

Mayflower School District

District Crisis Plan



(Plan for the Worst and Hope for the Best)

John Gray, Superintendent

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SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

Background

The approach is to plan for the worst and hope for the best. It is the school districts responsibility to do what it can to ensure the safety of students, teachers, administrators, staff and the community. Every school should be prepared to handle and recover from an emergency.

Purpose of this Guide

The District Crisis Plan serves two major purposes:

- 1) To assist those who have to make decisions in times of crisis.
- 2) To plan for and inform everybody on the actions of the school district before, during and after a crisis. (For student safety reasons some sections of the plan will remain confidential, for example, evacuation and safe areas will be notified at the time of the event.)

Crisis Identification

A crisis is identified as an emergency that is sudden, generally unanticipated and has the potential to have profound and negative effects on part or all the school district.

Partners in School Crisis

1. 911
2. Poison Hotline 1-800-222-1222
3. Faulkner County Health Department 450-4941
4. Mayflower City Police Department 470-1000
5. Mayflower Fire Department 470-1200 470-1337
6. Mayflower City Animal Control 470-0948
7. Faulkner County Sheriff's Office. 450-4914
8. Faulkner County OEM/911 501-450-4935
9. Arkansas Department of Education 682-4475
10. Facilities and Transportation Commission 501-682-4261
11. Arch Ford Education Service Co-operative 501-354-2269
12. Farris Center UCA 501-4503148
13. UCA Police 501-450-3111
14. Arkansas State Police Headquarters 501-618-8000
15. FBI 501-221-9100
16. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 501-324-6181
17. Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-482-5964
18. Arkansas Department of Emergency Management 501-683-6700
19. DHS 501-371-1402
20. Exxon Mobil Pipeline 1-800-537-5200

SECTION TWO – CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS

School Crisis Response Team (SCRT)

The school principal is responsible for overseeing the formation of the School Crisis Response Team (SCRT) and is the designated leader. The School's crisis response teams together will make the **District Crisis Response Team**. The Superintendent will be a member and the designated leader of the District Crisis Response Team (DCRT).

The teams meet to help develop plans and prepare policies. The team will also meet to discuss and enact appropriate actions during and after a crisis. The DCRT will be called by the Superintendent and SCRT meetings will be called by the Principal.

Elementary School SCRT Members

Principal

Counselor

2 teachers who have been in the district > 2 years

1. Lynn Raney
2. Flo Stephens

School Nurse

A Secretary

Middle School SCRT Members

Principal/Asst. Principal

Counselor

2 teachers who have been in the district > 2 years

1. Amy Cochran
2. Shanda Sutton

School Nurse

A Secretary

High School SCRT Members

Principal/Asst. Principal

Counselor

Athletic Director

2 teachers who have been in the district > 2 years

1. Sabrena Thacker
2. Heather Malone

School Nurse

A Secretary

The Incident Command System (ICS)

Some emergencies require involvement from police officials, fire departments, and other emergency management agencies. With several agencies handling a crisis, roles and responsibilities can quickly become confusing. To prevent confusion about “who is doing what,” many emergency response agencies use the Incident Command System (ICS). It is important for the SCRT/DCRT and other school personnel to understand the ICS so that they can work cooperatively with other agencies during an emergency.

The ICS assigns roles and decision-making authority during the planning and handling of critical incidents of all types. Implementing the ICS will allow all school personnel to know their area/s of responsibility during an emergency and to plan and practice the management of their specific role. Unified Command (UC) is a structure that brings together the "Incident Commanders" of all major organizations involved in the incident to coordinate an effective response.

The following constructs an Incident Command System for Mayflower School District.

DISTRICT WIDE CRISIS

Incident Commander: Responsible for overall management.

Superintendent

Backup 1: High School Principal

Backup 2: Middle School Principal

Backup 3: Elementary Principal

Assistant Incident Commanders:

School Principals

Operations - Care of Students:

High School Assistant Principal

Backup 1: Middle School Assistant Principal

Backup 2: Elementary Assistant Principal

Operations – Facilities/Communications

Director of Facilities

Backup 1: High School Grounds and Maintenance

Backup 2: Middle School Grounds and Maintenance

Operations – Transportation

Director Transportation

Backup 1: Head Bus Mechanic

Backup 2: Most experienced transportation employee

Director of Operations – Medical

District Registered Nurse

Backup 1: High School Nurse

Backup 2: Middle School Nurse

Backup 3: Elementary Nurse

Operations – Supplies

Food Service Director

Backup 1: High School Cafeteria Manager

Backup 2: Middle School Cafeteria Manager

Backup 3: Elementary School Cafeteria Manager

Operations – Finance and Documentation

General Business Manager (Bookkeeper I)

Backup 1: Bookkeeper II

Backup 2: Director of H.R.

SCHOOL WIDE CRISIS

All the positions above will remain the same with the following exceptions:

Operations - Care of Students:

Assistant Principal

Backup 1: SCRT Teacher 1

Backup 2: SCRT Teacher 2

SECTION THREE - PREPARATION

Potential Areas of Hazard

Identifying potential hazards helps you know what to expect and what to do to protect students and staff. It is important to understand that disasters have a cascading effect, for example:

- Flooding blocks roads, damages property, and ruins food supply
- Tornadoes destroy buildings, cause fallen power lines

Potential Hazards would include:

1. Fire
2. Weather (Storms, Tornados, Snow, Ice)
3. People (Active Killer)
4. Interstate Highway
5. Railway
6. Underground High Pressure Gas Line
7. Earthquake

Evacuation Routes

For safety reasons these are not made public in advance. The School Incident commander will notify those involved at the time of the emergency on the evacuation routes and safe areas to go. Each emergency may dictate a different evacuation route and safe area.

Emergency Drills

Each school will perform informal simulated emergencies such as fire drills, tornado drills active killer and evacuations. It should test a single component or function of the School Crisis Response Plan (for example, a “lock-down” drill). Drills may or may not involve a supporting agency such as police or fire department.

Tips for Conducting Successful Drills

Conducting successful drills is critical in preparing for an actual emergency. All school personnel need to be prepared for emergency situations, allowing for circumstances such as inclement weather, substitute teachers and accounting for all students.

- Inclement Weather

An emergency that requires evacuation from the school may occur during inclement

weather. Each school should be prepared for such an event and identify a protected site, such as a storm shelter, where students and staff can go until the school has been cleared for re-entry.

- Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers may be on site when an emergency occurs. Therefore, schools should account for the needs of substitute personnel who may not be as familiar with school grounds as permanent staff members. All substitute staff should receive an introduction to the school's emergency plans, including familiarization with evacuation site(s).

- Accounting for Students

Accounting for students is critical during an actual emergency, and drills provide an opportunity to practice the school's accountability system. Using classroom rosters and attendance rolls, all students should be accounted for during each drill. Missing and extra students should be reported upon the completion of each drill.

Emergency Code Words

Code words are no longer recommended. It is better to inform everyone so all can hear what the actual danger or incident is. Therefore if the danger is an intruder outside the building then it is to be explained that way with the location and description etc. of the intruder. If the intruder is in the building say they are in the building and also where they are located with a description and what the danger is.

Emergency Communication

Panic Button (Cell phone)

Intercom System

Bull horns/megaphones

Marine Air Horns

Cell Phones

Telephones

Alarm Systems

Bus two way radios

School Messenger

Media –Radio and TV

Strategies for Communicating

In managing emergencies it is important to deal with parent reactions and community agencies. Communication with parents and the community is best begun before an emergency occurs. Some useful strategies include the following:

1. Inform parents about the school's emergency plan, its objectives, and the need for it; such information can be included in a school newsletter or other informational materials prepared for parents and can be explained during open houses or other parent-teacher meetings.
2. Develop a relationship with parents so that they trust and feel comfortable calling school personnel in the event of emergency.
3. Develop templates of materials that may be needed including:
 - a. Letters to parents informing them of what happened.
 - b. Information regarding possible reactions of their child and ways to talk with them.
 - c. How the school and school district are handling the situation.
4. Develop a list of community resources that may be helpful to parents or helpful to the school in the event of an emergency.
5. Identify parents who are willing to volunteer in case of an emergency, include them in preparation efforts, and include them in training.

Sharing Information with Parents

In the event of an emergency, parents have very specific information needs.

First, parents want to know their children are safe; then, parents want to know the details of the emergency situation, to know how it is being handled, and to know that the children will be safe in the future.

The first reactions are likely to involve *fear*. Upon learning of an incident at the school, parents are likely to descend upon the school in search of their child or to telephone, frantically seeking information.

Establishing a system for responding quickly to parent needs for information is an important part of pre-planning. For example, assign a school official to be responsible for traffic flow and parking for parents in the event of an emergency, as well as establishing private areas to talk with parents individually if necessary. *Anger* is another common reaction of parents, particularly in the case of senseless acts of violence. In the event of an emergency or disaster:

1. Tell parents exactly what is known to have happened. Do not embellish or speculate.

2. Implement the plan to manage phone calls and meet with parents who arrive at school.

3. Schedule and attend a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) for parents as soon after the incident as possible. The CMB is an open question-and-answer meeting that will provide an opportunity for school officials to listen and respond to parent concerns (which is helpful in combating rumors and other misinformation) and to work on restoring parental trust in the school.

4. In the event of an incident that involves damage or destruction, an open house for parents and other members of the community to see the school restored to its “normal” state helps everyone get beyond the emergency.

5. Parents or other community members may wish to view the scene of a disaster. Those affected may also need to view the scene. Plans for the physical safety as well as mental health needs of those visiting the scene should be considered.

Sample Letter to Parents

Dear parents,

As you may know, our school/district/facility has recently experienced (specify event, whether death, fire, etc.) which has deeply affected us. Let me briefly review the facts (give brief description of incident and known facts).

We have implemented our school's crisis response plan to respond to the situation and to help our students and their families. Students and staff will react in different ways to emergencies of this nature, so it will be important to have support available to assist students in need. Counselors are available in the school setting to assist students as they express their feelings related to (the specific event). We have included a reference sheet to help you recognize possible reactions you may observe in your child. If you feel your child is in need of special assistance or is having a great deal of difficulty coping with (the loss, disaster, etc.), please do not hesitate to call.

While it is important to deal with grief, loss, anger and fear reactions, we believe it is essential to resume as normal a routine as possible regarding school activities. The following modifications in our school's regular schedule will be in effect during (specify dates), and after that time all regular schedules and routines will resume. (Specify needed information such as memorial services, possible changes in classroom or meeting locations, alterations in operating hours, etc.).

Thank you for your support of our school system as we work together to cope with (specify event). Please observe your child closely over the next several days and weeks to watch for signs of distress that may indicate a need for additional support and guidance. Please feel free to call if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child, or steps being taken by the school to address this (loss, tragedy, etc.).

Sincerely,

(Principal Name)

(Phone)

Backpack Letters

What are Backpack Letters and When Should They Be Sent Home?

Regular, clear communication between schools and families is essential. Letters to parents and guardians, often sent home in students' backpacks, are a key communications tool between principals and parents.

Especially when a critical incident has occurred at school or has involved one or more students or staff members in a school, letters, written in conjunction with public safety officials, can be an effective way of relaying important and helpful information. Unlike verbal messages, letters can be reread and used as a reference tool. Reporters often use backpack letters to verify facts and, even more importantly, to demonstrate to the community that a school is taking care of its students and staff members. The information in backpack letters can form the outline for media interviews.

What Should a Backpack Letter Say?

All well-constructed backpack letters share a number of characteristics:

- They are clear and simply written.
- They avoid words or phrases that are inflammatory.
- They contain only accurate information without speculation.
- They involve parents in the solutions.

Often a backpack letter can be limited to three paragraphs:

1. The first paragraph outlines the situation.
2. The second paragraph details the steps the school has taken—along with other division staff and public safety and/or public health officials—to remedy the problem.
3. The third paragraph lists ways that families can help and how families can get more information.

How is a Backpack Letter Prepared?

A draft of a backpack letter is prepared by the principal and first reviewed by the superintendent or other key school personnel. In all situations that involve police or fire and rescue investigations, public safety officials must also review the letter before it is sent home.

Sharing Information with the Media

Most news people are sensitive when reporting emergencies that occur in school settings and are interested in doing a reputable job. The following suggestions will promote clear communications with the media:

1. Media Liaison will be done by the Incident Commander (Superintendent) Staff and students are not to talk to the press. Cell phone use about the crisis is not to be done as the media listen to this on scanners. The purpose is to get out accurate information to the places it is needed as soon as possible. Misinformation can be damaging.
2. Direct media representatives to one area (on or off campus) where briefings can take place. On campus locations would include locations of minimal disruption such as the Cafetorium or football stadium. Off campus locations could include the City Hall, a local church, Arch Ford Co-op, or UCA. This designation will be made by the Incident Commander (Superintendent).
3. All employees are to refer all information and questions to the Incident Commander.
4. If the emergency is a death, consult with the deceased student/staff member's family before making a statement.
5. Insist that reporters respect the privacy rights of students and staff.
6. The district/school should decide what to say, issue a statement, and answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.
7. Remind employees that only designated spokespersons are authorized to talk with news media. That will be the Incident Commander.
8. Take initiative with news media and let them know what is or is not known about the situation. Use the Incident Weather Call list for contact information.
9. Emphasize school's/district's good record.
10. Speak to reporters in plain English; don't use acronyms or phrases only known within the school community.
11. If there is involvement with a criminal case, work in conjunction with the law enforcement spokesperson.
12. Don't try to "kill" a story; don't say "no comment;" don't speculate; don't try to blame anyone for anything.
13. When communicating, maintain a unified position and message; keep messages concise, clear, and consistent.
14. Delay releasing information until facts are verified and the school's position is clear; prepare statements about the situation in advance (avoid ad-libbing) and use prepared statements.
15. Assign sufficient staff to handle phones and keep a log of calls and personal contacts.
16. Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the emergency.

Sample Statements to the Media

Example 1: Bus accident

Our third grade students were on a field trip when their school bus was involved in an accident on Interstate-40 (I-40). Emergency medical teams have arrived and are transporting students to (NAME) community hospital. Our principal is at the scene, and our superintendent is at the hospital. We have established a hotline for parents (or, staff members are calling parents of students involved in the accident). The hotline number is (NUMBER). Our School Crisis Response Team is implementing our emergency protocol for bus accidents, including providing support to students and staff.

Note: Important points made are: preparedness of the school; coordination of efforts with community agencies, access to information for parents; responsible immediate action taken by school representatives (including those in positions of authority); and support provided for students at the school.

Example 2: Fight/Death of Student (off campus, after hours)

A fight involving two eleventh-grade students occurred a block from campus at 7:00 PM last night. The incident resulted in the fatal shooting of one of our students. Police are investigating and no more is known at this time, but police are conducting an ongoing investigation.

Our school's Crisis Response Team went into action immediately following the incident and the following actions have been taken: 1) Our Crisis Response Team met last night and planned a staff meeting before the school day. 2) We notified staff of the meeting using our Telephone Tree. 3) Crisis intervention for students is being provided by Central Office and community resources; 4) A review of our school weapons policy is underway and school security is on alert for potential related violence.

Note: Important points are: Even though the incident occurred off campus, after hours, the school still has a responsibility to act; the incident is coupled with a re-statement of the district weapons policy; the school demonstrates it is able to handle emergencies by convening an School Crisis Response Team meeting, by drawing on community resources, and by providing (or accessing) crisis counseling to the students.

Accounting for all students, visitors and personnel

- Daily attendance for students
- Daily attendance for staff
- Daily visitor sign-in and sign-out log

Attendance and visitor sign-in logs should be easily accessible during an emergency, and staff should be instructed to take all logs with them during an evacuation. Emergency responders treat a situation very differently when people are missing. For example, when a bomb threat occurs, the stakes are substantially higher if firefighters do not know whether students are in the school when they are trying to locate and disarm a bomb.

The movement of students out of the building adds the extra responsibility of accounting for every student. In order to account for students, teachers must bring roles with them from the classroom and maintain control of the class once they are outside. Missing and extra students should immediately be reported to the counselor. This information should be passed on to the principal and then to police or fire personnel.

During evacuations – students will not be permitted to drive private vehicles.

Parent/Child Reunification Plan

When an incident occurs at a school, students' parents will contact the school and may begin arriving at the school to retrieve their children. The arrival of parents may disrupt the efforts of those dealing with the emergency. Planning for parent response will allow for a quickly organized process where parents and students can be reunited in an orderly and accountable fashion. A well-organized parent reunion location will alleviate parents' fears and deliver students to their parents or guardians efficiently.

Meeting Areas For Elementary, Middle School and High School

- To be announced during each emergency.
 1. The School Counselor will be in charge of these sites. They will be supported by teachers of the SCRT.
 2. Keep records of all students released.
 3. Communicate reunification location and release procedures to parents using School Messenger and media.

SECTION FOUR – RESPONSE

When an emergency begins, the Incident Commander will decide which of the following procedures to implement, based on the situation.

There are **seven basic procedures** that can be utilized in responding to various emergencies:

1. Evacuation
2. Soft Lock-down
3. Severe Weather Safe Area (Tornado)
4. Lock-down (Chemical)
5. Lock-down (Lock and Hide)
6. Earthquake (Drop, Cover, and Hold)
7. Active Killer – Run, Hide, Fight

1. Evacuation *(For use when conditions outside are safer than inside)*

When announcement is made or alarm sounded:

1. Take the closest and safest way out as posted (use secondary route if primary route is blocked or hazardous)
2. Take roll book for student accounting
3. Assist those needing special assistance
4. Do not stop for student/staff belongings
5. Go to designated Assembly Area
6. Check for injuries
7. Take attendance and report
8. Wait for further instructions

2. Soft Lock Down *(For use when conditions inside are safer than outside)*

When the announcement is made:

1. Move students and staff inside as quickly as possible
2. Secure the outside of the building as practical
3. Assist those needing special assistance
4. Report to classroom
5. Check for injuries
6. Take attendance; report
7. Run as normal as possible and maintain staff supervision
8. Wait for further instructions

3. Severe Weather Safe Area (Tornado) *(For use in severe weather emergencies)*

When announcement is made or alarm sounded:

1. Take the closest, safest route to shelter in designated safe areas (use secondary route if primary route is blocked or dangerous)
2. Occupants of portable classrooms shall move to the main building to designated safe areas
3. Take roll book for student accounting
4. Take attendance and report.
5. Assist those needing special assistance
6. Do not stop for student/staff belongings
7. Close all doors
8. Remain in safe area until the “all clear” is given

9. Wait for further instructions

4. Lock Down (Chemical) *(For use when evacuation is not possible)*

When the announcement is made:

1. Students are to be cleared from the halls immediately and to report to nearest available classroom or other designated location
2. Assist those needing special assistance
3. Close and tape all windows and doors and seal the gap between bottom of the door and the floor (external gas/chemical release)
4. Take attendance; report according to Student Accounting and Release procedures
5. Do not allow anyone to leave the classroom
6. Stay away from all doors and windows
7. Wait for further instructions

5. Lockdown (Lock and Hide) *(For use to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building)*

When the announcement is made:

1. Students are to be cleared from the halls immediately and to report to nearest available classroom
2. Assist those needing special assistance
3. Close and lock all windows and doors and do not leave for any reason
4. Cover all room and door windows
5. Barricade doors

6. Earthquake (Drop, Cover, and Hold)

(For use in earthquake or other imminent danger to building or immediate surroundings)

When the command "Drop" is made:

DROP – to the floor, take cover under a nearby desk or table and face away from the windows

COVER - your eyes by leaning your face against your arms

HOLD - on to the table or desk legs, and maintain present location/position

1. Stay away from all doors and windows and move students to interior walls and drop
2. Shut off lights
3. BE QUIET!
4. Assist those needing special assistance
5. Wait for further instructions

7. Active Killer - Run, Hide, Fight

(For use to protect building occupants from killer who brings multiple weapons and bombs to the school.)

There is not normally an announcement. Listen for gun shots or other warnings.

When alerted act first and confirm second. Time is critical.

1. Stay calm
2. Assess the situation – Do not freeze
3. RUN AWAY if possible. If not, HIDE then RUN AWAY when safe. If all else fails then FIGHT!!! Your life will depend on it.
4. Call 911

General Emergency Intervention Checklist

General Emergency Intervention Checklist for School Crisis Response Teams

Although each situation is different, the following is intended as a general listing of actions to consider when faced with an emergency or critical incident.

1. Take a deep breath, don't panic, and verify information.
2. Notify necessary staff and activate plan.
3. Activate school's Crisis Response Team, Incident Command System (ICS); activate and assign duties as needed:
4. Determine whether to call 911, whether to implement Universal Emergency Procedures.
5. Notify and request assistance:
 - a. Assist with planning for a response and implementing protocols
 - b. Provide recovery support to students
6. Set up a Command Post for communication.
7. Schedule briefing with staff before and/or after school day to:
 - a. Advise staff of the known facts and provide written statement
 - b. Support their concerns and emotions
 - c. Provide classroom assistance if needed; refer to emergency procedures guide flip chart
 - d. Outline schedule for the day; modify day's schedule if needed
 - e. Identify resources available to teachers and students
8. Establish contact with parents/family members of affected students to offer support, to determine assistance needed, and (in the event of a death) for information regarding visitation/funeral arrangements.
9. Inform closest friends of the affected student(s) and provide support.
10. Prepare formal statement or announcement to students, parents and media; provide statement to secretaries, staff, and other internal personnel.
11. Notify board of education members as appropriate.
12. Review and implement "Recovery" activities.
13. Document actions taken and secure records as legal documents.
14. Expand span of Incident Command System as needed, deactivate ICS when activities are completed.

Emergency Procedures Guide

Protocols

- Active Killer (Shooter)
- Allergic reaction
- Assaults/fights
- Bomb threat
- Bus accident
- Disease outbreak/Foodborne Illness
- Fire
- Hazardous materials
- Intruder/hostage
- Missing child/kidnapping
- Natural disasters

- Earthquake
- Flood
- Heat Alert
- Hurricane
- Severe thunderstorm
- Snow
- Tornado
- Poisoning
- Radiological incident
- Rape/Sexual abuse
- Seizures
- Serious injury/death
- Student unrest
- Suicide
- Suspicious mail or package
- Utility failure
- Gas line break
- Electric power failure
- Water line break
- Weapons

Active Killer (Shooter) Response

Profile of an active Shooter

An Active Killer is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active killers use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active k situation.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door
- If you are in a hallway, get into a room and secure the door
- As a last resort, attempt to take the active shooter down. When the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so.

How to respond when an active killer is in your vicinity

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that students and visitors are likely to follow the lead of employees and administrators during an active killer situation.

1. RUN AWAY

If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow

- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

2. HIDE

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view and lock/barricade yourself in a classroom, office, closet or location to prevent the entry of the active killer.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction behind bullet stopping materials such as brick walls, stacks of books, file cabinets etc.
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Remain quiet
- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

3. FIGHT

Take action against the active shooter. As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions (Follow through, fight like your life depends on it as it does.)

How to respond when law enforcement arrives

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

- Officers could arrive individually or in teams. Several law enforcement agencies will respond.
- Officers will assume everyone is a suspect until proven otherwise.
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns
- Officers may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Officers may shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety

How to react when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling

- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 operators:

- Location of the active shooter/s have been identified and questioned.
- Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter/s
- Number and type of weapons held by the shooter/s
- Number of potential victims at the location

The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises. Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witness

Allergic Reaction

Possible Symptoms:

- Skin irritation or itching, rash, hives, nasal itching or sneezing, localized swelling,
- Swollen tongue.
- Restlessness, sweating, fright, shock.
- Shortness of breath, vomiting, cough, hoarseness.

Staff First Actions:

1. If imminent risk, call 911.
2. Send for immediate help (Operations: First Aid, CPR, medical) and medication kit (for known allergies).
3. Assist in getting "Epi pen" (Epinephrine) for individuals who carry them (usually in backpack), and prescription medications (kept in office).
4. If an insect sting, remove stinger immediately.
5. Notify principal.
6. Assess situation help student/employee to be comfortable.
7. Move only for safety reasons.

Principal, Team:

1. Call 911, depending on circumstances.
2. Notify parent or guardian.
3. Administer medication, by order of a doctor, if appropriate; apply ice pack to affected area, keep victim warm or take other actions as indicated.
4. Observe for respiratory difficulty.
5. Record on an attached label: time & site of insect sting or food ingested, name of medicine, dosage & time administered.

Preventive/Supportive Actions:

1. Emergency health card should be completed by parents for each child, and should be easily accessible by school personnel.
2. Bus drivers should have emergency sheets for all known acute reactors.
3. Encourage employees with special health considerations to alert building director and work associates of any difficulties and possible medical reactions.

Assaults/Fights

Staff Procedures:

1. Ensure the safety of students and staff first.
2. Call 911, if necessary.
3. Notify CPR / first aid certified persons in school building of medical emergencies.
4. Notify principal. Principal assembles Crisis Team Members.
5. Seal off area where assault took place.
6. Defuse situation, if possible.
7. Principal notifies police if weapon was used as required by law, victim has physical injury causing substantial pain or impairment or if assault involved sexual contact (i.e., intentional touching of anus, breast, buttocks, or genitalia of another person in a sexual manner without consent. This includes touching of those areas covered by clothing.)
8. Principal notifies superintendent and parents of students involved in assault.
9. Document all activities. Ask victim(s) / witness(es) for their account of incident.
10. Assess counseling needs of victim(s) or witness(es). Implement post-emergency procedures.

Bomb Threats

Upon receiving a message that a bomb has been planted in school:

1. Ask where the bomb is located, when bomb will go off, what materials are in bomb, who is calling, why caller is doing this.
2. Listen closely to caller's voice and speech patterns and to noises in background.
3. Notify principal or designee.
4. Principal/designee orders evacuation of all persons inside school building(s).
5. Principal/designee notifies police (call 911) and superintendent. Principal or superintendent must report incident to Fire Marshal.

Evacuation procedures:

1. Principal warns students and staff. Do not mention "Bomb Threat." Use standard fire drill procedures.
2. Students and staff must be evacuated to a safe distance (suggested distance at least 2000 feet) outside of school building(s). After consulting with superintendent, principal may move students to designated areas.
3. Teachers take roll after being evacuated.
4. No one may re-enter building(s) until entire building(s) is declared safe by fire or police personnel.
5. Principal notifies students and staff of termination of emergency. Resume normal operations.

Bus Accidents

Each school should maintain a bus folder for each bus serving the school. This folder should contain rosters, including an emergency telephone number for each student assigned to ride the bus. The teacher in charge of a special activity trip should prepare trip bus folders, one copy of the student manifest should be placed in the trip folder and a second copy should accompany the teacher on the trip. There should also be a bus seating chart on the bus.

Bus drivers should have designated procedures for handling emergency situations. The following protocol is intended to outline steps to be taken by school personnel should an accident occur.

In the event of a Bus Accident:

Staff at the Scene:

1. Call 911, if warranted.
2. Call principal.
3. School staff at the scene of a bus accident will help to implement basic first aid until emergency medical services and/or law enforcement arrives and takes charge of the emergency.
4. School staff at the scene of a school bus accident will move all uninjured students to a safe distance from the accident.
5. The names of all injured students and the location to which they may be taken for medical treatment will be provided to the school or collected by staff at the scene.

Principal, Team:

1. Notify District, Central Office.
2. Ascertain the names of any injured students and the nearest location of any medical treatment facility.
3. Parents/guardians of all students on the bus will be notified as quickly as accurate information is available.
4. Designated school staff representative will proceed to any medical treatment facility to which an injured student has been taken to assist parents and to provide support to students, as appropriate.
5. Complete appropriate documentation.

Disease Outbreak/Food borne Illness

Possible Signs of Disease Outbreak/Foodborne Illness:

1. Unusual number of absences from school
2. Unusual number of people showing the same signs and symptoms
3. Threats received or group taking credit for causing illness
4. Ordinary disease or symptoms but out of season

Staff First Actions:

1. If imminent risk, call 911.
2. Send for immediate help (First Aid, CPR, medical).
3. Isolate persons affected in a separate room and restrict access to the room to essential personnel only.
4. Notify principal.
5. Notify School Nurse and/or District Registered Nurse
6. Help students/employees be as comfortable as possible.

Principal, Team:

1. Principal notifies superintendent.
2. Call 911, depending on circumstances.
3. Notify State Health Department if appropriate. (This is critical as there may be contaminated food that was sent to multiple locations that could make more people ill.)
4. Notify parent or guardian of affected student(s).

5. Administer medication, by order of a doctor, if appropriate.
6. Document all activities.
7. Implement post-emergency procedures.

Fire

In the event of fire, smoke from a fire or if a gas odor has been detected:

1. Pull fire alarm.
2. Evacuate students and staff to a designated area.
3. Follow normal fire drill route. Follow alternate route if normal route is too dangerous.
4. Teachers take class roster.
5. Principal/designee notifies police (call 911) and superintendent. Principal or superintendent report to State Fire Marshal's office if appropriate.
6. Teachers take roll after being evacuated.
7. After consulting with superintendent, principal may move students if weather is inclement or building is damaged.
8. No one may reenter building(s) until declared safe by fire or police personnel.
9. Principal/designee notifies students and staff of termination of emergency.
10. Resume normal operations.

Hazardous Materials

Incident occurred in school:

1. Call 911.
2. Notify principal.
3. Principal notifies superintendent.
4. Seal off area of leaks/spill.
5. Take charge of area until fire personnel contain incident.
6. Personnel in charge will recommend shelter or evacuation actions.
7. Follow procedures for sheltering or evacuation.
8. Notify parents if students are evacuated.
9. Resume normal operations after consulting with fire officials.

Incident occurred near school property:

1. Fire or Police will notify superintendent.
2. Superintendent will notify principal.
3. Fire officer in charge of scene will recommend shelter or evacuation actions. If not then superintendent will make decision on information received to keep all staff and students safe.
4. Follow procedures for sheltering or evacuation.
5. Notify parents if students are evacuated.
6. Resume normal operations after consulting with fire officials or official in charge.

Intruder/Hostage

An intruder is an unauthorized person who enters school property.

Procedures:

1. Notify principal.
2. Ask another staff person to accompany you before approaching intruder.
3. Politely greet intruder and identify yourself.
4. Ask intruder the purpose of his/her visit.
5. Inform intruder that all visitors must register at the main office.

6. If intruder's purpose is not legitimate, ask him/her to leave. Accompany intruder to exit.

If intruder refuses to leave:

1. Warn intruder of consequences for staying on school property. Inform him/her that you will call police.
2. Notify security or police and principal if intruder still refuses to leave. Give police full description of intruder.
3. Walk away from intruder if he/she indicates a potential for violence. Be aware of intruder's actions at this time (where he/she is located in school, whether he/she is carrying a weapon or package, etc.)
4. Principal notifies superintendent and may issue lockdown procedures or active killer procedures if there is any risk for students.

Hostage:

1. If hostage taker is unaware of your presence, do not intervene.
2. Call 911 immediately. Give dispatcher details of situation; ask for assistance.
3. Seal off area near hostage scene.
4. Notify principal.
5. Principal notifies superintendent.
6. Give control of scene to police and hostage negotiation team.
7. Keep detailed notes of events.

If taken hostage:

1. Follow instructions of hostage taker.
2. Try not to panic. Calm students if they are present.
3. Treat the hostage taker as normally as possible.
4. Be respectful to hostage taker.
5. Ask permission to speak and do not argue or make suggestions.

Missing Child/Kidnapping

Missing Child:

1. If child is missing first make announcements and search for child
2. Track down where child was last seen and who with
3. School will notify parents of missing child and attempt confirmation that child is with family; if not - inform parents of situation and steps taken.
4. Call 911 immediately; provide the following information:
 - Child's name and age
 - Address
 - Physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks
 - Medical status, if appropriate
 - Time and location child was last seen
 - Person with whom the child was last seen
5. Have child's information including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
6. School will report incident to DHS and/or State Police if appropriate.
7. School will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

Kidnapping

1. Call 911 immediately; provide the following information:
 - Child's name and age
 - Address
 - Physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks
 - Physical and clothing description of the suspect
 - Medical status, if appropriate
 - Time and location child was last seen
 - Vehicle information and direction of travel
2. Follow Emergency Lockdown
3. Have child's information including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
4. School will notify parents of missing child; inform parents of situation and steps taken.
5. School will report incident to DHS and/or State Police if appropriate.
6. School will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

Natural Disasters

Earthquake Procedures

1. Remain calm and stay where you are.
2. If indoors, take cover under a sturdy desk, table or bench and hold on or sit against an interior wall.
3. If outdoors, stay there. Move away from building, utility poles, wires and street lights.
4. Be prepared for aftershocks.
5. Evacuate building if gas or chemical fumes are present.

Flood Procedures

1. Monitor emergency alert stations and listen to television newscasts for the latest information.
2. Evacuate the building by prescribed routes when necessary.
3. Stay away from floodwaters as it may contain chemicals or raw sewage.

Heat Alert Procedures

1. Monitor the heat index and listen to news reports for the latest information.
2. Allow students to drink plenty of water, wear hats, use sunscreen, cover up, keep inside in coolest areas possible.
3. Curtail physical activities.

Hurricane Procedures

1. Monitor Emergency Alert Stations and local weather forecasts including NOAA Weather stations
2. Evacuate the building by prescribed routes if plenty of time permits before any incident.
3. The schools can be a designated shelter for the community, work with local emergency management personnel to make necessary preparations.

Severe Thunderstorms Procedures

1. Monitor weather updates with a battery operated radio.
2. Use tornado procedure to shelter students.

3. If available, move to storm shelter/s.

Snow Procedures

1. Principal or superintendent will determine prior to opening hours whether or not to open the schools; families will be notified.
2. If the school must close during hours of operation because of snow or storm, the principal will notify parents by automated phone system, local media and phone.
3. If weather conditions prevent a parent or legal guardian from reaching the school to recover a child, the school will care for the child until such time as the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact person can safely claim the child.
4. If the above persons cannot claim the child within 2 hours of the school closing, the school will contact police.

Tornado Procedures

1. Shut off gas.
2. Monitor Emergency Alert Stations or NOAA Weather.
3. Bring all persons inside building.
4. Close windows and blinds.
5. Review tornado drill procedures and location of safe areas. Tornado safe areas are under desks and in hallways away from windows and large rooms.
6. Review “stop, drop and cover” procedures with students.

Poisoning

In the event of the poisoning or suspected poisoning of a student or an employee:

Immediate Actions:

1. Call 911.
2. Call the Poison Center Hotline (1-800-222-1222).
3. Administer first aid directed by poison information center.
4. Notify principal.
5. Utilize building personnel (school Nurse) with knowledge of poisonous materials, first aid training, etc.
6. Notify parents.
7. Seek additional medical attention as indicated.

Preventive Measures:

1. Keep poisonous materials in a locked and secure location.
2. Post the Poison Control Center emergency number in prominent locations such as the front office, school clinic, etc.
3. Post the names of building personnel who have special paramedic, first aid training, or other special lifesaving or life-sustaining training.
4. Provide staff with information on possible poisonous materials in the building.

Radiological Incident

An accident or incident involving radiological materials at or near a school is quite possible. Consequently, certain precautionary actions should be taken. The three basic actions are:

Time: Minimize the amount of time near and exposed to the source.

Distance: Maximize the distance away from the source.

Shielding: Maximize the amount of material (i.e. wood, concrete, earth, etc.) between the individual and radioactive source.

There is a commercial Nuclear Power Plant at Russellville, AR. In the event of a site emergency of some kind, appropriate warning and instruction will be broadcast over the state Emergency Alert System (EAS). There are two basic protective actions: sheltering and evacuation.

Sheltering Notification:

1. Bring all persons inside building(s).
2. Close all exterior doors and windows.
3. Turn off any ventilation leading outdoors.
4. Cover up food not in containers or put it in the refrigerator.
5. If advised, cover mouth and nose with handkerchief, cloth, paper towels or tissues.

Evacuation Procedures

1. Superintendent will listen to reports and make decision on relevant action
2. If time permits parents will be notified to collect students using school notification system
3. If time does not permit, the school will load students in busses and move in the direction that is advised by authorities.
4. The school notification system will be used to inform parents.

Rape/Sexual Abuse

When a school is notified that a rape or other sexual abuse may have occurred, the school must protect the identity and right to privacy of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. News of the incident should be contained as much as possible. Appropriate response by school staff will be directed at assisting the victim, addressing and minimizing the fear of fellow students, and quelling the spread of rumors. Services provided to the victim and her/his family must be kept confidential and should be coordinated with outside providers, such as a rape crisis center, children's advocacy center, or hospital emergency room. Student handbook policy will be followed.

Rape / Sexual Abuse becomes a crisis to be managed by school staff only when one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. A rape or other sexual abuse occurs on campus.
2. A member of the alleged victim's family requests intervention.
3. The alleged victim's friends request intervention.
4. Rumors and myths are widespread and damaging.
5. Students witness police action or emergency services response.

When one or more of the above conditions exists, the following should be implemented:

1. Direct the person providing the information, and others who hear the report, not to repeat it elsewhere in the school.
2. Ensure the short-term physical safety of the student.
3. The school nurse, counselor or other staff shall administer first aid and secure immediate medical treatment.
4. Notify appropriate law enforcement, and/or rape crisis center.
5. Designate the school counselor or staff member closest to the alleged victim to talk about the types of support he or she needs.
6. Determine which peers close to the victim may need support.

7. Take action to quell rumors.
8. Store all records related to rape or other sexual abuse incident and services provided in a confidential file.

Seizures

Grand mal seizures (tonic, clonic) are the most common known type of seizure. They begin with stiffening of the limbs, followed by jerking of the limbs and face. Breathing may decrease or cease altogether, producing blueing of the lips, nail beds, and face. Breathing typically returns, but may be irregular. Seizures usually last less than a minute.

Symptoms include:

- A cry out then loss of consciousness
- Arms flex up then extend and remain rigid for a few seconds.
- A series of jerking movements take place as muscles contract and relax together.
- The jerking will slow down and eventually stop.

Staff First Actions

1. Prevent injury. Place something soft under the head, loosen tight clothing, and clear the area of sharp or hard objects.
2. Do not hold the person down.
3. Do not put anything in the person's mouth.
4. Turn onto left side to open airway and allow secretions to drain. There may be a small risk of post-seizure vomiting before the person is fully alert.
5. Send for immediate help: Nurse, First Aid, or Principal.
6. Pay attention to the length of the seizure. Call 911 if seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
7. Stay with the person until the seizure ends.
8. Make the person as comfortable as possible
9. Keep onlookers away
10. Notify parents/family

A seizure is usually not a medical emergency unless it lasts longer than five minutes, or a second seizure occurs soon after the first, the person is pregnant, injured, diabetic, or not breathing easily. In these situations, 911 should be called.

Serious Injury/Death

If incident occurred in school:

1. Call 911.
2. Notify CPR/first aid certified persons in school building of serious medical emergencies and school nurse
3. If possible, isolate affected student/staff member.
4. Notify principal/designee.
5. Principal/designee notifies superintendent.
6. Activate school crisis team. Designate staff person to accompany injured/ill person to hospital.
7. Principal notifies parent(s) or guardian(s) of affected student.
8. Direct witness(es) to school psychologist/counselor. Contact parents if students are sent to psychologist/counselor.
9. Determine method of notifying students, staff, and parents.
10. Refer media to the superintendent

If incident occurred outside of school:

1. Building administrator confirms the accuracy of the report with law enforcement or family.
2. Activate school crisis team if appropriate.
3. Notify staff before normal operating hours.
4. Determine method of notifying students and parents. Announce availability of counseling services for those who need assistance.
5. Refer media to superintendent

Post-Crisis Intervention:

1. Meet with school counseling staff and support agencies to determine level of intervention for staff and students.
2. Designate rooms as private counseling areas.
3. Escort affected student's siblings and close friends and other "highly stressed" students to counselors.
4. Assess stress levels of staff. Recommend counseling to overly stressed staff.
5. Follow-up with students and staff who receive counseling.
6. Designate staff person(s) to attend funeral.
7. Allow for changes in normal routines or test schedules to address injury or death.

Student Unrest

1. Ensure the safety of students and staff first.
2. Notify police, if necessary.
3. Notify principal.
4. Contain unrest. Seal off area of disturbance.
5. Principal/designee notifies superintendent.
6. Warn staff. Principal/designee may issue lockdown.
7. Shut off bells.
8. Move students involved in disturbance to an isolated area.
9. Meet with student representatives to address issues.
10. Document incidents.

Teachers:

1. Keep students calm.
2. Lock classroom doors.
3. Do not allow students outside of classroom until you receive an all-clear signal from principal/designee.
4. Make a list of students absent from classroom.
5. Document all incidents.

Suicide

Attempt

1. Verify information.
2. Call 911, if person requires medical attention, has a weapon, or needs to be restrained.
3. Notify school psychologist/counselor, principal and DHS where appropriate

4. Principal calls superintendent and parent(s) or guardian(s) if suicidal person is student. Principal may schedule meeting with parents and school psychologist/counselor to determine course of action.
5. Try to isolate suicidal person from other students.
6. Stay with person until counselor/suicide intervention arrives. Do not leave suicidal person alone.
7. Determine method of notifying staff, students and parents. Hold daily staff debriefings before and after normal operating hours as needed.
8. Activate school crisis team to implement recovery procedures. Determine level of intervention.

Suicidal Death/Serious Injury

1. Verify information.
2. Activate school crisis team.
3. Principal notifies superintendent.
4. Notify staff in advance of next school day following suicide or attempted suicide.
5. Determine method of notifying students and parents. Do not mention "suicide" or details about death in notification. Do not hold memorials or make death appear heroic. Protect privacy of family.
6. Implement recovery procedures.

Post-Crisis Intervention:

1. To determine level of intervention for staff and students, meet with school counseling staff and support services.
2. Designate rooms as private counseling areas. Escort siblings and close friends and other "highly stressed" students to counselors.
3. Assess stress levels of staff. Recommend counseling to overly stressed staff.
4. Refer media to superintendent. Do not let media question students or staff.
5. Follow-up with students and staff who receive counseling.
6. Resume normal routines as soon as possible.

Suspicious Mail or Package

1. Suspicious mail or packages may meet the following description:
2. Outside of mail/package:
 - No return address
 - Possibly mailed from a foreign country
 - Excessive postage
 - Misspelled words
 - Badly typed or written words
 - Incorrect titles or addressed to title only
 - Oily stains, discolorations or crystallization on envelope/wrapper
 - Excessive tape or string
3. Contents:
 - Protruding wires
 - Lopsided or uneven
 - Rigid or bulky
 - Strange odor
4. Do not touch, smell, or taste unknown substances.
5. Fence off area and mark as "do not enter, or dangerous..."

6. Evacuate and seal off room.
7. Wash hands thoroughly.
8. Call 911.
9. Make a list of all adults and children present in the room at the time of the incident to provide to local health authorities and the police.
10. Inform all parents of the incident.
11. Complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity.

Utility Failure

Gas Line Break

1. Call 911.
2. Notify principal/designee.
3. Open windows.
4. If directed, follow evacuation procedures.
5. Do not re-enter building until utility officials say it is safe.

Electric Power Failure

1. Calm students.
2. Stay in classroom until evacuation notification.
3. If there is danger of fire, evacuate the building by evacuation procedures.
4. If a short is suspected, turn off all electric devices in room, and notify custodian.

Water Line Break

1. Notify principal/designee and custodian.
2. Relocate articles that may be damaged by water.
3. Relocate students to designated safe areas.

Weapons

Student or staff who are aware of a weapon brought to school

1. Notify principal or teacher immediately.
2. Tell principal or teacher name of suspected person who brought the weapon, where the weapon is located, if the suspect has threatened anyone or any other details that may prevent the suspect from hurting someone or himself/herself.
3. If teacher suspects that weapon is in classroom, he/she should confidentially notify a neighboring teacher. Teacher should not leave classroom.

Principal:

1. Call police if a weapon is suspected, as viewed by a reasonable person, to be in school.
2. Ask another administrator to join you in questioning suspected student or staff member.
3. If feasible, accompany suspect to private office to wait for police.
4. If situation warrants, isolate suspect/area until police arrive.
5. Assign person detailed notes of all events and why search was conducted.
6. Notify parent(s) or guardian(s) of suspect is a student. Explain why search was conducted and results of the search.
7. Avoid confrontation. Try not to disarm him/her. Back away with your arms up. Remain calm.

SECTION FIVE – RECOVERY

Recovery is the process of assisting people with the physical, psychological and emotional trauma associated with experiencing tragic events.

The following section contains follow-up measures and tools to effectively address the aftermath of an emergency situation. This collection of recovery measures is designed to assist teachers and other professionals as they help students and families begin the recovery and healing process.

- a. Introduction to Recovery & Aftermath Planning
- b. Disasters and Their Effects
- c. Strategies for Follow-up to Emergencies
 - General Strategies for Follow-Up
 - Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
 - Teachers Helping Children After a Critical Incident
 - Understanding Age-Appropriate CISM Interventions
 - The Talking Method and the Drawing Method
 - Assisting Children When Someone at School Dies
 - Suggestions for Handling a Classmate Tragedy
 - Suggestions for Students Attending a Visitation or a Funeral
 - Suggestions for Students When Visiting Grieving Parents
 - Memorials
 - Suicide
 - Caring for the Care Provider
 - Information Sheet to Share with Parents

Introduction to Recovery & Aftermath Planning

Recovery is a long-term process of supporting people who have experienced abnormal stressors. Initially, individuals may be in shock and may require support to meet basic physical and social support needs. In the months and years that follow a critical incident, individuals may enter a grief phase and need continued support. Children and their parents, faculty, staff and administrators, public safety personnel and the larger community are all impacted by tragic events and will benefit from immediate and ongoing support.

Short Term vs. Long Term Recovery

It is essential to understand recovery at two levels: immediate and ongoing. *Immediate support* is needed from the first moments of a traumatic event through the first few days following it. Frequently, recent victims of major trauma are in a state of shock, and at this time basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing are often a primary focus. *Long-term recovery* needs may not be readily apparent, and for many, ongoing support will be needed. Ongoing recovery refers to support provided to some individuals for weeks, months, or years following a tragic event.

Who should provide recovery services?

For some traumatic events, your school's crisis response team (SCRT) may be adequate to provide immediate and ongoing recovery services. Emergencies that affect a small number of people, or certain district level

emergencies, may be well served by crisis counseling and recovery from other district employees, local community mental health providers, employee assistance programs and similar services. For large-scale emergencies, however, services such as triage, assessment, outreach and crisis intervention are best delivered on a regional basis through a trained rapid response network. For large scale disasters, site-based personnel who are normally assigned these functions are now victims/survivors themselves. The regional network of trained professionals provides a structured immediate first response system to support the district in need. Once the immediate crisis has passed, site-based personnel will be called on to provide ongoing support services.

Disasters and Their Effects

The impact of tragedies on individual children and adults is not simple to predict. The range of human responses can include physical, cognitive and emotional symptoms including nausea, sleep disturbance, slowed thinking, bad memories, regressed behavior, anxiety, guilt, depression, anger and a host of other responses.

In this section, you will find:

- Potential experiences or feelings after a disaster
- Symptoms of Distress in Children
- Mental Health Checklist

Potential experiences or feelings after a disaster include:

- Sense of fear, worry
- Disruption of home, routine
- Feeling that one's life was or is threatened
- Feeling trapped and isolated
- Feeling out of control of life's basics: food, shelter, clothing, people, comfort...even life itself
- Having flashbacks to other catastrophes
- Feeling cut-off from services
- Being separated from loved ones
- Having a sense of mortality
- Feeling "survivor guilt"
- Children who are forced to become "parents" to adults who are scared or worried
- Problems sleeping (too much or too little)
- Loss of weight
- Poor hygiene

Symptoms of Distress in Children

As a result of traumatic experiences some children will show a variety of symptoms of distress. Adults must first know a child's baseline ("usual") behavior and cultural/ethnic responses before he/she can identify "unusual" or problem behavior in a child. In addition to teachers and school administrators, it is important to train bus drivers, foodservice workers and any other staff and/or community members to be alert for students who show signs of emotional distress.

Symptoms of distress in children include:

- Unusual complaints of illness
- Keeping isolated from the rest of the group
- Child seems pressured, anxious that he/she somehow dominates, has to distract others, or is otherwise “needy”
- Changed behavior/appearance
- Resistant to opening up (however, child might just be shy, may have language or cultural barrier)
- No eye contact (Note: In some cultures, making eye contact with adults is “defiant behavior”)
- Difficulty concentrating, can’t focus
- “Feisty” or hyperactive/silly, giddy
- Any emotional display; crying, “regressed” behavior (less than age appropriate)
- Lack of emotional expression
- Poor performance
- Can’t tolerate change; can’t move to next task
- Lethargic, apathetic
- Easily startled, jumpy

Mental Health Checklist

This checklist, provided by FEMA, can assist parents and teachers in determining if a child is in need of professional counseling following a disaster or traumatic event. Add up the pluses and minuses to obtain a final score. If the child scores more than 35, it is suggested you seek a mental health consultation.

1. Has the child had more than one major stress within a year BEFORE this disaster such as a death, molestation, major illness or divorce? If yes, +5.
2. Does the child have a network of supportive, caring individuals who relate to him/her daily? If yes, -10.
3. Has the child had to move out of his/her house because of this disaster? If yes, +5.
4. Was there reliable housing within one week of the disaster with resumption of the usual household members living together? If yes, -10.
5. Is the child showing severe disobedience or delinquency? If yes, +5.

Has the child shown any of the following as a NEW behavior for more than three weeks after the disaster?

6. Nightly states of terror? +5
7. Waking from dreams confused or in a sweat? +5
8. Difficulty concentrating? +5
9. Extreme irritability? +5
10. Loss of previous abilities in toilet or speech? +5
11. Onset of stuttering or lisping? +5
12. Persistent severe anxiety or phobias? +5
13. Obstinance/stubbornness? +5
14. New or exaggerated fears? +5
15. Rituals or compulsions? +5
16. Severe clinging to adults? +5

17. Inability to fall asleep or stay asleep? +5
18. Startling at any reminder of the disaster? +5
19. Loss of ambition in the future? +5
20. Loss of pleasure in usual activities? +5
21. Loss of curiosity? +5
22. Persistent sadness or crying? +5
23. Persistent headaches or stomachaches? +5
24. Hypochondria? +5
25. Was anyone in the child's immediate family killed or severely injured in the disaster (including injury to the child)? If yes, +15.

Total _____

NOTE: Any child presenting a preoccupation with death, unusual accident proneness, or suicidal threats should be referred for immediate consultations. It is also recommended that any child who has been seriously injured or who has lost a parent, sibling or caregiver to death be referred to a mental health professional.

Strategies for Follow-Up to Emergencies

For some trauma victims, adverse effects fade with emotional support and the passage of time. Others are more deeply affected and experience long-term consequences. These reactions are normal responses to an abnormal event. Although no one can predict who will experience the most severe reaction to trauma, the more direct the exposure to the event, the higher the risk for emotional harm.

In general, schools can help children by:

1. Restoring a learning environment
2. Modeling how to recover from the event
3. Maintaining basic educational goals
 - Administrative staff, counselors and teachers can help their school community by:
 - Reducing conflict among groups
 - Creating working partnerships among groups inside and outside of the school
 - Following familiar school routines
 - Acknowledging the trauma through shared activities and observances
 - Representing safety and security
 - Supporting children and their families
 - Creating opportunities to support caregivers
 - Having trained crisis intervention personnel be highly visible in the schools following a crisis
 - Remembering that children and their communities are resilient when supported adequately

General Strategies for Follow-Up

Short-Term Follow-Up:

1. Convene Crisis Response Team and faculty/staff members to update them on any additional information/procedures.
2. In case of death, provide funeral/visitation information.
3. Identify students and staff in need of follow-up support and assign staff members to monitor vulnerable students:
4. Coordinate stress management/crisis intervention strategies for students
5. Announce what the school is doing for students, including ongoing support for students with place, time, and staff facilitator
6. Provide parents with a list of community resources available to students and their families.
7. Designate a comfort room for counseling.
8. Convene district-wide support team to assist with crisis management.
9. Assess district-wide support needs, and develop planned intervention Strategies.
10. Schedule and provide student, family and staff Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM, Everly & Mitchell, 1999) services.
11. Discuss successes and problems.
12. Discuss things to do differently next time.
13. Allow staff opportunities to discuss feelings and reactions and provide list of suggested readings to teachers, parents and students.

Long-Term Follow-Up and Evaluation:

1. Amend Emergency Management Protocols if needed.
2. Write thank-you notes to people who provided support during the emergency.
3. Be alert to anniversaries and holidays. Often students and staff will experience an “anniversary” trigger reaction the following month(s) or year(s) on the date of the emergency, or when similar crises occur.

Teachers Helping Children after a Critical Incident

Ways Teachers Can Assist Students:

- Cope with your own natural feelings of helplessness, fear, and anger. Until you do this, you won't be able to effectively help the children.
- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of distress and post traumatic stress reactions.
- Put the emergency or critical incident in context; provide a perspective.
- Communicate a positive “I'm not helpless” attitude.
- Start the healing process; help children to feel relieved and soothed.
- Identify children who may need crisis intervention and referral to mental health professionals or other helpers.

Understanding Age-Appropriate CISM Interventions

When providing Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM, Everly & Mitchell, 1999) interventions, it is essential to tailor your approach to the developmental level of the students involved. In general, younger students need more teacher led interventions using

activities (as opposed to discussion), while older students benefit from counselor led discussions.

The Talking Method and the Drawing Method

The Talking Method and the Drawing Method are two suggested methods/techniques to use in the classroom after a critical incident. Following are suggested questions or themes, and specific techniques to help students understand and process the critical incident.

Suggested questions to ask/themes to represent:

- Where were you when it (the disaster/event) happened?
- What were you doing?
- Where were your friends? Where was your family?
- What was your first thought when it happened?
- What did you see? What did you hear?
- What sound did it make? What did you smell?
- Was anyone you know killed or injured?
- What can you do now to help others to feel better?
- How did you feel?
- What did other people around you do (during, after)?
- What was the silliest thing you did?
- Were you or anyone else you know injured?
- What happened to pets or other animals around you?
- What dreams did you have after it?
- What reminds you of it? When do you think about it?
- What do you do differently since the event?
- How do you feel now? What makes you feel better?
- How have you gotten through rough times before?
- What would you do differently if it happened again?
- How did you help others? How would you help next time?
- What can you do now to help others?

Talking Method Activities:

- Child tells a story (allow metaphors)
 - Puppets “tell” or “live” a story
 - Have an open discussion - using previous questions, ask for volunteers to begin with...talk general to specific
 - Use photos, drawings, etc. to facilitate discussions
 - Use video if appropriate prior to discussion to get it going
 - Create a skit, play or do role-playing, related to the critical incident (provide “dress-up” clothes if available, including uniforms if possible to represent emergency workers seen during the disaster, etc.)
 - Do “show and tell” related to the event
 - Inform/educate the children about the event to make it less threatening to talk/act about
 - When people understand that their feelings and experiences are normal and can be predicted (even if they are scary feelings), they begin to regain control
- Note: Remember to keep yourself in a facilitative/guiding role, not in a role of “control” of the discussions/stories etc. This will be most helpful to the children. Reassure the children by verbally acknowledging and “normalizing” their experiences. For some children, the talking method is not helpful:

- In some cultures, talking openly is not comfortable, appropriate (or even “polite”).
- Some children have been raised in families where “talking-out one’s feelings” was not possible or supported.
- Some children have been raised in situations where talking openly was not practiced or encouraged.
- Some children simply prefer not to discuss their feelings openly due to personality type, privacy concerns or lack of trust in the process.
- All these reasons should be respected as valid.

Drawing Method Activities

The drawing method is a playful experience to express feelings.

First introduce drawing as:

- Another way of “talking,” but with pictures instead of words.
- A means of expression used by many (point out that some people express themselves by talking, some by singing, some by dancing, some by drawing)
- Remember when introducing drawing of any sort to clearly say that the goal is not to draw a “pretty picture” but rather, a picture of expression.
- Drawing should not be judged or analyzed. If a child’s artwork is concerning, refer the child for mental health services.
- Drawing should be presented to the child as an option for expression, not as a required activity.

Drawing Method Activities:

- Draw/write a book together or make journals with pictures.
- Do a collective drawing such as a mural (murals tell a “collective story,” develop/support teamwork, and feel “safer” for some children as opposed to individual art).
- Give the mural a “place of honor” in the classroom.
- Make the mural accessible for everyday viewing.
- Celebrate the mural: use it to demonstrate getting through something tough, or to facilitate discussions.
- Take photos/slides of the mural when completed.
- Draw aspects of the event (people, places, activities, etc.).
- Suggest lots of options, not specifics (e.g., rather than saying “draw a fireman, helping someone,” say “draw a person you saw doing something helpful...”)
- Create a collage (a variety of materials) using a leading question such as “Where were you when the disaster happened?”
- The teacher may draw/paste on the central image, then the children add photos, magazine pictures, articles, fabric pieces, etc. around theme, or may draw directly onto it.
- Avoid the use of paint in this method as it is too “loose” of a medium for a traumatized child.
- Allow a full range of expression: some kids draw recognizable “things,” others draw “abstracts;” respect all varieties.
- Allow children to discard their artwork or decide what to do with it.
- Emphasize to the children that their work will not be judged, graded or necessarily shown to others.

- Only exhibit the artwork if a child desires to share with others.
- Allow the use of various mediums (pastels, crayons, pencils, markers, etc.).
- A key element of the Drawing Method is the follow-up discussion. This discussion can help to bring closure to the experience, an important step in the process of expressing feelings.

Assisting Children When Someone at School Dies

Children may experience a number of powerful feelings when confronted with the death of a classmate or another individual.

CISM usually follows this sequence:

1. Introductory Phase
2. Fact Phase
3. Feeling Phase
4. Reaction/Teaching
5. Closure Phase

1. Introductory Phase

- Introduce team members or helpers to discuss why we are here and what we hope to accomplish
- Stress the need for confidentiality and ask for a verbal agreement to keep what is said confidential

2. Fact Phase

- Give all known relevant facts about the death/incident

Ask the following questions:

- Is this your understanding of what happened?
- Does anyone have any other information?
- Is there any other information you want to have about his/her death?
- How did you find out?
- Where were you when you first heard?
- What were your first thoughts?
- Is there anyone not here that perhaps needs to be? Who are you worried/concerned about?

3. Feeling Phase (make an effort to include everyone in the discussion)

- How did you feel when you first heard? Explore feelings (shock, denial, anger, fear etc.)
- How are you feeling now? (All feelings are okay)
- We did not know (name), could anyone tell us about him/her? What was he/she like?
- When do you think it will hit you that he/she is really gone or when do you think you'll miss him/her?
- Does anyone have a photo of him/her? (Pass around)
- What are some of your memories of?
- How do you think he/she would like to be remembered?

4. Reaction/Teaching Phase

Explore the physical, emotional and cognitive stress reactions of the group members

- What are some things you usually do when you are really upset or down?
- Has anyone lost anyone close recently? What were some of your reactions to his/her death?
- Take this opportunity to teach a little about the grief process, if appropriate
- Talk about effective coping techniques
- Determine if students have someone they can talk to

5. Closure Phase

- Give information about wake/funeral if available
- Students will often make comments about wanting to take a collection, plant a tree, or dedicate a page in the yearbook. Let them talk, then refer them to school staff without either encouraging or discouraging them
- Encourage students to support one another
- Remind them that it may take a long time before they will feel settled and that's normal
- Encourage them to talk with someone in their family about their sadness
- NOTE: This process should conclude with quiet, reflective time.

Memorials

When a member of the school dies, often people will want to find ways to memorialize the student or staff member. A word of caution: carefully think through the type of tribute you pay to a person who has died.

Consider these points and examples:

- In general, memorials should focus on the life lived, rather than on the cause of death.
- Yearbook memorials should be a regular-sized picture with a simple statement such as "We'll miss you."
- If a school were to create a permanent or lasting memorial for one person, it would be difficult to refuse a similar memorial for another person.
- A school that planted a tree for a student who died, realized this was needed also for a second death and then a third. The resulting group of trees came to be referred to as "the graveyard" by students.
- Another school had a "memorial tree" die during one dry summer and had to address the hard feelings of the family who thought the tree had not been properly cared for.
- There are many wonderful ways to support student's and loved one's need to remember, examples include: cards, food, kind words, work parties for relatives, scholarship funds, contributions to a favorite charity, or flowers.
- Parents and loved ones especially want to know people miss the person and there was great sadness at the loss; they also want to know people assisted the grieving friends.
- Permanent or lasting memorials are not encouraged as a way for schools to remember someone who died as a result of suicide.

Suicide

A school's general response to a suicide does not differ markedly from a response to any death emergency. However, some issues exclusive to suicide require specific attention.

School administrators must allow students to grieve the loss of a peer without glorifying the method of death. Over-emphasis on a suicide may be interpreted by vulnerable students as a glamorization of the suicidal act, which can assign legendary or idolized status to taking one's own life.

The following "DO's" and "DON'Ts" will help school staff limit glamorization of suicide:

DO:

- Do acknowledge the suicide as a tragic loss of life.
- Do allow students to attend funeral services.
- Do provide support for students profoundly affected by the death.

DON'T:

- Don't organize school assemblies to honor the deceased student.
- Don't dedicate the yearbook or yearbook pages, newspaper articles, proms, athletic events, or advertisements to the deceased individual.
- Don't pay tribute to a suicidal act by planting trees, hanging engraved plaques or holding other memorial activities.

A suicide in the school community can heighten the likelihood, in subsequent weeks, of "copycat" suicide attempts and threats among those especially vulnerable to the effects of a suicide. To prevent further tragedies, students considered to be especially susceptible to depression/suicide must be carefully monitored and appropriate action taken if they are identified as high risk. These efforts require a limited, rather than school-wide, response.

Caring for the Care Provider

General Reactions to Emergencies or Critical Incidents in Adults

First reactions may include:

- Numbness, shock, difficulty believing what has occurred or is in the process of occurring
- Physical and mental reactions may be very slow or confused
- Difficulty in decision making; uncertainty about things; it may be difficult to choose a course of action or to make even small judgment calls

Ongoing reactions may include:

- Loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, loss of interest or pleasure in everyday activities
- Desire to get away from everyone - even family/friends
- Emotional lability; becoming irritable or upset more quickly than usual
- Feelings of fatigue, hopelessness, helplessness
- Digestive problems; headaches or backaches
- Difficulty accepting that the emergency has had an impact or difficulty accepting support from friends and the community

Some things that can be helpful:

- Take time to relax and do things you find pleasant; getting away for a few hours with close friends can be helpful
- Stick with your regular routine for a while; avoid making changes, even if it appears to be a positive change
- Get regular exercise or participate in a regular sport; activity soothes anxiety and helps you relax
- Keep your days as simple as possible; avoid taking on any additional responsibilities or new projects

- Tap sources of assistance with your workload - have students, instructional assistants, or volunteers help grade papers, take care of copying, or help with other time-consuming tasks
- If symptoms of stress persist beyond a few weeks or are severe, seek professional help

Information to Share with Parents

Helping Your Child or Teen after a Disaster

Children may be especially upset and express feelings about the disaster. These reactions are normal and usually will not last long.

Listed below are some problems you may see in your child:

- Excessive fear of darkness, separation, or being alone
- Clinging to parents, fear of strangers
- Worry
- Increase in immature behaviors
- Not wanting to go to school
- Changes in eating/sleeping behaviors
- Increase in either aggressive behavior or shyness
- Bedwetting or thumb sucking
- Persistent nightmares
- Headaches or other physical complaints

The following will help your child or teen:

- Talk with your child about his/her feelings about the disaster; share your feelings, too.
- Talk about what happened; give your child information he/she can understand.
- Reassure your child that you are safe and together; you may need to repeat this reassurance often.
- Hold and comfort your child often.
- Spend extra time with your child at bedtime.
- Allow your child to mourn or grieve over lost belongings (a toy, a lost blanket).
- If you feel your child is having problems at school, talk to his/her teacher or counselor so you can work together to help him/her.

Ongoing recovery:

Please reread this information from time to time in the coming months. Usually a child's emotional response to a disaster will not last long, but some problems may be present or recur for many months afterward. Professionals skilled in talking with people experiencing disaster-related problems are on staff at your community mental health center.

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