear, anger, anxiety, and resounding sadness. A child’s ability to learn and behave appropriately may also be compromised based on exposure to these events.

This manual is designed to provide Brevard Public Schools administrators, counseling professionals, teachers, and members of crisis and recovery response teams with information and guidance for preventing and mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crisis situations. Information contained in this document will support school administrators and their staff in preparing a comprehensive approach directed at creating and maintaining school-site safety and security.

"The greatest glory in living, lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

Nelson Mandela
# Table of Contents

**Division of Student Services Crisis Response Team Manual** ........................................... 2

**PREFACE** ............................................................................................................................ 3

**CRISIS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY** ........................................................................... 7

Examples of School Related Crisis or Disasters ..................................................................... 7

I. **RESPONDING TO A DEATH OF A STUDENT OR STAFF** ...................... 8

Principal/Administration Crisis Response Team Checklist .......................................................... 9

Faculty Responsibilities ........................................................................................................... 11

Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities ............................................................... 12

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda ............................................................................................... 13

Sample Email to Staff - Death of a Student .......................................................................... 14

Sample PA Sample Death of a Secondary Level Student ....................................................... 15

Sample Letter to Parents - Death of a Student (PreK-2nd grade) ......................................... 16

Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process ......................... 17

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student (PreK-2nd grade – Spanish) ........................... 18

Guideline for Parents (Spanish) Helping your Child through the Grieving Process ............. 19

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student PreK to 2nd grade (Creole) ............................. 20

Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process ............. 21

Sample Letter Death of a Student (Grades 3-12) .................................................................... 22

Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process ............................ 23

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student (Grades 3-12 - Spanish) ............................... 24

Guidelines for Parents (Spanish) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process .......... 25

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student (Grades 3-12 - Creole) .................................... 26

Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process ............. 27

Sample Email Death of a Teacher/Staff Member .................................................................. 28

Sample PA Sample Death of a Teacher/Staff Member Secondary Students .......................... 29

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (PreK-2nd grade) .................... 30

Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process ........................... 31

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (PreK-2nd grade - Spanish) .... 32

Guideline for Parents (Spanish) Helping You Child through the Grieving Process ............. 33

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (PreK-2nd grade - Creole) ....... 34

Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process ............. 35

Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (3-12 grades) ........................... 36
II. Responding to a Death by Suicide (Student or Staff Member) ............... 55

Introduction - Crisis Response for Death by Suicide ..................................... 56
Principal/Administrators Checklist for Death by Suicide ............................... 57
Faculty Responsibilities .................................................................................. 60
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities ......................................... 61
Staff Meeting Agenda ..................................................................................... 62
Crisis Response Team Packet ........................................................................ 63
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student Verified Suicide - Secondary .... 66
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student Suspected Suicide .................... 68
Talking Points for Students and Staff after a Suicide ..................................... 69
Following a Suicide: Stages of Grief .............................................................. 70
Suicide Warning Signs for School Staff ......................................................... 71
Memorial Guidelines Following a Suicide ....................................................... 72

III. APPENDIX ......................................................................................... 73

Psychological First Aid .................................................................................. 74
7 Stages of Grief (Not necessarily in this order) ............................................. 75
Children’s Reaction to Trauma ..................................................................... 77
How Children View Death........................................................................................................ 78
The Grieving Elementary School Student .............................................................................. 79
The Grieving Middle School Student ...................................................................................... 81
The Grieving High School Student .......................................................................................... 82
Normal Feelings for Children about Death ........................................................................... 83
Support Activities .................................................................................................................... 84
Grief Activity – Elementary – Age Students Creating My “Safe Box” ................................. 85
Creating a “Memory Box” ......................................................................................................... 86
Memorial Activities .................................................................................................................. 88
Natural Disasters/Violence Developmental Responses After a Natural Disaster .................. 90
Talking to Children About Violence Tips for Parents and Teachers ...................................... 92
Supporting Children’s Recovery after a Hurricane ................................................................. 94
Recommendations for Helping Children Cope After a Disaster ........................................... 95
10 Tips for Building Resilience in Children and Teens ............................................................ 96
IV. CRISIS TEAM MANUAL FORMS...................................................................................... 98
Principal/Administration Crisis Response Team Checklist ..................................................... 99
Faculty Responsibilities .......................................................................................................... 101
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities ............................................................... 102
District Crisis Response Team Checklist ............................................................................... 103
Crisis Response Worksheet ..................................................................................................... 105
Sign in/Please Print Crisis Response Team ............................................................................ 106
Student Sign in Log Crisis Response Team ............................................................................ 107
Principal/Administrators Checklist for Death by Suicide ..................................................... 108
Faculty Responsibilities (Death by Suicide) ........................................................................... 110
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities (Death by suicide) ................................ 111
Crisis Response Team Packet Death by Suicide (Student or Staff) ....................................... 112
Memorial Guidelines Following a Suicide .............................................................................. 114
CRISIS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A state of crisis is achieved through the occurrence of a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively impacts an individual, institution or a community’s ability to function effectively. Crisis may also be a result of long term or chronic exposure to dysfunctional or threatening environments or situations; or attributed to temporary developmental challenges. Youths exposed to such critical situations are at increased risk for posttraumatic reactions that may have significant impact on functioning. While most children who have experienced a critical incident or disaster will not be traumatized, they may still be in need of intervention services.

Examples of School Related Crisis or Disasters

Events or circumstances, such as those listed below, may lead to serious and profound difficulties. Whether they occur on school campus, in the home, or in the community, they may have significant impact on the entire school community. Actions taken prior to and following an incident or disaster can save lives, prevent injuries, and enhance student resiliency.

- Abduction
- Automobile Accident
- Contagious Disease: Hepatitis, Meningitis, etc.
- Death Of A School Community Member
- Drowning
- Faculty Arrest Or Dismissal
- Fire/Explosion
- National Or International Crisis
- Natural Disaster
- School Bus Accident
- Shooting
- School Invasion
- Suicide
- Terrorism
I. RESPONDING TO A DEATH OF A STUDENT OR STAFF
Principal/Administration Crisis Response Team (CRT) Checklist

Step 1

_____ Verify crisis and obtain accurate factual account. If the death is by suicide, please refer to the tab marked Suicide.
_____ Inform the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and your Director of Leading and Learning.
_____ Communicate with the parents/families of the person who died, (student or staff) or any directly affected families. Only release information approved by the family.
_____ Meet with school based staff and the assigned response team, to develop a plan. Determine how phone calls to front office will be handled. Include School Resource Officer, if the school has one.
_____ Determine how to inform the school community of the death for either a student or staff.
_____ Go live on T.V. when available, announcing over the intercom is not recommended as it depersonalizes the incident and may create chaos. However, a PA announcement is included in the packet in case it is being used as a last resort. Response team members and/or staff may read a statement to the class, provided by administration. Use information from the classroom script in this packet.
_____ Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed.
_____ If it is a crisis which requires faculty to report early the next day, activate the school text messaging/telephone tree to inform school staff of meeting time for the next morning.
_____ Be highly visible throughout the day.

This will not be a typical day.

Step 2

_____ Determine if the student who died had siblings in other schools. If so, contact the principals of those sites to inform them of the loss, or let CRT know.
_____ Consult with school-based staff and the CRT to discuss the need for visiting the student’s home, sending food and/or flowers, and providing counseling/grief referral sources to the family.
_____ Hold initial meeting with faculty, staff and CRT members, informing them of situation and establishing procedures for responding to the incident; sample staff meeting agenda is included in this packet.
_____ Designate campus personnel to assist with student and building safety and supervision.
_____ Send home a letter to all parents of students impacted by the death/crisis. This letter should discuss the event, briefly describe common grief reactions, and should strongly encourage them to talk with their child; sample letter is included in English, Spanish and Creole.
_____ Determine with Leading and Learning Director or Assistant Superintendent for Student Services if it is necessary to offer a parent/community forum or meeting. If approved by the Leading and Learning Director or Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, the response team will assist with developing the agenda for the meeting.
_____ Debrief with CRT Leader – assess follow up needs, identify high needs.
_____ Monitor social media.
Discuss how to gather personal effects of the student or staff that has died and determine the most sensitive manner to present these items to the family.

Check out students who leave school for the day. (Considerations should be given to not count the absence as unexcused, especially on the initial day of the crisis). Keep names of students who check out early.

**Step 3**

Disseminate information – funeral/service details.

Involves staff and students in planning any special recognition activities or memorials (i.e., scholarships, memory wall, etc.).

Advise parents of the student who died of any special assemblies or activities planned to honor the deceased. Although their direct involvement may not be recommended, it is important that they be informed of plans. Any assemblies/activities should be discussed with and approved by the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or Leading and Learning Director.

Release students to attend memorial services, if desired. Students and parents will provide their own transportation to the service.
Faculty Responsibilities

_____ Inform the students in your classroom, as directed by administration. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss the loss and share their feelings, a CRT member will assist if requested.
_____ Answer questions and conduct class discussions. Feel free to say, “I don’t know” when asked a question you cannot answer.
_____ Identify and refer to the CRT any students who were close friends of the deceased, as well as those who are in distress or who you consider high risk. It may be necessary at times to have another student escort a student or have a CRT member come to get the student.
_____ Limit homework and testing if possible. Maintain stability in the classroom but acknowledge the impact of the death/crisis and grief process. Be flexible while maintaining classroom structure and control.
_____ Consult with school-based or response team members when needed.
_____ Allow students to write letters or make drawings expressing sympathy, to be delivered to the parents by the school. Be sure that letters are unsealed and reviewed before delivering, so that no negative or inappropriate messages are sent.
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities

- Assist in preparing letters and handouts, the handouts may be placed on the website.
- Respond, as requested by your principal, to parent/community phone calls. Often, administration and the response team will write a standard response for incoming calls and concerns.
- Assist CRT members by providing printed schedules of students, classroom locations, bell schedules, and hall passes.
- Remove the name of the student that died from the school mailing lists, automatic calling machine, computer, guidance newsletter list, etc.
Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

The principal is not expected to lead the entire staff meeting. The CRT leader and team will provide any support needed/requested. This will not be a typical day.

- Share factual information about the loss.
- Introduce CRT members.
- Review crisis response plan for the day.
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information. (social media has changed the way students and adults communicate). Often the information is shared through Social Media, prior to verifications. Rumors and misinformation can create an escalated reaction to a death.
- Review behaviors and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students or staff. Discuss how events can trigger emotions in people from previous events in their lives.
- Discuss resources that are available for students and staff.
- Instruct staff to refer students to counselors or CRT as necessary.
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom.
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services, have number and/or cards available.
- Allow time for staff to ask questions.
Sample Email to Staff - Death of a Student

Good Morning (school mascot) staff.

It is with great sadness that I share, our student (Name of Student) died as a result of (state cause of death, if known). Please do not discuss this information with your students until you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students’ behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to (designated/location). Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss.

[FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the incident and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.]

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal’s Name
Good Morning, *(School Mascot) family,*

It is with great sadness that I greet all of you today. As many of you may already know, the *(Name of School)* has suffered the loss of one of our students, *(Name of Student).* He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your feelings and thoughts with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time dealing with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us now have a moment of silence for *(Name of Student).*

Thank you.
Sample Letter to Parents - Death of a Student (PreK-2nd grade)

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The (School Name) family sadly announces the death of a beloved (Student’s Grade Level) grade student, (Name of student). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, and teachers.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during the difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Members of the District Crisis Response Team and our counselor will be available to assist students impacted by the loss.

Please let your child’s teacher or counselor know if there is any information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a recent loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal reaction.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, (Counselor’s Name) at (School Phone Number).

Sincerely,

Principal
Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve.
- Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time, and times of separation.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child. We can be reached at (School Phone Number).
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student (PreK-2nd grade – Spanish)

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela (School Name) anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de (student’s grade level) grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente. Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la listade pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (District Crisis Management Team) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela debatener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es un reacción normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares (Counselor’s Name) al (School Phone Number).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora
Guideline for Parents (Spanish) Helping your Child through the Grieving Process

• Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo(a).

• De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo(a) lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.

• Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se lo llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.

• Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permite que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.

• Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarle.

• Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.

• Comportamientos que pueden esperar incluye: aislamiento, pérdida de apetito, comportamiento agresivo o convertirse en desafiante cuando de lo contrario es un niño(a) bien portado.

• El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer.

• Dificultades para dormir, en el apetito y las tareas cotidianas son respuestas normales a un evento traumático.

• Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student PreK to 2nd grade (Creole)

Chè Paran (yo) oswa Gadyen (yo),


Nou prepare lis direktiv pou paran / gadyen yo pou ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis chagren an. Manm Ekip Repons Distri Kriz la ansanm ak anplwaye konsèy lekòl ou a disponib pou ede elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Tanpri, kite pwofesè oswa konseye pitit ou a konnen si gen lòt enfòmason lekòl la ta dwe konnen, tankou, si fanmi ou te soufrì yon pèt oswa yon trajedi menm jan an, sa ka pote santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa a se yon eksperyans nòmal.

Si ou ta dwe gen plis kesyon oswa enkyetid, tanpri kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, (Non konseye a) nan nimewo telefòn lekòl la.

Sinsèman,

Prensipal la
Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process
Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.

- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.


- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.

- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.

- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.

- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.

- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pou oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.

- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separatasyon.
Sample Letter Death of a Student (Grades 3-12)

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The (School Name) family sadly announces the death of a beloved (Grade Level) student. He/she will be greatly missed by his family, friends and teachers. As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Response Team along with your school’s counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child’s teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of, for example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), (Counselor’s Name) at (School Phone Number).

Sincerely,

Principal’s Name
Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve.
- Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bed time, and times of separation.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child. We can be reached at [School Phone Number].
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student (Grades 3-12 - Spanish)

Estimado padre(s) o tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela (School Name) anuncia con con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido estudiante de (student’s grade level) grado. Su familia, amigos y maestros le vamos a extrañar inmensamente. Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, a menudo sienten miedo o se sienten abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo(a) durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (District Crisis Management Team) junto a los consejeros de su escuela están disponibles para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjene saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta, por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares (Counselor’s Name) al (School Phone Number).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora
Guidelines for Parents (Spanish) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo(a).

- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo(a) lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.

- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.

- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor lloré también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.

- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarle.

- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.

- Comportamientos que pueden esperar incluye: aislamiento, pérdida de apetito, comportamiento agresivo o convertirse en desafiante cuando de lo contrario es un niño(a) bien portado.

- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer.

- Dificultades para dormir, en el apetito y las tareas cotidianas son respuestas normales a un evento traumático.

- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Student (Grades 3-12 - Creole)

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl (School Name) anONSE avèk lapenn ěnmò (Name of student), yon élèv (Student’s Grade Level) nou tout te rennen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, ak pwofesè li ap sonje l anpil. Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè ěnmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boulvèse akoz evènman sa a. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki nan atachman an pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwaye konseye lekòl la disponib pou asiste élèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvouplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sib yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajedi menmjan, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans ki nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvouplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, (Counselor’s Name) nan (School Phone Number).

Sensèman,
**Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process**

**EdiT it ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapen: Machasuiv pou Paran**

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.

- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.


- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.

- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.

- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.

- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jouanalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.

- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontrè regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pou oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.

Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon
Sample Email Death of a Teacher/Staff Member

Good Morning (school mascot).

Staff it is with great sadness that I share information of the tragic loss of a teacher/staff member. (Name of Staff Member) died as a result of (only state the cause of death if the family has given permission to do so or if the incident is public knowledge). Please do not discuss this information with your students unless you are directed to do so. Today may be a difficult and emotionally trying day for you, a day where you may need to draw upon your personal and professional resources. We ask you to be keen observers of your students’ behavior in your classroom and in the hallways. It is also important to remember that students will observe and model the behaviors and reactions of trusted adults. Normal reactions to crisis events may include fear, anxiety, crying, anger and/or numbness. If you observe students displaying any of these behaviors or directly requesting to speak to a counselor, please send them with a pass to (Location of Grief Counselors). Use your judgment regarding whether a student would need to be escorted. Our goal today is to provide counseling services to those in need. If a majority of your class needs attention, please notify the main office and a counselor will be sent to your classroom. Additionally, counselors will be following the class schedule of the deceased and will also visit other classes directly impacted by the loss. Support for staff will also be available in room ____________.

FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY: An announcement will be made regarding the loss and services that are available. The announcement may prompt increased conversation and concerns regarding the incident. This is to be expected and addressed.

Please make every effort to avoid and discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information, as this will only increase fear and anxiety. It is critical that we manage our response to this tragic loss in a safe and sensitive manner.

Thank you,

Principal
Sample PA Sample Death of a Teacher/Staff Member Secondary Students
Use only after most staff and students have been informed

Good morning students and staff

It is with great sadness that I greet you today. We have received word that the (Name of School or Mascot) family has suffered the loss of one of our teachers/staff, (Name of Staff Member). He/she has been a member of our staff for ____ years and will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students and colleagues. During this difficult time, it can be helpful to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone. For this reason, we have extra counselors that will be here throughout the day to talk with you and answer questions. If you feel that you need to speak with someone or have a friend that is having a difficult time with the loss, please tell your teacher. Your teachers will know how to connect you with a counselor. Let us have a moment of silence for (Name of Staff Member).

Thank you
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Death of a Teacher/Staff (PreK-2nd grade)

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

The (Name of School) family sadly announces the death of a beloved staff member (Name of Staff Member). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, students, staff and parents. As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of a loved one or friend for the first time will often be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance. Due to the age of your child, we feel that it would be best for you to inform him/her of this loss in the comfort of your home environment.

In an effort to assist you in helping your child during this difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. Members of the District Crisis Response Team, along with your school’s counselor will be available to assist students impacted by the loss.

Please let your child’s teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. For example, if your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings of that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor, (Name of Counselor) at (phone number)

Sincerely,

Principal
Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek some professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve.
- Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic events.
- Young children especially may display regressive behavior, e.g. bedwetting, thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime, and times of separation.
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (PreK-2nd grade - Spanish)

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela (School Name) anuncia tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro del personal (Name of Staff Member). Su familia, amigos, estudiantes, compañeros y padres de familia le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren por primera vez la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo, a menudo se sentirán atemorizados o abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Debido a la edad de su hijo, nos parece que sería mejor que usted le informase de esta pérdida en la comodidad de su hogar.

Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la listade pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo de Crisis del Distrito (District Crisis Team) junto a nuestros consejeros estará disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjele saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido recientemente una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una reacción normal. Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuníquense con nuestros consejeros escolares (Counselor’s Name) al (School Phone Number).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora
Guideline for Parents (Spanish) Helping You Child through the Grieving Process

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.

- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.

- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.

- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permita que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.

- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarle.

- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.

- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.

- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.

- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (PreK -2nd grade - Creole)

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl (School Name) anons avèk lapenn lanmò (Name of Staff Member), yon anplwayne nou tout terenmen. Fanmi li, zanmi li, elèv, anplwayne ak paran ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk apòr lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi pou premye fwa, ap souvan pè oubyen boulvèse akoz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote ou pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans. Akoz laj pitit ou a, nou santi li ta pi bon pou enfôme li oumenm sou lanmò sa a nan konfò anvèvònman kay ou.

Nan yon efò pou asiste w nan ede pitit ou pandan peryòd difisil sa a, nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak konseye lekòl nou an ap disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt sa a. Silvouplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfômasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzanp, si fanmi w te sibi yon pèt resamman oubyen yon trajèdi menmjen an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt sa a. Sa se yon eksperyans nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvouplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, (Counselor’s Name) nan (School Phone Number).

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris
Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfòmasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòaman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou.
- Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.
- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jounalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demonstre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pou oubyen fe kòlè san kontwòl. Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (3-12 grades)

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

The (School Name) family sadly announces the death of a beloved member of our staff, (Name of Staff Member). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, colleagues and students.

As adults, we are all aware of the substantial impact which follows the death of a loved one or friend. Children experiencing the death of someone may be frightened or overwhelmed by the event. They will most likely be looking to you for emotional strength and guidance.

We have prepared the attached list of guidelines for parents/guardians to help their children through the grieving process. Members of the District Crisis Response Team along with your school’s counseling staff are available to assist students who are impacted by the loss.

Please let your child’s teacher or counselor know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of. If your family has suffered a loss or similar tragedy, this may bring up feelings associated with that loss. This is a normal experience.

If you should have further questions or concerns, please contact our school counselor(s), (Counselor Name) at (School Phone Number).

Sincerely,

Principal’s Name
Guidelines for Parents Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

- As soon as possible after the death, set time aside to talk to your child.
- Give your child the facts in a simple manner; be truthful but avoid unnecessary and graphic details, especially with younger children. Your child might ask more questions later as they come to mind.
- Use the correct language, e.g., “dead” or “died”. Do not use phrases such as: “He’s sleeping” or “God took her,” or “He went away.” Younger children may be frightened by such references.
- Explain your feelings to your child, especially if you are crying. Give him/her permission to cry, too. You are the role model for your child and it is good for your child to see your sadness and for you to share your feelings with him/her.
- Reassure your child that you will be available to support him/her.
- Watch for behavioral changes in your child. If your child’s reaction to the death concerns you, seek professional help from a school counselor or therapist.
- Behaviors to look for may include: isolation, loss of appetite, aggressive behavior or becoming defiant when otherwise a well-behaved child.
- Sudden death, violent death, and the death of a young person are especially hard to grieve.
- Disruptions of sleep, appetite and daily activities are normal responses to a traumatic event.
- Make adjustments for anxieties and fears, especially at bedtime and times of separation.
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (3-12 grades - Spanish)

Estimados padre(s) de familia/tutor(es):

La familia de la escuela (School Name) anuncia con tristeza el fallecimiento de un querido miembro denuestro personal, (Name of Staff Member). Su familia, amigos, compañeros y estudiantes le vamos a extrañar inmensamente.

Como adultos, estamos todos conscientes del fuerte impacto que se siente después de la pérdida de un ser querido o de un amigo. Los niños que sufren la pérdida de un ser querido, puede que sientan miedo o se sientan abrumados por el suceso. Es muy probable que busquen en ustedes el apoyo y la fuerza emocional. Con el fin de ayudarlos para que puedan auxiliar a su hijo durante este período difícil, hemos preparado la lista de pautas que aparecen a continuación. El Equipo Administrativo del Control de Crisis del Distrito (District Crisis Management Team) junto a los consejeros de su escuela está disponible para ayudar a los estudiantes impactados por la pérdida.

Por favor, déjenle saber al maestro o consejero de su hijo si hay alguna otra información que la escuela deba tener en cuenta. Por ejemplo, si su familia ha sufrido una pérdida o una tragedia similar, puede que su hijo tenga sentimientos asociados con esa pérdida. Esta es una experiencia normal.

Si tuviesen más preguntas o inquietudes, por favor, comuniquense con nuestros consejeros escolares (Counselor’s Name) al (School Phone Number).

Atentamente,

Director o Directora
Guidelines for Parents (Spanish) Helping Your Child through the Grieving Process

Como ayudar a sus hijos en momentos de dolor: Pautas para los padres de familia

- Después del fallecimiento de alguien conocido, dedique tiempo, tan pronto como sea posible, para hablar con su hijo.

- De una manera sencilla explique a su hijo lo que sucedió; sea sincero pero evite los detalles gráficos que no sean necesarios, especialmente cuando se trata de niños muy pequeños. Probablemente el menor haga preguntas más adelante después que lo piense.

- Use el lenguaje adecuado, por ejemplo, “muerto” o “murió”. No use frases como las siguientes: “Está durmiendo” o “Dios se la llevó” o “Se fue lejos”. Los niños más pequeños pueden asustarse con esos términos.

- Explique al menor cómo es que usted se siente, especialmente si le ha visto llorando. Permite que el menor llore también. Usted es el modelo de su hijo y es bueno que vea su tristeza y de que usted comparta sus sentimientos con él o ella.

- Asegure al menor que usted está a su disposición para ayudarle.

- Esté atento a cualquier cambio en el comportamiento de su hijo. Si la reacción de su hijo ante el fallecimiento le preocupa, por favor, busque la ayuda profesional de un consejero escolar o terapeuta.

- El dolor que se siente por una muerte repentina, muerte violenta o la muerte de una persona joven son difíciles de sobreponer. El comportamiento normal a un evento traumático incluye: dificultades para dormir, durante las actividades cotidianas y falta de apetito.

- Especialmente en los niños pequeños se puede dar el caso de que muestren un comportamiento regresivo, por ejemplo, que mojen la cama (incontinencia nocturna), se chupen el dedo o tengan rabietas.

- Haga los ajustes necesarios en el caso de que el menor este ansioso o sienta miedo, especialmente a la hora de dormir y en los momentos en que se tienen que separar de usted.
Sample Letter to Parents Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (3-12 grades - Creole)

Chè Paran oubyen Gadyen,

Fanmi Lekòl (School Name) anonte avèk lapenn lanmò (Name of a Staff Member), yon anplwayne nou tout te renmen. Fanmi li, zanmi, kolèg ak elèv ap sonje l anpil.

Kòm adilt, nou tout konnen gwo chòk aprè lanmò yon moun pwòch oubyen yon zanmi. Timoun ki pèdi yon moun ka pè oubyen boylvèse akoz evènman an. Gen anpil chans pou yo vin bò kote w pou yo jwenn fòs emosyonèl ak gidans.

Nou prepare lis machasuiv ki tache a pou paran/gadyen ede pitit yo atravè pwosesis lapenn nan. Manm Ekip Jesyon Kriz Distri a ak anplwayne konseye lekòl ou a disponib pou asiste elèv ki afekte ak pèt la.

Silvouplè avize pwofesè oubyen konseye pitit ou a si genyen enfòmasyon adisyonèl lekòl la ta dwe konnen. Pa egzant, si fannmi w te siby yon pèt oubyen yon trajedi menmjan an, sa ka reveye santiman ki asosye avèk pèt a Sa se eksperyans nòmal.

Si w gen plis kesyon oubyen enkyetid, silvouplè kontakte konseye lekòl nou an, (Counselor’s Name) nan (School Phone Number).

Sensèman,

Direktè/tris
Guidelines for Parents (Creole) Helping your Child through the Grieving Process

Ede Pitit ou Atravè Pwosesis Lapenn: Machasuiv pou Paran

- Pi vit posib aprè lanmò a, rezève tan pou pale ak pitit ou.
- Bay pitit ou enfômasyon yo yon fason ki byen senp; di laverite men evite detay vif ki pa nesesè, espesyalman ak timoun ki pi piti yo. Pitit ou ka vin poze kesyon pita lè yo vin nan tèt li.
- Eksplike pitit ou kòman ou santi w, espesyalman si w ap kriye. Ba li pèmisyon pou li kriye tou. Ou se yon modèl pou pitit ou e li bon pou pitit ou wè tristès ou e pou w pataje santiman ou avèk li.
- Rasire pitit ou w ap disponib pou ba l sipò.
- Suiv pitit ou pou chanjman nan konpòtman li. Si reyaksyon pitit ou sou lanmò enkyete w, al chèche èd pwofesyonèl nan men konseye lekòl oubyen terapis.
- Mò sibit, mò vyolan, ak lanmò yon jèn moun espesyalman bay plis lapenn. Enteripsyon nan somèy, apeti ak aktivite jouanalye se repons nòmal pou yon evènman trajik.
- Jèn timoun espesyalman ka demontre regresyon nan konduit yo, pa egzanp, pipi nan kabann, souse pous oubyen fè kòlè san kontwòl.
- Fè ajisteman pou anksyete ak perè, espesyalman nan lè pou al nan kabann ak lè pou separasyon.
Crisis Response Team Member Packet

- Checklist
- CRT Worksheet
- Classroom Scripts
- Sign-In Sheets
District Crisis Response Team Checklist

___ Team Leader meets with Principal and/or District Administrator who responds to gather details (complete Crisis Response Worksheet) and set up response plan. Gather school bell schedule, map of school, school faculty list, by grade or subject. Gather the information or outside counseling resources, discuss need for student passes. **CRT member should follow the student’s schedule, invite principal.**

___ In the initial organizational meeting include the school-based counselor and other dedicated staff. Discuss and assign who will provide what services during the day (i.e., class presentations, individual and group counseling, teacher relief, etc.). Discuss as a group if that day’s routine school counselor activities or special events should be canceled or postponed. **CRT members should be highly visible.**

___ Team Leader provides each CRT member with a copy of the school’s master schedule, bell schedule, a map of the school, a faculty list with grade and subject taught, (if needed), a school telephone list, and handouts listing outside counseling sources. Be sure to have an adequate supply of student passes available for use.

___ Collaboratively identify high risk or most affected students. In addition to identifying close friends, also identify any students who were recently in major conflict with the student who died. Remember to include students who have experienced a recent loss, ESE students, those who have completed a risk assessment or have witnessed violence.

    Note: If the crisis involves a trauma situation, identify the “more exposed” and the “most exposed” (i.e., eyewitnesses, siblings, close friends, etc.) who may benefit from participating in a debriefing session at a later time.

___ Determine if there are siblings or relatives/close friends at other schools that may need services. If so, call those schools to alert their staff, including previous teachers or coaches.

___ On the first day of the crisis and for subsequent days, have school-based staff closely monitor the absentee list, watching for any high-risk students who may be absent. Call parents when necessary and be particularly watchful for any groups of affected students who stayed home and are gathering without supervision at one of the student’s house

___ Inform the staff how to refer and send students for counseling. Structure and organization will help reduce stress and encourage the return of equilibrium at the school.

___ Assess potentially high-risk students, contact parents to refer for outside help.

___ Provide support for teachers and staff members as requested. This may include brief classroom breaks or counseling.

___ Respond to staff questions regarding grief and common reactions. Debrief faculty if requested by administration, distribute appropriate handout located in appendix.
_____ Keep a list/log of all students who received CRT/guidance services. Review list at the end of each day—particularly with school based guidance counselor(s)—to ensure that follow-up counseling/services are provided as needed.

_____ Provide CRT services, if requested, at school the day of the memorial service. There is often a heightened grief reaction at this time.

_____ Debrief and plan as a team at the end of each day. Allow time for sharing of feelings and emotional reactions/frustrations among the team members. Ask “what worked” and “what would we do differently?” There are always lessons and opportunities to learn in each crisis situation. **Monitor CRT members for compassion fatigue.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis Response Worksheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Team Leader complete with School Administration)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name/ Administrator Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Crisis Detail:**

Name of student or staff involved in crisis:
Grade level/Age:
Other details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Students Who May Be At Risk:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Counseling Locations**

**Announcement of Crisis:**

Classroom Presentation
Email to Staff
Letter Home to Parents
PA announcement

**Staff Meeting:**

Location/Time:  
Agenda:  
Presenters:

**Voluntary Debrief Staff Meeting at End of Day:**

Location/time  
Response Team Member
### Crisis Response Team Sign in/Please Print

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Department/Agency</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Student Sign in Log

## Crisis Response Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Student’s Name (Please Print)</th>
<th>Teacher/Grade/Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student (Pre K-2nd grade)

Good morning boys and girls. My name is (Name). I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do/did you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died?

There are a lot of important people in your life. Your friends are also important people in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school.

Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about one of your friends. Unfortunately, (Name of student) died. When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to (Name of student). It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn’t always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don’t feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone’s life. Let’s talk about some nice things about your friend. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student (3-6 grades)

Hello. Our names are ______ and _______. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad. One of the students in your class has died. (Name of Student) died yesterday (only state the cause of death with the permission of the family or if the information is publicly known). (Name of Student) will be missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.

When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we’ve never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don’t want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/staff that are in need of additional counseling services.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student (Secondary Level)

Hello. Our names are _______ and _______. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. One of your fellow classmate’s, (Name of Deceased) died as a result of (Cause of Death – Shared only with the permission of family, or if information has been released by a reliable public source).

When things like this happen some people may feel angry, upset, scared, sad, in shock, or all of these emotions all wrapped in one. You may see that someone may cry a lot and others don’t cry at all. Maybe some of you just want to stay quiet for a while, and some of you have to talk about what happened and want to get as much information as possible.

There is no “right” way to react to death, the important thing is to recognize how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling. In your school you have (list counselors) that are here every day for you.

Today the (Designated Counseling Area) is the space that we have designated as your spot to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask your teachers for a pass, if you feel that someone you know may need to talk to someone about how they feel, inform a teacher so that he/she can connect him/her with the counselor. This is going to be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, teachers and counselors are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with you about the loss of your classmate and friend, (Name of Deceased). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student Verified or Suspected Suicide

Hello. Our Names are _____________ and ___________. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Yesterday one of your classmates, (Name of Student) died as a result of suicide (Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).

You may be feeling a variety of things right now: confusion, asking yourself ‘why’ questions that can never be fully answered, maybe feeling angry that he/she took his/her life. Some of you may feel very sad, while others may feel numb, not wanting to believe that this really happened. You may be asking yourself if you should have known; could I have stopped him/her. These thoughts and feelings are normal.

We don’t always know why a person chooses to take his/her life, but we do know that suicide is never the answer to any problems. It is important to remember that the suicide is not your fault. Only the person who made the choice to take their life is responsible for his/her actions. Suicide is a tragedy that leaves many victims behind-family and friends. Most people who are suicidal really don’t want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing and unfortunately lose sight of the choices that are available to them. There are always other choices. Suicide is never an acceptable choice. We can help prevent future tragedies like this by realizing that we have the power to get help for ourselves and others who are feeling suicidal. Therefore, if you or anyone you know is thinking or talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. The National Suicide Hotline is 1-800-273-8255 or locally you can dial 211.

There is no “right” way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have (List Counselors) who are here every day for you.

Today the (Designated Counseling Area) is the space that we have designated as a place to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor, please ask you teacher for a pass.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, teachers and counselor are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with you about the loss of your classmate, (Name of Deceased). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.
Good morning boys and girls. My name is [Name]. I am here today to talk to you about something important. First, I would like to know how many of you have or had a pet? What kind of pet(s) do you have? Pets are a very important part of a family. How many of you have had a pet that died? How did you feel when your pet died? How many of you know a person who has died? Who is that person? How did you feel when that person died? There are a lot of important people in your life. Your teacher is also an important person in your life. He/she is someone who you see each day at school. Today, I am here to tell you some sad news about your teacher. Unfortunately, [Name of teacher] died.

When someone dies, they are no longer breathing and their heart is no longer working. They can no longer walk, talk, eat or sleep. That is what happened to [Name of teacher]. It is very hard when someone you care about dies.

You may feel very sad and miss them. It isn’t always easy to talk about sad feelings; by talking to someone you love can help you feel better. You might want to talk about it with your parents, other people in your family or maybe another adult at school. No matter how sad you feel today, one thing you can be sure of is that you will not always feel this way. There will come a time when you don’t feel as sad anymore and you will feel happy again remembering your friend. Happy times and sad times are a part of everyone’s life. Let’s talk about some nice things about your teacher. You can also draw a nice picture about him/her and we can give it to his/her family who will also miss him/her.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/staff that are in need of additional counseling services.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (3-6 grades)

Hello. Our names are ____________ and ______. We are here today to give you some information and talk with you. Students, as a class and as a school, you are a family. You spend five days a week together and attend school 180 days a year. During that time, you have many happy moments and celebrate many occasions. However, like any family, you also have experiences that are not fun. Sometimes things happen that make you sad. Today, we must tell you about something that is quite sad.

Your teacher, (Name of Teacher), has died. He/she died yesterday (only state the cause of death with the permission of the family or if the information is publicly known). (Name of Teacher) will be missed by his/her family, friends, students and other teachers. When these types of things happen to people we know, new feelings and thoughts can happen inside of us. Some of these are new feelings we’ve never felt. Maybe we have bad dreams or feel sad. Maybe we feel mad or afraid, or we just don’t want to think that it happened. It is OK to feel sad and cry. It is not OK to make fun of anyone who is sad, scared or cries. We all have different feelings and they should be respected. It is also very important to talk about what happened, because talking will help us to feel better.

Note: It is important to follow the script with an activity, including having the students write cards to the family or draw pictures. It is also important to identify students/staff that are in need of additional counseling services.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Teacher/Staff Member (Secondary)

Hello. Our names are ___________ and ___________. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Your teacher, (Name of Deceased), died as a result of (Cause of death can be mentioned with family approval or if information has been made public from a reliable source).

When things like this happen some people may feel angry, upset, scared, sad, in shock or all of these emotions all wrapped into one. You may see that someone may cry a lot and others don’t cry at all. Maybe some of you just want to stay quiet for a while, and some of you have to talk about what happened and want to get as much information as possible.

There is no “right” way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have (list counselors) who are here every day for you.

Today the (designated counseling area) is the space that we have designated as your spot to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor please ask your teacher for a pass, if you have a friend that may need to talk to someone about how they feel, inform a teacher so that he/she can connect him/her with a counselor.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, other teachers and counselors are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced a loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with you about the loss of your teacher, (Name of Deceased). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends, colleagues and students.
II. Responding to a Death by Suicide
(Student or Staff Member)
Introduction - Crisis Response for Death by Suicide

A death by suicide is a tragedy with a unique set of circumstances. Suicide carries a stigma in society and leaves survivors often with strong feelings of guilt, regret and anger. It is, therefore, not uncommon that family members will ask that the school not disclose suicide as a likely cause of death, especially when the cause of death has not been confirmed by the medical examiner. This may be the case even when the circumstances (e.g., nature of death or presence of a note indicating it was a death by suicide) make it highly likely that the death was a result of suicide. It is generally best to respect the family’s wishes, while still addressing the topic as it is raised by students. For example: “We are all saddened by student’s name death. It is still under investigation [or the family does not agree with the media reports and feels it was an accident]. However, many of you have raised the question of death by suicide and/or death by suicide has been discussed in the news, so let’s talk about suicide in general as it is an important topic.” In this way, the parents’ wishes can be respected, while attending to the students’ comments and addressing the topic.

Response to a death by suicide should not only include the immediate response, but also long-term follow-up and support. Openly discussing the death by suicide sends the message that it is “ok” to talk about the topic. For example, when addressing school personnel, the leader of the response team may say, “there has been a death by suicide of one of our students, John Smith.” Then insert facts as they are known, but omit graphic details. It is important to directly address the death with students; if a teacher does not feel able to talk to his/her students about the death by suicide, a member of the response team should be available to assist with the notification.
Principal/Administrators Checklist for Death by Suicide

Please note: this will not be a typical day.

Step 1

____ Verify death of student/staff and obtain accurate factual account.
   Inform the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and your Director of Leading and Learning.
____ Communicate with the parents/family of the student/staff who died by suicide, if appropriate.
____ Only give this information if the parents/family of the student/staff that has died have given permission. However, if information about student’s death has been on social media and suicide is being mentioned, the topic of suicide should be discussed.
   **Remember, if the death has not been verified as a suicide, this is only an opportunity to talk about risk and protective factors. The discussion should not include details but can address general information about suicide.**
____ Be prepared to activate the school telephone/text/email process to inform school staff of meeting time for the next morning, if necessary.
____ Direct all media to the Office of Government and Community Relations.
____ When informing staff or students, use the phrase “death by suicide” to underscore that you are willing to discuss this difficult topic. Avoid “committed suicide” (which may imply a criminal act). Included in the message should be the importance of sharing any concern for the safety of others with a trusted adult.
____ Meet with school based team and the assigned responders, to develop a response plan.
   Include School Resource Officer, if the school has one, as well as support staff.
____ Be sure someone from the school (counselor, administrator, and/or the crisis response team follows the deceased student’s schedule each period and speaks with the classes. This is critical!
____ Remove student from AS400 with a withdrawal code of W12.
____ Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm.
____ Determine how to inform the students. Some suggestions include: (1) go live on your school’s TV if/when available; (2) announce over the intercom using adaptation of script found in this document; (3) team members and/or staff may read a statement to the class, provided by administration. If needed, crisis response team and/or counselor may remain in the classroom after notifying students.
____ Be highly visible throughout the day.

Step 2

____ Consult with school-based staff and the crisis response team to discuss the need for visiting the student’s home, sending food and/or flowers, and providing counseling/grief referral sources to the family.
____ Hold initial meeting with faculty, staff and crisis response team members, informing them of situation and establishing procedures for responding to the incident (sample staff meeting agenda is included in this packet).
____ Distribute the Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors handout to staff (located at the end of this packet).
____ Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the suicide.
____ Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days.
____ Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed, during the school day.
____ Designate school personnel to assist with student and building safety and supervision.
____ The principal sends home a letter to all parents of all students via Edline or other preferred method of dissemination. This letter should discuss describe common grief reactions, and should strongly encourage them to talk with their child (sample letter is included at the end of this packet).
____ Monitor social media.
____ Check on students who leave school for the day to make certain they do not require further intervention.

**Step 3**

____ Disseminate information – funeral/service details, if appropriate.
____ Debrief with Crisis Response Team Leader – assess follow up needs, identify high needs students and staff.
Additional information to consider

Handling the Student’s Belongings School desks and lockers may serve as uncomfortable reminders of the deceased student. Consider procedures for handling these with input from classmates. Talk to family members to identify a time for returning all personal belongings to the family. Ideally, this can be done after school hours and all belongings can be collected and made available in the front office so that family members are not required to clean out desks, lockers, etc., especially during school hours when other students may be present. Personal belongings can also be delivered by school staff. Have a member of the school crisis team available for the family when they arrive as this will likely be an emotional time for them. Newsletters and other school communications can also serve as traumatic reminders of the death; be sure that the name of the deceased is removed from any mailing lists, listservs, or phone trees.

Spontaneous memorials Spontaneous memorials often “spring up” after any death of a student. Have a timeline and plan for what to do with flowers, notes, and stuffed animals that may be left. For example, items may be picked up every few days for a maximum of 5 days or until after the funeral. Items will be donated to some place of the family’s choosing and/or given to the family. Any notes, cards, and letters should be read by school counselors to ensure that these are appropriate to share with family. It is important that there are no unmonitored sites for posting comments (e.g., large pieces of banner paper left unattended for students to write messages) as negative comments about the death by suicide may be written or children who may be contemplating suicide may post a message to this effect. An unsupervised or anonymous expression makes it nearly impossible to follow-up with students who may benefit from timely intervention. Similar issues may arise with the use of websites or postings on social media sites as a means of commemorating the death of a student. Talk with students about postings and other forms of social media communication, encouraging them to talk to a trusted adult about any inappropriate comments or statements of self-harm. Talk to close friends about alternative ways to remember their friend. These may include participation in a suicide awareness fund-raiser or walk, volunteering at a local helpline, supporting a local program or charity related to an interest of the deceased (e.g., animal shelter or arts program), or participating in a campaign to reduce the stigma of mental health problems.

Ongoing Monitoring It is important to continue to monitor those impacted by the death. Maintain a close eye on students at risk. There will be events that may trigger the return of intense emotions such as special school events (e.g., homecoming, parent day, graduation) or special dates (e.g., birthday, death anniversary). Let students, families, and school personnel know that supportive services will be available as needed, especially at these times.
Faculty Responsibilities
(Death by Suicide)

_____ Inform students as directed by the administration. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss the loss and share their feelings about it, a CRT member will assist if requested.

_____ Answer questions and conduct class discussions. Feel free to say, “I don’t know” when asked a question you cannot answer.

_____ Identify and refer to the CRT any students/staff that may be in distress or at risk, due to the death. Students should be escorted by another student, a staff member or have a CRT member come to get the student.

_____ Limit homework and testing if possible. Maintain stability in the classroom but acknowledge the impact of the death/crisis and grief process. Be flexible while maintaining classroom structure and control.

_____ Consult with school-based counselor or response team members when needed.

_____ Allow students to write letters or make drawings expressing sympathy, to be delivered to the family by the school. Be sure that letters are unsealed and reviewed before delivering, so that negative messages are not sent.
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities
(Death by Suicide)

_____ Assist in preparing letters and handouts to be sent home with students.

_____ Respond, as requested by your principal, to parent/community phone calls. Often, administration and the response team will write a standard response for incoming calls and concerns.

_____ Assist CRT members by providing printed schedules of students, classroom locations, bell schedules, student passes etc.

_____ Remove the deceased student’s name from the school mailing lists, automatic calling machine, computer, guidance list, etc.
Staff Meeting Agenda

The principal is not expected to lead the entire staff meeting. The CRT leader and team will provide any support needed/requested.
This will not be a typical day.

Share factual information about the death, refer to sample staff email for talking points.

- Introduce Crisis Response Team member
- Review crisis response plan
- Review and distribute handouts covering the risk factors, warning signs and protective factors for suicide and common grief reactions that may be displayed by students. Be aware events can trigger emotions in people from previous events in their lives. (Handout in Appendix)
- Review and distribute handouts covering the risk factors, warning signs
- Remind staff to discourage the possible dissemination of inaccurate information
- Discuss procedures for referring students to CRT member/school counselors. Students should be escort to these designated places
- Inform teachers that they may request a counselor to visit the classroom
- Remind staff of the availability of EAP services, have the number or cards available
- Allow time for staff to ask questions and express feelings
Crisis Response Team Packet
Death by Suicide (Student or Staff)

Checklist Crisis Response Team Death by Suicide

____ Team Leader meets with Principal and/or District Administrator who responds to gather details (complete Crisis Response Worksheet) and set up response plan. Gather school bell schedule, map of school, school faculty list, by grade or subject. Gather the information or outside counseling resources, discuss need for student passes. **CRT member should follow the student’s schedule, invite principal.**

____ In the initial organizational meeting include the school-based counselors or other designated staff. Discuss and assign who will provide what services during the day (i.e., class presentations, individual and group counseling, teacher relief, etc.). Response team member should follow student schedule, invite Principal. Discuss as a group if that day’s routine school counselor activities should be canceled or postponed. **CRT members should be highly visible during the school day.**

Only give this information if the parents of the student/staff who died have given permission to do so, or if the suicide is public knowledge. If information about the student’s death is on social media and suicide is being discussed, this needs to be addressed. If the death has not been verified as a suicide, this is an opportunity to talk about suicide and discuss risks.

____ Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm. Collaboratively identify high risk or most affected students. In addition to identifying close friends, also identify any students who were recently in major conflict with the deceased. Remember to include students who have experienced a recent loss, ESE students, those who have previously completed a risk assessment or traumatic events.

____ Team Leader provides each CRT member with a copy of the school’s master schedule, bell schedule, a map of the school, a faculty list with grade and subject taught, (if needed), a school telephone list, and handouts listing outside counseling sources. Be sure to have an adequate supply of school hall passes available for use.

Note: If the crisis involves a trauma situation, identify the “more exposed” and the “most exposed” (i.e., eyewitnesses, siblings, close friends, etc.) who may benefit from participating in a debriefing session at a later time.

____ Determine if there are siblings or relatives/close friends at other schools that may need services. If so, call those schools to alert their staff, including previous teachers and coaches.
On the first day of the crisis and for subsequent days, have school-based staff closely monitor the absentee list, watching for any high-risk students who may have stayed home. Call parents when necessary and be particularly watchful for any groups of affected students who stayed home and are gathering without supervision at one of the student’s houses.

Inform the staff how to refer and send students for counseling. Clear structure and organization will help reduce stress and encourage the return of equilibrium at the school.

Observe and assess potentially high-risk students. Contact parents. Refer for outside help as needed.

CRT member follows the class schedule of the student who died at least until the majority of students have been given the opportunity to ask questions and participate in class discussions.

Provide support for teachers and staff members as requested. This may include brief classroom breaks or counseling.

Respond to staff questions regarding grief and common reactions. Debrief faculty if requested by administration.

Keep a list/log of all students who received crisis team/guidance services. Review list at the end of each day—particularly with school based school counselor(s)—to ensure that follow-up counseling/services are provided as needed.

Provide counseling services at school the day of and after the memorial service. There is often a heightened grief reaction at this time.

Debrief and plan as a team at the end of each day. Allow time for sharing of feelings and emotional reactions/frustrations among the team members. Ask “what worked” and “what would we do differently?”. There are always lessons and opportunities to learn in each crisis situation. **Monitor CRT members for signs of compassion fatigue.**
Please read before beginning script

Talking about the suicide

When discussing death by suicide, listening is far more important than talking. Emotions can be intense and the listener should be compassionate, validating more than trying to solve the grief. Often children and adults raise the question of “why?” as well as “what could I have done to prevent the death?” There are no easy answers to these questions. In many cases, these questions are rhetorical and intended to voice feelings of helplessness or personal regrets. As these questions are raised, it is important to underscore the relationship between suicide and mental illness.

There is truly nothing anyone can say that will remove the grief, but talking about the death and listening to students as they share their feelings can be a first step to healing. Thank you for your time and support of the schools’ students and staff.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student Verified Suicide - Secondary

Hello. Our Names are ____________ and ____________. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Yesterday one of your classmates, (Name of Student) died as a result of suicide (Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).

You may be feeling a variety of things right now: confusion, asking yourself ‘why’ questions that can never be fully answered, maybe feeling angry that he/she took his/her life. Some of you may feel very sad, while others may feel numb, not wanting to believe that this really happened. You may be asking yourself if you should have known; could I have stopped him/her. These thoughts and feelings are normal.

We don’t always know why a person chooses to take his/her life, but we do know that suicide is never the answer to any problems. It is important to remember that the suicide is not your fault. Only the person who made the choice to take their life is responsible for his/her actions. Suicide is a tragedy that leaves many victims behind-family and friends. Most people who are suicidal really don’t want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing and unfortunately lose sight of the choices that are available to them. There are always other choices. Suicide is never an acceptable choice. We can help prevent future tragedies like this by realizing that we have the power to get help for ourselves and others who are feeling suicidal. Therefore, if you or anyone you know is thinking or talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. The National Suicide Hotline is 1-800-273-8255 or locally you can dial 211.

There is no “right” way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have (List Counselors) who are here every day for you.

Today the (Designated Counseling Area) is the space that we have designated as a place to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor, please ask your teacher for a pass.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, teachers and counselor are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other. Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way. Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with you about the loss of your classmate, (Name of Deceased). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.
Please read before beginning script

Talking about the suicide When discussing death by suicide, listening is far more important than talking. Emotions can be intense and the listener should be compassionate, validating more than trying to solve the grief. Often children and adults raise the question of “why?” as well as “what could I have done to prevent the death?” There are no easy answers to these questions. In many cases, these questions are rhetorical and intended to voice feelings of helplessness or personal regrets. As these questions are raised, it is important to underscore the relationship between suicide and mental illness.

There is truly nothing anyone can say that will remove the grief, but talking about the death and listening to students as they share their feelings can be a first step to healing. Thank you for your time and support of the school’s students and staff.
Sample Classroom Script Death of a Student Suspected Suicide

Hello. Our Names are ___________ and ___________. We are here to talk about something that many of you may have already heard about. Yesterday one of your classmates, (Name of Student) died. The cause of death has not been verified at this time. However, suicide has been mentioned on social media and in conversations heard around school. Because suicide has been discussed let’s talk about some facts and information about suicide. (Cause of death can only be revealed with the approval of the family of the deceased or if the information has been made public by a reliable source).

Some of you may feel very sad, while others may feel numb, not wanting to believe that this really happened. We want to make sure we talk about this very difficult topic.

Therefore, if you or anyone you know is thinking or talking about wanting to hurt themselves, please tell your teacher, school counselor or parent, immediately. The National Suicide Hotline is 1-800-273-8255 or locally you can dial 211.

It is important that you take care of yourself.

There is no “right” way to react to death, the important thing to recognize is how you feel and know that there are people here that care a lot about you and want to help you get through whatever it is that you are feeling.

In your school you have (List Counselors) who are here every day for you.

Today the (Designated Counseling Area) is the space that we have designated as a place to grieve, support each other or ask questions. If you feel that you need to see a counselor, please ask you teacher for a pass.

This may be a difficult day for many of you, please know that your administrators, teachers and counselor are all here to help you.

Some of you may have experienced loss in the past and so this may trigger some other feelings.

Please respect each other and understand that we may not all grieve the same way.

Thank you for allowing us the time to come to your classroom and speak with your about the loss of your classmate, (Name of Deceased). He/she will be greatly missed by his/her family, friends and teachers.
## Talking Points for Students and Staff after a Suicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talking Points</th>
<th>What to Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give accurate information about suicide.</td>
<td>Suicide is not caused by a single event such as fighting with parents, a bad grade, or the breakup of a relationship. In most cases, suicide is caused by mental health disorders like depression or substance abuse. Mental health disorders affect the way people feel and prevent them from thinking clearly and rationally. Having a mental health disorder is nothing to be ashamed of. There are effective treatments to help people who have mental health disorders or substance abuse problems. Suicide is never the answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide is a complicated behavior. Help students understand the complexities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address blaming and scapegoating.</td>
<td>Blaming others for the suicide is wrong and it is not fair. Doing that can hurt another person deeply. Let’s focus on talking about the feelings we are left with after_______________’s death and figure out the best way to manage them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not talk about the method.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about the method can create images that are upsetting, and it may increase the risk of imitative behavior by vulnerable youth.</td>
<td>Let’s focus on talking about the feelings we are left with after_______________’s death and figure out the best way to manage them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address anger.</td>
<td>It’s OK to feel angry. These feelings are normal, and it doesn’t mean you didn’t care about______. You can be angry at someone’s behavior and still care deeply about that person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept expressions of anger at the deceased. Help students understand that</td>
<td>This death is not your fault. We cannot always see the signs because a suicidal person may hide them well. We cannot always predict someone’s behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these feelings are normal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address feelings of responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students understand that the only person responsible for the suicide is</td>
<td>We are always here to help you through any problem, no matter what. Who are the people you would go to if you or a friend were feeling worried, depressed, or had thoughts of suicide? <strong>Call 211 for assistance.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the deceased.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassure those who have exaggerated feelings of responsibility, such as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinking they should have done something to save the deceased or seen the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>signs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage help-seeking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to seek help from a trusted adult if they or a friend are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeling depressed or suicidal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following a Suicide: Stages of Grief

**Shock and denial:** At first there may be minimal responses to the death. The reality of the death has yet to be absorbed.

*Suggested Response:* Acknowledge the shock, anticipate the reactions to come, demonstrate a willingness to talk when students are ready.

**Anger and Protection:** Students want someone to blame for this and may openly express/direct anger at the deceased’s parents/teachers/boyfriend/girlfriend.

*Suggested Response:* Listen to their concerns and feelings. Gently explain that it is natural to want to find a reason for things we don’t understand. Suggest that suicide is a very complicated human behavior and that there are always multiple reasons.

**Guilt:** Students close to the deceased may blame themselves for not doing enough or knowing how serious the situation was. Students may also feel guilty if they feel that they have contributed to the problem in some way.

*Suggested Response:* Remind students that only the person who kills him/herself is responsible for having made that decision.

**Anger at the Deceased:** This is surprisingly common among close friends as well as those who were not close to the deceased.

*Suggested Response:* Allowing and acknowledging some expression of anger is helpful. Explain that this is normal stage of grieving. Acknowledging the anger often lessens the intensity.

**Anxiety:** Students sometimes start to worry about themselves and/or other friends. Fear of a contagion happening may increase the anxiety in other students.

*Suggested Response:* This is an opportunity to work with students who display some anxiety and teach them healthy coping strategies. Remind students that there are counselors available at school every day to listen and help them with whatever anxiety they may be experiencing. Practice problem solving.

**Loneliness:** Those closest to the deceased may find it almost impossible to return to a normal routine, and may even resent those who appear to be having fun. They may feel empty, lost, totally disconnected. They may become obsessed with keeping memory of their friend alive.

*Suggested Response:* Notice anyone who seems to be isolating from others and reach out to them. Connect them with a positive peer, as a means of support.
## Suicide Warning Signs for School Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suicide Early Warning Signs</th>
<th>Suicide Late Warning Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Withdrawal from friends and family</td>
<td>1. Actually talking about suicide or having a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preoccupation with death</td>
<td>2. Exhibiting impulsivity such as violent actions, rebellious behaviors or running away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marked personality change and serious mood changes</td>
<td>3. Refusing help, feeling “beyond help”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>4. Complaining about being a bad person;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Difficulties in school (decline in quality of work, behavior, attendance)</td>
<td>5. Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Change in eating and sleeping habits</td>
<td>6. Giving away favorite possessions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Loss of interest in pleasurable activities</td>
<td>7. Giving verbal hints such as “I won’t be a problem for you much longer”, “Nothing matters”, “It’s no use”, and “I won’t see you again”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.</td>
<td>8. Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression – this may be a sign that the student has already made the decision to escape all problems by ending his/her life and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Persistence of boredom</td>
<td>9. Saying “I am going to kill myself”, “I wish I were dead”, or “I shouldn’t have been born”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Loss of interest in things one cares about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memorial Guidelines Following a Suicide

Students and staff should be given the opportunity to participate in activities to remember the student who died. The activity can be prevention-oriented, including the following:

____ Donate money to charities, crisis support centers, or youth support programs;
____ Create an album of positive memories of the deceased that can be given to the family;
____ Volunteer with a local charity, community agency, or crisis center; and
____ Encourage impacted students, with parental permission, to attend the funeral, if appropriate. Memorials should not glorify, glamorize, or sensationalize the death.

Therefore, it is recommended you avoid the following

____ Memorial services within the school building
____ Flying flags at half-staff (typically takes an order of the Governor to fly flags at half-staff)
____ Large assemblies about the victim or a moment of silence at assemblies
____ Dedication of sports events or other events
____ Permanent markers or memorials of any kind, i.e., at the student’s locker; and
____ Shrines of any kind.
III. APPENDIX
Psychological First Aid

Children and adolescents react to trauma in many different ways. Some may become increasingly anxious, confused, hopeless and restless. Early intervention with youth following a natural disaster will help promote a safe and hopeful environment. Psychological First Aid is an evidence-informed approach for assisting children, adolescents, adults and families in the aftermath of disaster. Please review the following steps:

Listen
Respond to questions and concerns with honesty. Stick to the facts of the event and only discuss information that will positively contribute to the emotional well-being of the child. Observe changes in behaviors/mood, school performance, relationships with classmates and school-based activities. Be patient and be prepared to explain things more than once.

Protect
Answer questions simply and honestly using age appropriate responses. Provide students an opportunity to express themselves by facilitating classroom discussions, art activities or play. Pay extra attention to anything in the child’s environment that may re-traumatize the child. Limit students’ access to television and internet coverage of the incident, the disaster and any recovery efforts.

Connect
Check in with students on a regular basis. Find resources that can offer support to your students and the classroom. Keep the communication lines open with caregivers, parents, siblings, other teachers and relatives. Encourage student involvement in interactive school activities such as sports, clubs and student-community projects. This will allow students to meet other students and feel a part of something.

Model
Children model behaviors. How you cope with your emotions surrounding the event will influence how your students will cope and behave. Find practical ways to empower students and their families. Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation while emphasizing that people can learn to cope with the worse of situations. If you are hopeful and positive, your students will be as well.

Teach
Explain that children and adults understand and react differently to traumatic events and disasters. Help children understand that there is no right way to react to disaster. Encourage students to identify and use positive coping strategies. Help youth problem solve. Encourage physical activities and combine these activities with useful tasks.
7 Stages of Grief (Not necessarily in this order)

1. **SHOCK & DENIAL**
   You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level, or in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

2. **PAIN & GUILT**
   As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully, and not hide it, avoid it, or escape from it with alcohol or drugs. You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or did not do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

3. **ANGER & BARGAINING**
   Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. Please try to control this, as permanent damage to your relationships may result. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion. You may rail against fate, questioning “Why Me?” You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair (“I will never drink again if you just bring him back”).

4. **DEPRESSION, REFLECTION, LONELINESS**
   Just when your friends may think you should be getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be “talked out of it” by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this state of grieving. During this time, you finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

5. **THE UPWARD TURN**
   As you start to adjust to life without your dear one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your depression begins to lift slightly.

6. **RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH**
   As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing your life without him or her.

7. **ACCEPTANCE & HOPE**
   During this, the last of the seven stages in this grief model, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experience, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward. You
will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without pain; sadness, yes, but the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.
Overview: Children’s reaction to a trauma will involve not only the impact of the catastrophe on their lives (what they saw, heard, felt, smelled and so on) but a sense of crisis over their parent’s reaction.

**Birth -2 Years**
1. High anxiety levels manifested in crying, biting, throwing objects, thumb sucking, and agitated behavior
2. While it is unlikely that the child will retain a strong mental memory of the trauma, the child may retain a physical memory.

**2 Years – 6 Years: Pre-school**
1. Children may not have the same level of denial as adults so they take in the catastrophe more swiftly.
2. Engage in reenactments and play about the traumatic event.
3. Anxious attachment behaviors are exhibited toward caretakers.
4. May become mute, withdrawn and still.
5. Manifest a short, but repeated “sadness spans.”
6. Regression in physical independence.
7. Sleep disturbances, particularly nightmares, are common.
8. Any change in daily routines may be seen as threatening.

**6 Years – 10 Years: School Age**
1. Play continues to be the primary method of expression.
2. Inability to concentrate in school.
3. Radical changes in behavior may result.
4. May fantasize about event with “savior” ending.
5. Withdrawal of trust from adults.
6. May become tentative in growth towards independence.
7. Internal body dysfunctions are normal – headaches, stomach aches, dizziness.
How Children View Death

Newborn to Age 2
- will sense the changes in the atmosphere at home and in daily routine
- will experience the feelings of deprivation of the presence of significant people
- may respond with irritability, change in sleeping, eating and eliminating patterns

Age 2 - 6
- think death is reversible, not permanent
- often connect events that have no relationship with each other
- exhibit magical thinking

Age 6 – 9
- most view death as final
- can understand a more detailed description as to why/how the person died
- view death in a violent sense, often personifying death as a skeleton or monster that comes after you
- may feel death is contagious

Age 9 – 12
- see death as final and begin to understand the possibility of their own death
- may view death as a punishment
- interested in the physical aspects of dying
- may express concerns about the effect of the death on them with regard to finances and lifestyle; more future oriented
- may conceal the fact of death in the family to peers

Adolescents
- usually able to view death on an adult level – see death as universal; inevitable
- seen in the context of developmental tasks of separation/individuation
- may experience confusion and acting out behaviors
- may lack peer support
The Grieving Elementary School Student

Elementary-aged students are concrete thinkers who are beginning to develop logical thinking patterns along with increased language and cognitive ability. After a death, they begin questioning how their lives will be different, what will be the same, and how one knows the person is really dead. They are usually interested in how the body works and as specific questions like: “Did his blood get all over the windshield?” Or, “Will her hair fall out now that she is dead?” It is not unusual for their questions and play to be graphic and gory, displaying a fear of bodily harm and mutilation. Although their discussions and play can be unsettling to teachers and parents, it is important to give simple, honest answers to their questions.

The overwhelming concern with the body and what is happening to it may bring about the desire to be with the deceased person. For example, it is not unusual for children to say things like, “I wish I was dead so I could be with daddy.” Statements like this do not necessarily mean the child is suicidal or really wants to die; rather, they are most often expressions of deep longing for the deceased. However, any time a child talks about wanting to die, it should be taken seriously and explored. Discerning whether the child is expressing a normal, common desire to be with the lost loved one, or is truly at risk of endangering her own life may be difficult. If you have any concerns, request professional intervention immediately.

While 6 to 12 year olds want to see death as reversible, they are also beginning to understand that it is final. Because they are beginning to understand the permanence of the death, they may begin to worry about their own and others’ deaths. They often perceive death as a punishment for something they did, and therefore, they often associate guilt with death. They may think “If only I’d been a better daughter or son, maybe my mom would still be alive.”

They are beginning to become more socially aware, and look to others to see if they are acting or responding correctly. The family is still the main security and support but their role in the family has changed and they need to figure out what their new role is. Because school is such an integral part of the student’s life, and because the academic expectation is increasing, you may notice that grieving students have difficulty attending, staying focused, remembering what was said and completing assignments. These are normal grief responses and should be expected and planned for. Students may also appear withdrawn or depressed. Many grieving students have difficulty getting to sleep, wake up during the night, have night terrors or awaken very early. Teachers may notice these students come to school tired.

Common Behaviors to Expect

- Regression to earlier behaviors
- Fighting, anger
- Difficulty in paying attention and concentrating
- Daydreaming
- Not completing homework or assignments
- Sleepiness
- Withdrawal
How to Help

- Answer questions as clearly and accurately as possible
- Provide art, journal, music and dance activities
- Make time for physical outlets: sports, games, walks, etc.
- Help the student identify and use support systems
- Work with the student around academic work load
- Encourage the student to take a break and have some alone time
- Allow for expressions of feelings and emotions
- Maintain routines and structure but allow for flexibility
- Give the student choices whenever possible
- Let the student know you care and are thinking about him/her
- Assign the student a buddy who can work with him/her
- Create a “safe space” where a student can go when needed

From Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers
The Dougy Center The National Center for Grieving Children
The Grieving Middle School Student

Middle school students are, under the best conditions, experiencing a great deal of turmoil due to the physical and hormonal changes in their bodies. Grieving students must deal with the additional stress of the grief process. Because of the many physical changes, pre-adolescents tend to have a variety of physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach problems, sleep disturbances and changes in eating patterns.

They generally experience a range of emotional reactions. In addition, they may be beginning to get their primary support from friends rather than family, as in the past. The normal process of moving away from family towards friends for support is altered when a death impacts them. They want very much to be like their peers and not to be treated differently just because of the death in their family. They often become confused about how and from whom they can get support.

Although preteen students are much more verbal and cognitively process information at a higher level, physical outlets are still very important to the preteen student. They comprehend that death is final and unavoidable. This may provoke feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and may increase risk-taking behaviors. These students are apt to exhibit concerns about the survivors and what their future holds.

Common Behaviors to Expect
- Argumentative
- Withdrawal, sullenness
- Anger, fighting
- Sleepiness
- Lack of concentration and attentiveness
- Risk-taking behaviors (drugs, sexual acting out, stealing)
- Unpredictable ups and downs, or moodiness
- Erratic, inconsistent reactions

How to Help
- Expect and accept mood swings
- Provide a supportive environment where the student can share, when needed
- Anticipate increased physical concerns, including illness and body aches and pains
- Allow the student to choose with whom or how she gets support
- Encourage participation in a support group
- Allow flexibility in completing school work

From Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers
The Dougy Center The National Center for Grieving Childre
The Grieving High School Student

High school students are often philosophical about life and death and believe that death won’t happen to them. While functioning at the formal operational stage of cognitive development, they appear to use “adult” approaches of problem solving and abstract thinking in dealing with their grief. However, it is important to remember that high school students are not yet adults. In their attempts to make sense of the world and what has happened to them, you may see depression, denial, anger, risk-taking and acting-out behaviors. You may see teens fighting against their vulnerability because they want very much to be independent. It is not unusual for people to assume that a teen will become responsible for the family. A boy whose father has died may be told that he is now “the man of the house.” Or, a girl whose mother has died may find out that she is expected to “take care of her dad and siblings.”

Common Behaviors to Expect

- Withdrawal from parents and other adults
- Angry outbursts
- Increased risk-taking behaviors (substances, reckless driving, sexual behaviors)
- Pushing the limits of rules
- Lack of concentration; inability to focus
- Hanging out with a small group of friends
- Sad face, evidence of crying
- Sleepiness, exhaustion

How to Help

- Allow for regression and dependency
- Encourage expression of feelings such as sorrow, anger, guilt, regret
- Understand and allow for variation in maturity level
- Answer questions honestly and provide factual information
- Model appropriate responses, showing the students your own grief
- Avoid power struggles and allow choices
- Help students understand and resolve feelings of helplessness
- Assist students with plans for completion of assignments
- Allow for some flexibility in assignments, e.g. be willing to adapt assignments to topics relevant to a student’s current experience.

From Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers
The Dougy Center The National Center for Grieving Children
Normal Feelings for Children about Death

Anxiety
The death may produce anxiety about being left alone for periods of time with the fear of being deserted.

Shock
Even if the death is anticipated, the death is still initially a shock.

Stressful
The death of a parent is the single most stressful event in a child’s life. Children have very limited life experiences with death and a parent’s death may be the first death that he or she has ever experienced.

Concern
Children may be very concerned about the death of the remaining parent/other family members.

Anger
Anger is pervasive to family members, friends and acquaintances. The child may be angry at the surviving parent and also angry at the deceased parent for leaving him or her.

Abandoned
The child may feel insecure and alone.

Guilt
Children may grieve a relationship that “might have been.” They may grieve an ambivalent relationship, or a positive relationship that did not exist. They may also feel guilty if the relationship was not a positive one.

Isolated
A child may feel alone because he or she may feel his or her emotions cannot be shared with family members for fear of upsetting them.

Fear
A child may be worried about who will take care of him or her. Your child may question, “What will become of me?”

Worried
Children often worry about who else will die and leave them.

Support Activities

Support Activities

**Spontaneous Writing**
Cut long pieces of mural paper, enough for multiple students to participate at the same time. This provides an opportunity for students to write messages to the family or draw pictures. The pieces of paper could be rolled up and given to the family as a gift from the classmates and/or students.

**Safe Box**
Creating a safe box is a creative way for students to share their feelings and provide a sense of empowerment. Students decorate old shoe boxes and place pictures inside, drawings, photos, or writings, which bring them peace. The object is to create a space where the child feels safe and enjoys looking at.

**Memory Box**
This is especially useful for older children. Along the same lines as creating a safety box, students can create a memory box and decorate it with images, quotes or objects that remind them of the deceased. Inside the box could be objects, special interests, news articles, etc.

**Grief Books**
Reading to children about grief can be very useful in the healing process, especially with very young children. Children in Pre-K through 2nd grade may not understand the permanency of death. Finding the right grief book could help the children understand what happened. Check with Media Specialist.

**Buddy System**
Pairing students with other students in their grade level or classroom to go to and from class, make trips to the office or running errands, provides students with a sense of safety. It relieves the student from being alone.
Grief Activity – Elementary – Age Students Creating My “Safe Box”

Concept

As students recover from a traumatic event or loss they need to find ways to feel safe and secure. Students can create a “safe box” in which they can place a variety of objects or photos that help them feel protected and safe.

Required Materials:

- Shoe Box or empty box
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- White paper
- Colored sheets of paper
- Magazines or pictures

Step-by-Step

Students select a box they would like to decorate
Decorate the outside of box with paper, markers, crayons or pictures
Place objects or images that remind students of feeling safe and peaceful
Have students tell the story of their box

Connect

Discuss with students the significance of feeling safe and remind them of all the things that are meaningful in their life. Teachers can display boxes in the classroom for a short period of time before students are allowed to take them home.
Creating a “Memory Box”

Concept

A creative way for students to deal with loss and remember the positive. Students can create a memory box to share their experiences with other students, as well as providing an outlet for creative expression about their feelings.

Required Materials:

- Shoe Box or empty box
- Markers, crayons or color pencils
- White paper
- Color construction paper
- Magazines or pictures
- Newspaper clippings

Step-by-Step

- Students select a box they would like to decorate
- Students decorate the box with paper, markers, crayons or pictures
- Students place objects, photos, letters of who they would like to remember
- Have students tell a memory they placed in the box.
  - *Allow students to be creative. Teachers may elect to have students work in groups as well as individually.

Connect

Teachers and/or counselors can use this activity to allow students time to share their memories. Please make sure that information placed inside the box and materials used to decorate the outside of box are appropriate. Do not allow profanity or explicit content. Encourage students to use positive and healthy ways of expression.
Draw a picture and use words to answer the questions.

**What Happened?**

**What could help you feel better?**
Memorial Activities

Following a traumatic experience, natural disaster, or death of a loved one, many students may express their desire to “do something.” School memorial activities may serve as an important part of the healing process. How a school approaches a memorial activity can make a difference in the healing process for students and faculty alike. Memorials should promote positive experience and not re-traumatize students or staff participating in the activities.

Student lead activities have the most desirable impact with the direction of a responsible school employee. Consider the following when planning your school memorial activity.

Temporary Memorials

A temporary memorial will provide students and faculty with an opportunity to mourn and celebrate the life lost, without having a permanent reminder of the loss. Students may place flowers, stuffed animals or other tokens of remembrance in a special hallway, in front of a classroom or other location on the school campus. This is a natural memorial that should be temporary. It is recommended that this natural memorial be removed following the funeral. School personnel may arrange for the items to be delivered to the family of the deceased. Additionally, this provides students the opportunity to provide something for the family as a collective group.

School Initiatives

Following the death of a student or staff member, schools have the opportunity to provide activities that have positive impact. For example, the homicide of a student may prompt a “Youth Violence Prevention Week” that may incorporate pep rallies on gun safety, in-services for teachers, and an art contest for students to display their prevention efforts in the memory of their classmate, friend, or teacher.

Teachers may also provide writing assignments or research projects following an incident, natural disaster or community loss. Students may be encouraged to write post cards or letters to relief workers or military personnel. Older students may want to take part in government by writing letters of support or concern to local, state and national leaders.

Permanent Memorials

It is recommended that schools do not create permanent memorials gardens, tree-planting, plaques, etc., are best reserved for the community. Providing a temporary memorial at school provides students with the option not to participate and decreases the opportunity for re-exposure to traumatic events. Permanent memorials may provide an on-going visual reminder of the loss for students and staff, creating more harm than good. Participating in memorials should be a choice, not a mandate.
Additional Recommended Memorial Activities for students

- Donate money to a charity or community agency
- Volunteer to assist a local agency in providing a community service
Natural Disasters/Violence Developmental Responses After a Natural Disaster

Preschoolers—thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal from friends and routines.

Elementary School Children—irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.

Adolescents—sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.

A minority of children may be at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Symptoms can include those listed above as well as re-experiencing the disaster during play and/or dreams; anticipating or feeling that the disaster is happening again; avoiding reminders of the disaster; general numbness to emotional topics; and increased arousal symptoms such as inability to concentrate and startle reactions. Although rare, some adolescents may also be at increased risk of suicide if they suffer from serious mental health problems like PTSD or depression. Again, adults should seek professional mental health help for children exhibiting these symptoms.

Immediately Following a Natural Disaster: Information for Parents and Teachers

▪ Remain calm and reassuring
▪ Acknowledge and normalize their feelings
▪ Encourage children to talk about disaster-related events
▪ Promote positive coping and problem-solving skills
▪ Emphasize children’s resiliency
▪ Strengthen children’s friendship and peer support
▪ Take care of your own needs

Immediately Following a Natural Disaster: Specific Information for Schools

▪ Identify children who are at high risk and plan interventions
▪ Provide time for students to discuss the disaster
▪ Allow time for staff to discuss their feelings and share their experiences

Helping Children Adjust to Relocation after a Natural Disaster

The frequent need to relocate after a disaster creates unique coping challenges. It may contribute to the social, environmental, and psychological stress experienced by children and their families. Children will be most impacted by the reactions of their parents and other family members, the duration of the relocation, their natural coping style and emotional reactivity, and their ability to stay connected with friends and other familiar people and activities. To the extent possible parents and other caregivers should:
Provide opportunities for children to see friends.

- Bring personal items that the child values when staying in temporary housing.
- Establish some daily routines so that the child is able to have a sense of what to expect (including returning to school as soon as possible).
- Provide opportunities for children to share their ideas and listen carefully to their concerns or fears.
- Be sensitive to the disruption that relocation may cause and be responsive to the child’s needs.
- Consider the developmental level and unique experiences of each child; it is important to remember that as children vary, so will their responses to the disruption of relocation.

In addition, school personnel should:

- Determine the status of every child in the school. Contact each child who is absent and keep a record. Identify the needs of children whose home was destroyed or damaged.
- Find out the phone numbers and addresses of every student that had to relocate. Encourage classmates to write notes or make phone calls.
- Develop an advisory committee of students to report back to school staff about what resources and changes in routines will help students cope.
- Listen to and observe students’ behavior. It takes time for children to understand and adjust to disasters. It is perfectly normal for them to discuss the event over and over again. Provide opportunities for children to discuss how they are coping. Use creative arts (e.g., drama, art, music, photography) to help them express their emotions.
- Help connect families to community resources. Bring agencies into the school that can deal with needs related to housing, finances, and insurance. Ensure that children get any necessary medical and emotional assistance.
- Increase staffing for before and after school care. If possible, extend the service for additional hours and even on weekends.
- Incorporate information about the disaster into related subject areas, as appropriate. Science, math, history, and language arts are especially relevant.

Adapted from Lazarus, P. J., & Jimerson, S. R., Brock, S. E. (2002). Natural Disasters. In S. E. Brock, P.

Talking to Children About Violence Tips for Parents and Teachers

High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel in danger or worry that their friends or loved-ones are at risk. They will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security and talking with them about their fears.

1. **Reassure children that they are safe.** Emphasize that schools are very safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.

2. **Make time to talk.** Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Be patient. Children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. Some children prefer writing, playing music, or doing an art project as an outlet. Young children may need concrete activities (such as drawing, looking at picture books, or imaginative play) to help them identify and express their feelings.

3. **Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate.**
   - **Early elementary school** children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of school safety like reminding children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground, and emergency drills practiced during the school day.
   - **Upper elementary and early middle school** children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools.
   - **Upper middle school and high school** students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g. not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, and accessing support for emotional needs.

4. **Review safety procedures.** This should include procedures and safeguards at school and at home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they go if they feel threatened or at risk.

5. **Observe children’s emotional state.** Some children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can indicate a child’s level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some children may be at risk for more intense reactions. Children who
have had a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or other mental illness, or with special needs may be at greater risk for severe reactions than others. Seek the help of mental health professional if you are at all concerned.

6. **Limit television viewing of these events.** Limit television viewing and be aware if the television is on in common areas. Developmentally inappropriate information can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children. Adults also need to be mindful of the content of conversations that they have with each other in front of children, even teenagers, and limit their exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.

7. **Maintain a normal routine.** Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities but don’t push them if they seem overwhelmed.

**Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children**

- **Schools are safe places.** School staff work with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- **The school building is safe because …** (cite specific school procedures).
- **We all play a role in the school safety.** Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- **There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping.** You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- **Don’t dwell on the worst possibilities.** Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the possibility of something happening and the probability that it will affect our school.
- **Senseless violence is hard for everyone to understand.** Doing things that you enjoy, sticking to your normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about the event.
- **Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others.** They may be unable to handle their anger, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from mental illness. Adults (parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, faith leaders) work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry and to stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- **Stay away from guns and other weapons.** Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.
- **Violence is never a solution to personal problems.** Students can be part of the positive solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict mediation skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

**National Association of School Psychologists, 2006**
Supporting Children’s Recovery after a Hurricane

Children will react differently to a hurricane and its aftermath depending on their age, developmental level, and prior experiences. Some will withdraw, while others will have angry outbursts. Still others will become agitated or irritable. Parents should be sensitive to each child's coping style. The following are typical reactions children exhibit following a hurricane or other natural disaster:

- Fear and worry about their safety and the safety of others, including pets.
- Fear of separation from family members.
- Clinging to parents, siblings or teachers.
- Worry that another hurricane will come.
- Increase in activity level.
- Trouble concentrating or paying attention.
- Withdrawal from others.
- Angry outbursts or tantrums.
- Aggression toward parents, siblings or friends.
- Increase in physical complaints, such as headaches and stomach aches.
- Change in school performance.
- Long-lasting focus on the hurricane, such as talking repeatedly about it or acting out the event in play.
- Increased sensitivity to sounds of thunder, wind, rain or things crashing.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Changes in appetite.
- Lack of interest in usual activities, even playing with friends.
- Returning to earlier behaviors, such as baby talk, bedwetting or tantrums.
- Increase in teens' risky behaviors, such as drinking alcohol, using substances, harming themselves or engaging in dangerous activities.
Recommendations for Helping Children Cope After a Disaster

- Refrain from discussing disturbing details related to the disaster with other staff members in the presence of students.
- Provide opportunities for children to share their experiences.
- Involve children in activities that allow them to make choices and resume a sense of control over their environment.
- Incorporate information about the disaster into related subject areas, as appropriate.
- Listen and observe student behaviors.
- Consider developmental level and unique experiences of each child.
- Involve students in recovery-related activities and projects.
- For displaced children, investigate resources to allow a return to activities they previously enjoyed.
- Talk to displaced children about how they would like to handle questions from new friends about their disaster experience.
- Maintain normalcy, routine and stability.
- Create an environment of safety.
- Be calm, be hopeful, and be friendly.
- Be sensitive to diverse cultural and religious traditions regarding tragedy and loss.
- Be honest, but avoid discussing any disturbing details.
- Avoid repeated exposure to details of the disaster via media.
- Listen to child’s fears and feelings surrounding the disaster.
- Give the children an opportunity to tell their story.
- Understand that children deal with trauma in their own unique way.
10 Tips for Building Resilience in Children and Teens

We all can develop resilience, and we can help our children develop it as well. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned over time. Following are tips to building resilience.

1. **Make connections**

   Teach your child how to make friends, including the skill of empathy, or feeling another's pain. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get friends. Build a strong family network to support your child through his or her inevitable disappointments and hurts. At school, watch to make sure that one child is not being isolated. Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience. Some find comfort in connecting with a higher power, whether through organized religion or privately and you may wish to introduce your child to your own traditions of worship.

2. **Help your child by having him or her help others**

   Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage your child in age-appropriate volunteer work, or ask for assistance yourself with some task that he or she can master. At school, brainstorm with children about ways they can help others.

3. **Maintain a daily routine**

   Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives. Encourage your child to develop his or her own routines.

4. **Take a break**

   While it is important to stick to routines, endlessly worrying can be counter-productive. Teach your child how to focus on something besides what's worrying him. Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be news, the Internet or overheard conversations, and make sure your child takes a break from those things if they trouble her. Although schools are being held accountable for performance on standardized tests, build in unstructured time during the school day to allow children to be creative.

5. **Teach your child self-care**

   Make yourself a good example, and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest. Make sure your child has time to have fun, and make sure that your child hasn't scheduled every moment of his or her life with no "down time" to relax. Caring for oneself and even having fun will help your child stay balanced and better deal with stressful times.
6. **Move toward your goals**

Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then to move toward them one step at a time. Moving toward that goal — even if it's a tiny step — and receiving praise for doing so will focus your child on what he or she has accomplished rather than on what hasn't been accomplished, and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges. At school, break down large assignments into small, achievable goals for younger children, and for older children, acknowledge accomplishments on the way to larger goals.

7. **Nurture a positive self-view**

Help your child remember ways that he or she has successfully handled hardships in the past and then help him understand that these past challenges help him build the strength to handle future challenges. Help your child learn to trust himself to solve problems and make appropriate decisions. Teach your child to see the humor in life, and the ability to laugh at one's self. At school, help children see how their individual accomplishments contribute to the wellbeing of the class as a whole.

8. **Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook**

Even when your child is facing very painful events, help him look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Although your child may be too young to consider a long-term look on his own, help him or her see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good. An optimistic and positive outlook enables your child to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times. In school, use history to show that life moves on after bad events.

9. **Look for opportunities for self-discovery**

Tough times are often the times when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever he is facing can teach him "what he is made of." At school, consider leading discussions of what each student has learned after facing down a tough situation.

10. **Accept that change is part of living**

Change often can be scary for children and teens. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable. In school, point out how students have changed as they moved up in grade levels and discuss how that change has had an impact on the students.

IV. CRISIS TEAM MANUAL
FORMS

________________________________________
NAME
(Please save document under the student/employee’s name)
Principal/Administration Crisis Response Team Checklist

**Step 1**

- [ ] Verify crisis and obtain accurate factual account. If the death is by suicide, please refer to the tab marked Suicide.

- [ ] Inform the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and your Director of Leading and Learning.

- [ ] Communicate with the parents/families of the person who died, (student or staff) or any directly affected families. Only release information approved by the family.

- [ ] Meet with school based staff and the assigned response team, to develop a plan. Determine how phone calls to front office will be handled. Include School Resource Officer, if the school has one.

- [ ] Determine how to inform the school community of the death for either a student or staff. Go live on T.V. when available –Announcing over the intercom is not recommended as it depersonalizes the incident and may create chaos. However, a PA announcement is included in the packet in case it is being used as a last resort. Response Team members and/or staff may read a statement to the class, provided by administration. Use information from the classroom script in this packet.

- [ ] Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed.

- [ ] If it’s a crisis which requires faculty to report early the next day, activate the “school telephone tree” to inform school staff of meeting time for the next morning.

- [ ] Be highly visible throughout the day.

- **This will not be a typical day.**

**Step 2**

- [ ] Determine if the student who died had siblings in other schools. If so, contact the principals of those sites to inform them of the loss, or let CRT know.

- [ ] Consult with school-based staff and the CRT to discuss the need for visiting the student’s home, sending food and/or flowers, and providing counseling/grief referral sources to the family.

- [ ] Hold initial meeting with faculty, staff and CRT members, informing them of situation and establishing procedures for responding to the incident. (Sample staff meeting agenda is included in this packet).
Designate campus personnel to assist with student and building safety and supervision.

Send home a letter to all parents of students impacted by the death/crisis. This letter should discuss the event, briefly describe common grief reactions, and should strongly encourage them to talk with their child. (sample letter is included in English, Spanish and Creole)

Determine with Leading and Learning Director or Assistant Superintendent for Student Services if it is necessary to offer a parent/community forum or meeting. If approved by the Leading and Learning Director or Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, the response team will assist with developing the agenda for the meeting.

Debrief with CRT Leader – assess follow up needs, identify high needs.

Monitor social media.

Discuss how to gather personal effects of the student or staff that has died and determine the most sensitive manner to present these items to the family.

Check out students who leave school for the day. (Considerations should be given to not count the absence as unexcused, especially on the initial day of the crisis). Keep names of students who check out early.

**Step 3**

Disseminate information – funeral/service details.

Involves staff and students in planning any special recognition activities or memorials (i.e., scholarships, memory wall, etc.).

Advise parents of the student who died of any special assemblies or activities planned to honor the deceased. Although their direct involvement may not be recommended, it is important that they be informed of plans. Any assemblies/activities should be discussed with and approved by the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or Leading and Learning Director.

Release students to attend memorial services, if desired. Students and parents should provide their own transportation to the service.
Faculty Responsibilities

☐ Inform the students in your classroom, as directed by administration. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss the loss and share their feelings, a CRT will assist if requested.

☐ Answer questions and conduct class discussions. Feel free to say, “I don’t know” when asked a question you cannot answer.

☐ Identify and refer to the CRT any students who were close friends of the deceased, as well as those who are in distress or who you consider high risk. It may be necessary at times to have another student escort a student or have a RT member come to get the student.

☐ Limit homework and testing if possible. Maintain stability in the classroom but acknowledge the impact of the death/crisis and grief process. Be flexible while maintaining classroom structure and control.

☐ Consult with school-based or response team members when needed.

☐ Allow students to write letters or make drawings expressing sympathy, to be delivered to the parents by the school. Be sure that letters are unsealed and reviewed before delivering, so that not negative messages are sent.
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities

☐ Assist in preparing letters and handouts, the handouts may be placed on the website.

☐ Respond, as requested by your principal, to parent/community phone calls. Often, administration and the recovery team will write a standard response for incoming calls and concerns.

☐ Assist CRT members by providing printed schedules of students, classroom locations, bell schedules, and hall passes.

☐ Remove the name of the student that died from the school mailing lists, automatic calling machine, computer, guidance newsletter list, etc.
District Crisis Response Team Checklist

☐ Team Leader meets with Principal and/or District Administrator who responds to gather details (complete Crisis Response Worksheet) and set up response plan. Gather school bell schedule, map of school, school faculty list, by grade or subject. Gather the information or outside counseling resources, discuss need for student passes. **CRT member should follow the student’s schedule, invite principal.**

☐ In the initial organizational meeting include the school-based counselor and other dedicated staff. Discuss and assign who will provide what services during the day (i.e., class presentations, individual and group counseling, teacher relief, etc.). Discuss as a group if that day’s routine school counselor activities or special events should be canceled or postponed. **CRT members should be highly visible.**

☐ Team Leader provides each CRT member with a copy of the school’s master schedule, bell schedule, a map of the school, a faculty list with grade and subject taught, (if needed), a school telephone list, and handouts listing outside counseling sources. Be sure to have an adequate supply of student passes available for use.

☐ Collaboratively identify high risk or most affected students. In addition to identifying close friends, also identify any students who were recently in major conflict with the student who died. Remember to include students who have experienced a recent loss, ESE students, those who have completed a risk assessment or have witnessed violence.

Note: If the crisis involves a trauma situation, identify the “more exposed” and the “most exposed” (i.e., eyewitnesses, siblings, close friends, etc.) who may benefit from participating in a debriefing session at a later time.

☐ Determine if there are siblings or relatives/close friends at other schools that may need services. If so, call those schools to alert their staff, including previous teachers or coaches.

☐ On the first day of the crisis and for subsequent days, have school-based staff closely monitor the absentee list, watching for any high-risk students who may be absent. Call parents when necessary and be particularly watchful for any groups of affected students who stayed home and are gathering without supervision at one of the student’s house

☐ Inform the staff how to refer and send students for counseling. Structure and organization will help reduce stress and encourage the return of equilibrium at the school.

☐ Assess potentially high-risk students, contact parents to refer for outside help.

☐ Provide support for teachers and staff members as requested. This may include brief classroom breaks or counseling.
☐ Respond to staff questions regarding grief and common reactions. Debrief faculty if requested by administration, distribute appropriate handout located in appendix.

☐ Keep a list/log of all students who received CRT/guidance services. Review list at the end of each day—particularly with school based guidance counselor(s)—to ensure that follow-up counseling/services are provided as needed.

☐ Provide CRT services, if requested, at school the day of the memorial service. There is often a heightened grief reaction at this time.

☐ Debrief and plan as a team at the end of each day. Allow time for sharing of feelings and emotional reactions/frustrations among the team members. Ask “what worked” and “what would we do differently?” There are always lessons and opportunities to learn in each crisis situation. **Monitor CRT members for compassion fatigue.**
## Crisis Response Worksheet
*(Team Leader completes with School Administration)*

### School Name/ Administrator Name

### Team Leader Name:

### Crisis Detail

**Name of student or staff involved in crisis:**

**Grade level/Age:**

**Other details:**

### Identified students who may be at risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Counseling Locations

### Announcement of Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Presentation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email to Staff:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Home to Parents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA announcement:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Staff meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location/Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenters:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Voluntary debrief staff meeting at end of day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location/time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Team Member:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

June 1, 2018
## Sign in/Please Print Crisis Response Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Department/Agency</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Student’s Name (Please Print)</td>
<td>Teacher/Grade/Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principal/Administrators Checklist for Death by Suicide

Please note: this will not be a typical day.

**Step 1**

- Verify death of student/staff and obtain accurate factual account.
- Inform the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and your Director of Leading and Learning.
- Communicate with the parents/family of the student/staff who died by suicide, if appropriate.
- Only give this information if the parents/family of the student/staff that has died have given permission. However, if information about student’s death has been on social media and suicide is being mentioned, the topic of suicide should be discussed.

**Remember, if the death has not been verified as a suicide, this is only an opportunity to talk to about risk and protective factors. The discussion should not include details but can address general information about suicide.**

- Be prepared to activate the school telephone/text/email process to inform school staff of meeting time for the next morning, if necessary.
- Direct all media to the Office of Government and Community Relations.
- When informing staff or students, use the phrase “death by suicide” to underscore that you are willing to discuss this difficult topic. Avoid “committed suicide” (which may imply a criminal act). Included in the message should be the importance of sharing any concern for the safety of others with a trusted adult.
- Meet with school based team and the assigned responders, to develop a response plan. Include School Resource Officer, if the school has one, as well as support staff.

**Be sure someone from the school (counselor, administrator, and/or the crisis response team follows the deceased student’s schedule each period and speaks with the classes. This is critical!**

- Remove student from AS400 with a withdrawal code of W12.
- Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm.
- Determine how to inform the students. Some suggestions include: (1) go live on your school’s TV if/when available; (2) announce over the intercom using adaptation of script found below in this document; (3) team members and/or staff may read a
statement to the class, provided by administration. If needed, crisis response team and/or counselor may remain in the classroom after notifying students.

☐ Be highly visible throughout the day.

**Step 2**

☐ Consult with school-based staff and the crisis response team to discuss the need for visiting the student’s home, sending food and/or flowers, and providing counseling/grief referral sources to the family.

☐ Hold initial meeting with faculty, staff and crisis response team members, informing them of situation and establishing procedures for responding to the incident (sample staff meeting agenda is included in this packet).

☐ Distribute the Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors handout to staff (located at the end of this packet).

☐ Closely monitor student and staff attendance in the days following the suicide.

☐ Determine what additional safety precautions will be implemented in the upcoming days.

☐ Designate locations where information and counseling support services may be accessed, during the school day.

☐ Designate school personnel to assist with student and building safety and supervision.

☐ The principal sends home a letter to all parents of all students via Edline or other preferred method of dissemination. This letter should discuss describe common grief reactions, and should strongly encourage them to talk with their child (sample letter is included at the end of this packet).

☐ Monitor social media.

☐ Check on students who leave school for the day to make certain they do not require further intervention.

**Step 3**

☐ Disseminate information – funeral/service details, if appropriate.

☐ Debrief with Crisis Response Team Leader – assess follow up needs, identify high needs students and staff.
Faculty Responsibilities (Death by Suicide)

☐ Inform students as directed by the administration. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss the loss and share their feelings about it, a CRT member will assist if requested.

☐ Answer questions and conduct class discussions. Feel free to say, “I don’t know” when asked a question you cannot answer.

☐ Identify and refer to the CRT any students/staff that may be in distress or at risk, due to the death. Students should be escorted by another student, a staff member or have a CRT member come to get the student.

☐ Limit homework and testing if possible. Maintain stability in the classroom but acknowledge the impact of the death/crisis and grief process. Be flexible while maintaining classroom structure and control.

☐ Consult with school-based counselor or response team members when needed.

☐ Allow students to write letters or make drawings expressing sympathy, to be delivered to the family by the school. Be sure that letters are unsealed and reviewed before delivering, so that negative messages are not sent.
Secretarial Staff/Front Office Staff Responsibilities (Death by suicide)

☐ Assist in preparing letters and handouts to be sent home with students.

☐ Respond, as requested by your principal, to parent/community phone calls. Often, administration and the response team will write a standard response for incoming calls and concerns.

☐ Assist CRT members by providing printed schedules of students, classroom locations, bell schedules, student passes etc.

☐ Remove the deceased student’s name from the school mailing lists, automatic calling machine, computer, guidance list, etc.
Crisis Response Team Packet  Death by Suicide (Student or Staff)

Checklist Crisis Response Team Death by Suicide

☐ Team Leader meets with Principal and/or District Administrator who responds to gather details (complete Crisis Response Worksheet) and set up response plan. Gather school bell schedule, map of school, school faculty list, by grade or subject. Gather the information or outside counseling resources, discuss need for student passes. **CRT member should follow the student’s schedule, invite principal.**

☐ In the initial organizational meeting include the school-based counselors or other designated staff. Discuss and assign who will provide what services during the day (i.e., class presentations, individual and group counseling, teacher relief, etc.). Response team member should follow student schedule, invite Principal. Discuss as a group if that day’s routine school counselor activities should be canceled or postponed. **CRT members should be highly visible during the school day.**

☐ **Only give this information if the parents of the student/staff who died have given permission to do so, or if the suicide is public knowledge.**

If information about the student’s death on social media and suicide is being discussed, this needs to be addressed. If the death has not been verified as a suicide, this is an opportunity to talk about suicide and discuss risks.

☐ Work with the counseling staff to identify students and staff that may be heavily impacted by the loss and those who may be considered at-risk for self-harm. Collaboratively identify high risk or most affected students. In addition to identifying close friends, also identify any students who were recently in major conflict with the deceased. Remember to include students who have experienced a recent loss, ESE students, those who have previously completed a risk assessment or traumatic events.

☐ Team Leader provides each CRT member with a copy of the school’s master schedule, bell schedule, a map of the school, a faculty list with grade and subject taught, (if needed), a school telephone list, and handouts listing outside counseling sources. Be sure to have an adequate supply of school hall passes available for use.

Note: If the crisis involves a trauma situation, identify the “more exposed” and the “most exposed” (i.e., eyewitnesses, siblings, close friends, etc.) who may benefit from participating in a debriefing session at a later time.

☐ Determine if there are siblings or relatives/close friends at other schools that may need services. If so, call those schools to alert their staff, including previous teachers and coaches.

☐ On the first day of the crisis and for subsequent days, have school-based staff closely
monitor the absentee list, watching for any high-risk students who may have stayed home. Call parents when necessary and be particularly watchful for any groups of affected students who stayed home and are gathering without supervision at one of the student’s houses.

☐ Inform the staff how to refer and send students for counseling. Clear structure and organization will help reduce stress and encourage the return of equilibrium at the school.

☐ Observe and assess potentially high-risk students. Contact parents. Refer for outside help as needed.

☐ CRT member follows the class schedule of the student who died at least until the majority of students have been given the opportunity to ask questions and participate in class discussions.

☐ Provide support for teachers and staff members as requested. This may include brief classroom breaks or counseling.

☐ Respond to staff questions regarding grief and common reactions. Debrief faculty if requested by administration.

☐ Keep a list/log of all students who received crisis team/guidance services. Review list at the end of each day—particularly with school based school counselor(s)—to ensure that follow-up counseling/services are provided as needed.

☐ Provide counseling services at school the day of and after the memorial service. There is often a heightened grief reaction at this time.

☐ Debrief and plan as a team at the end of each day. Allow time for sharing of feelings and emotional reactions/frustrations among the team members. Ask “what worked” and “what would we do differently?” There are always lessons and opportunities to learn in each crisis situation. **Monitor CRT members for signs of compassion fatigue.**
Memorial Guidelines Following a Suicide

Students and staff should be given the opportunity to participate in activities to remember the student who died. The activity can be prevention-oriented, including the following:

Donate money to charities, crisis support centers, or youth support programs;

Create an album of positive memories of the deceased that can be given to the family;

Volunteer with a local charity, community agency, or crisis center; and

Encourage impacted students, with parental permission, to attend the funeral, if appropriate. Memorials should not glorify, glamorize, or sensationalize the death.

Therefore, it is recommended you avoid the following:

Memorial services within the school building;

- Flying flags at half-staff (typically takes an order of the Governor to fly flags at half-staff);

- Large assemblies about the victim or a moment of silence at assemblies;

- Dedication of sports events or other events;

- Permanent markers or memorials of any kind, i.e., at the student’s locker;

- Shrines of any kind.