



CRISIS/EMERGENCY INTERVENTION PLAN

SUPERINTENDENT'S POLICY STATEMENT

School officials in the Princeton Independent School District are always concerned about the welfare of the students in our schools. We know that we have a moral obligation and legal responsibility for their protection while they are on school grounds as well as the protection of school facilities.

The district has developed a comprehensive emergency plan. This plan along with the procedures outlined by our building principals will help us to be prepared should any emergency arise on our campus.

All campus-level procedures and the communication plan should be reviewed annually by each school. It is impossible for us to foresee all possible emergencies, but we have researched the most effective way to use our resources and to respond immediately to those situations that cannot be avoided.

Our main objective will always be to attend to the health and welfare of each child and staff member. Any emergency will disrupt our regular activities and schedules. We trust that we are prepared, and we will work together to remedy the situation as soon as possible.

**Philip Anthony
Superintendent**

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Princeton I.S.D., working with broad community support, has compiled this Crisis/Emergency Intervention Plan to be used as an aid in the event of an untimely crisis or emergency. Its goal is to assist school personnel in establishing a network and guidelines for dealing with any emergency or with shock, grief and the healing process that follows unexpected death or trauma. A situation in which schools and/or the community would be mobilized is defined as:

A Crisis Situation

- Suicide or traumatic death of a student, teacher, or other person known by a number of students,
- The death of a nationally known figure(s) admired by students,
- A suicide attempt or serious threat of suicide,
- A legal crisis, i.e. kidnapping, homicide, etc.,
- A school bus accident,
- A natural disaster in area,
- A national threat.

Or An Emergency Situation

- A natural disaster affecting school property,
- A fire,
- A bomb threat or explosion.

Each situation that occurs is unique; therefore, the judgment of those involved will determine the most appropriate steps. However, wherever possible the following steps should be considered.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

911

PISD ADMINISTRATION EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS		
	OFFICE	HOME
Philip Anthony, Superintendent	469.952.5400	972.979.4978
Danny Folk, Deputy Superintendent	469.952.5400	214.799.8080
Jackie Hendricks, Asst. Superintendent	469.952.5400	972.752.5258
Jim Staley, Director of Auxiliary Services	469.952.5400	214.491.9138
Police Officer Jesus Rodriguez	214.620.1999	

CITY & COUNTY EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS	
Emergency	911
Collin County Sheriff	972.547.5350
Poison Control	1.800.764.7661
Princeton Police Department (Non-Emergency)	972.736.3555
Princeton Police Department (Emergency)	911
Princeton Fire Department	972.736.6668
Princeton Public Works	972.736.6169
Princeton Water Department	972.736.2711

CRISIS/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Any crisis or emergency should be reported immediately to the Superintendent of schools. If it is necessary to send anyone to a hospital by ambulance for a serious injury, send one staff member to each facility utilized to serve as a liaison between hospital and district administration. The liaison should relay progress reports as soon as possible.

Alternate facilities should be established and “Hold Harmless Agreements” signed by the school district and the property owner assuring them that students will be supervised by district employees while on the premises; and that the school has insurance to cover any injuries or property damage while the students are at their facilities. Property owner, school, and the administration should each have copies of the agreement.

A Community Crisis Team should be established and agreements made between the school and other local agencies regarding any resources available that meet the physical and emotional needs of students and community members in the event of a crisis/emergency.

Every year, the school’s Crisis/Emergency Procedure Manual will be updated to reflect the actions required to minimize the loss of life and injury to persons and property. The principal of each campus will be the planning coordinator and will involve staff members to accomplish the objectives. Faculty responsibility for implementation of the plan will be assigned by the administration. Assignment of duties to specific individuals does not relieve other school employees from acting within their responsibility during emergencies.

During the first month of the school year, the principal from each campus will arrange a faculty meeting to review the validity of the plan and to update the staff regarding new procedures.

A chain of command will include the names and phone numbers of the personnel to succeed the principal in the event of his/her absence or incapacitation. The names will be designated in writing and prominently displayed in the school office.

A current Crisis/Emergency Procedure Manual will be kept by each office telephone in the district. The manual will include designated checklists with lines of succession and emergency assignments.

Each principal should appoint the following to the In-School Crisis Management Team for his/her campus and instruct them as to their individual responsibilities: one person from each major area of the school building, one person near the phone in the main office, the assistant principal, school counselor, nurse, and any other employee designated by the principal.

The Role Of The In-School Crisis Team

Responsibilities of persons identified and instructed to assist the principal during any crisis or emergency situation may include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting the person-in-charge to serve the needs of the students, parents and faculty members.
- Relaying factual information efficiently and accurately.
- Maintain calm and control.
- Clearing the building and being the last person to leave an assigned area in case of an evacuation.

The Role Of The Community Crisis Team

The Community Crisis Team has entered into an informal agreement with Princeton I.S.D. to coordinate other resources within the City of Princeton. Their responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assisting school officials with disaster awareness.
- Collection, analysis and dissemination of information concerning potential disasters.
- Establishment of a warning system to assure that school officials receive immediate word of any situation that may cause a threat to the schools or their students.
- Coordination of fire, police, and other support for the schools, both in disaster planning and in the event of an actual disaster
- Assistance with the instruction of school personnel who may require special training as a result of their disaster response assignments.
- Assistance in dealing with state or federal officials during the recovery stage.
- Assist with additional facilities.
- Assist by providing additional support groups.
- Coordination of physical needs such as food and clothing.
- Assist with additional personnel.
- Assist with Individual Family Crisis needs.

The Role Of The Media And Guidelines For Reporting Crisis/Emergency

The relationship between the media and schools, during a time of crisis/emergency, has often been one of conflict. The schools want to minimize negative publicity; the media has a responsibility to report the news. The ideal situation is for the media to present stories to the public in a manner that is informative and educational. In the case of a suicide, care should be taken to report the facts without increasing the possibility of additional suicides. It is important to keep in mind that the school is not the only source of information; frequently, the school does not have all the facts concerning the suicide or sudden death and can be placed on the defensive when pressed for facts. On the other hand, when the school does not present available information, they are seen as uncooperative. The paramount issue for all is the right to privacy and confidentiality for the victim and family.

Guidelines for the Media

News stories, articles, and dramatic presentations on the subject of suicide have come under scrutiny in recent years. The concern has been that such presentations may have stimulated some persons to attempt suicide. There is confusion about how the subject should be treated to minimize this danger. As a service to the news media and the people making public presentations on the subject of suicide, the Public Information Committee of the American Association of Suicidology has created a list of general statements to aid in a responsible presentation of information about suicide. To discourage imitative or copycat suicides, it is important to **minimize the following**:

- Reporting specific details of the method.
- Descriptions of a suicide as unexplainable. For example, “He had everything going for him.”
- Reporting romanticized versions of the reason for the suicide. For example, “We wanted to be together for all eternity.”
- Simplistic reasons for the suicide. For example, “Boy commits suicide because he had to wear braces.”

Additionally, the print media can **reduce the imitative effect by**:

- Printing the story on the inside page.
- If the story must go on the front page, printing it below the fold.
- Avoid the word suicide in the headline.
- Avoid printing a photo of the person who committed suicide.

In general, it is important to report a suicide in a straightforward manner so that the suicide does not appear exciting, the suicidal person does not seem admirable, and no approval of the suicide is evidenced. If the suicide has sensational elements, it is important to maintain an informative and educational approach to reporting, and not to focus on those elements. To **encourage prevention of suicide**, it is helpful to do the following:

- Present alternatives to suicide, calling a suicide prevention center or obtaining counseling.
- Present examples of positive outcomes of people in suicidal crises.
- Provide information regarding community resources for those who may be suicidal.
- Include a list of signs of suicidal behavior:
 - Suicide threats.
 - Statements revealing a desire to die.
 - Previous suicide attempts.
 - Sudden changes in behavior – withdrawal, apathy, moodiness.
 - Depression – crying, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, hopelessness.
 - Final arrangements – such as giving away personal possessions.
 - Discuss suicide openly and frankly

Guidelines for Media Interviews

When possible set policies and make decisions regarding the media prior to the occurrence of an emotional event. Direct all media inquiries to the Superintendent of Schools. This avoids confusion in times of crisis and ensures consistency in information given to the media. **The spokesperson should:**

- Use clear, simple terminology that readers or viewers can understand.
- Avoid being defensive or adversarial. Acknowledge the difficulty of the media's role and take the position of cooperation. If you don't know the answer to a question, put the interviewer in contact with another resource.
- Review statistics so erroneous information is not dispensed. Make sure to support facts and statistics with original resources.
- Use caution if the interviewer requests to be put in contact with an attempter or survivor. Make contact yourself first. Get permission to give the media person the name and telephone number of the attempter or survivor or offer anonymity to protect him from future unwanted calls.
- Before being recorded or interviewed, make it clear that you will not discuss details of the method or specific reasons of a particular suicide. General

information is more beneficial. For example, guns are used in the majority of suicides, or most suicides follow a significant loss.

- Never stand in front of or near school identification i.e., marquee or school sign during an interview which is being videoed or when pictures are taken.
- Personal experiences and case studies can make a point more real and understandable. Take care not to reveal information that might break the confidentiality of a client.
- Whenever possible, emphasize the suicide warning signs, how to respond to someone who is threatening suicide and where to go for help in your local community.
- Get in and out of the news as quickly as possible.

CRISIS PROCEDURES – SCHOOLS

Notification Procedures

Upon a crisis, the Superintendent will be the first one notified. The Superintendent will contact the crisis team.

The Superintendent will meet with the School Crisis Team Leader and other administrative personnel to determine the potential impact on the student body, school personnel, parents, other schools and the community. The group will implement specifics of the school plan and any changes in the daily school routine and/or support personnel.

The School Crisis Team leader will contact members of the Community Crisis Team.

The Community Crisis Team will include the following individuals:

- School Crisis Team Leader
- Principal of High School or representative
- Principal of Jr. High School or representative
- Principal of Intermediate School or representative
- Principal of Elementary Schools or representative
- City official
- Representative from church ministers
- Representative from Chamber of Commerce

Mobilizing The School Staff

The central support staff will meet with the school administrative staff to implement the specifics of the school plan and any changes in the daily school routine and/or support personnel.

1. Assemble In-school Crisis Management Team
 - a In-school Crisis Management Team may be administrators, counselors, teachers, and nurses.
 - b This should be done as early as possible to allow sufficient time to collect facts and to develop a plan.
2. Planning session of individual In-School Crisis Management Team
 - a Determine potential impact on student body, school personnel, parents and other schools.
 - b Make arrangements for additional crisis support services.

- c Provide written factual and appropriate information that will be shared with students.
 - d Provide a brief statement for secretaries to read when parents and others call. This statement should include a brief description of the incident, reassurance that students and staff are safe, a brief statement of what is being done to handle the situation, and a thank you for seeking facts rather than promoting rumors. The campus principal should conduct a brief training session with each secretary on how to handle calls and what to do with difficult calls.
 - e Notify each principal in the district of the situation if deemed necessary. Calling of principals must begin with those facilities located closest to the site of crisis.
3. A faculty meeting should be held after school the day of the crisis to:
- a Give the staff accurate information about the incident.
 - b Advise staff members on how to receive assistance and to assist students.
 - c Inform teachers to notify counselors of students at high risk. (by observing signs which would indicate students needing extra help - students close to the deceased, known depressed, emotionally disturbed, suicidal, students having difficulty dealing with another death; unusually withdrawn students).
 - d Advise the staff of available support resources.
 - e Inform the staff of high stress times, for example the day of the funeral.
 - f Explain that the school day will proceed as normally as possible and that teachers are to acknowledge the death or trauma without dwelling on it unnecessarily.
 - g Inform staff that all media contacts are to be referred to the Superintendent.
 - h Inform school personnel of outside support services (i.e. hours churches are open for support and counseling outside the regular school day).
4. Actions taken on second day.
- a In-School Crisis Team meets at the beginning of the day for assessment and critique.
 - b Continue seeing high-risk students and staff individually through counseling center.
 - c Establish small groups for students and staff for grief management.
 - d Arrange meeting in the evening for parents, students, school staff, and other interested parties as needed.

- i** Provide information on the crisis.
 - ii** Offer small group sessions for processing. (May work with churches on this.)
 - e** Arrange for staff to be available to students remaining in the building during the funeral. Staff members attending the funeral will observe students in need of follow-up support.

5. Follow-up

- a** Crisis Team meetings as determined by the Principal.
- b** Continue to see high-risk students and staff individually and in small groups.
 - i** High-risk students should be seen in individual sessions.
 - ii** Form groups (6-8) of previously high-risk students for follow-up.
 - iii** Time frame could be four weeks to end of school year.

DEFINITIONS AND RESPONSES

Adolescents are affected to varying degrees by events that happen to family members, friends and classmates. In some cases they are even affected by tragedies involving people whom they only know distantly. For instance, a child may relate to another child in his or her age group even though he or she may not know the child personally. Often, a tragic event represents to that child the first realization that “something bad” can really happen, activating fears and feelings of vulnerability.

The degree of response usually depends upon the closeness of the adolescent to the victim, or his or her exposure to the event. A child who witnesses a tragedy will experience a more profound reaction.

The *definitions* of the crises children and adolescents may experience are dealt with in the chapter.

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

1. Use your Threat Call Checklist.
2. Upon receipt of a bomb threat, the person receiving the call should make every attempt to:
 - a. Prolong the conversation.
 - b. Identify background noises.
 - c. Note distinguishing voice characteristics.
 - d. Interrogate the caller as to description of bomb, where it is, when it is due to explode.
 - e. Determine the caller's knowledge of the facility.
 - f. **DON'T HANG UP THE PHONE:** Use another phone to call authorities. (Use **Land-line only – do not use cell phones or radios**)
3. Notify the Person-in-Charge who will notify the Superintendent of Schools and 911 if necessary.
4. The principal will decide whether to evacuate the school immediately and search the facility or make a preliminary search prior to any other action.
5. The bomb can be almost anything ranging from the most overt bundle of dynamite and clock to cleverly concealed perfectly ordinary objects. Briefcases, toolboxes and pieces of pipe have been used. You will be looking for something that doesn't belong.
6. If what appears to be a bomb is found, **DO NOT TOUCH IT.** The police department will take charge.
7. If the caller indicates a time the bomb is due to explode, and the principal determines the threat is valid, the standard fire drill with possible modifications will be announced for evacuation of the facility.
8. Evacuate personnel according to the Emergency Exit Procedure when instructed to do so by the Person-in-Charge. During inclement weather and a possible prolonged search, move students to your school's alternate location.
9. After all students have been evacuated; all utilities should be turned off.
10. Check absentee list for possible clues to who might have phoned in the bomb scare.
11. Attendance will be taken when the students are assembled away from the school. Give roll count to Person-in-Charge.

IF BOMB THREAT CALL IS RECEIVED:

1. Use Threat Call Checklist. **DO NOT DISCONNECT INCOMING CALL LINE.**
2. Immediately notify the building principal who will assess the situation and contact 911.
3. Alert Superintendent of School's Office.

THREAT CALL CHECKLIST

RECORD THE EXACT LANGUAGE OF THE THREAT:

ASK:

WHEN IS IT SET FOR? _____

WHERE IS IT? _____

WHAT KIND OF BOMB? _____

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? _____

WHO ARE YOU? _____

VOICE ON THE PHONE:

MAN _____ WOMAN _____ CHILD _____ APPROX. AGE _____

INTOXICATED _____ SPEECH IMPEDIMENT _____ ACCENT _____

OTHER _____

BACKGROUND NOISE:

MUSIC _____ CHILDREN _____ AIRPLANE _____ TRAFFIC _____

TALK _____ TYPING _____ MACHINES _____

OTHER _____

DON'T HANG UP PHONE (USE ANOTHER PHONE TO CALL POLICE)

(Land line only – do not use cell phones or radios)

POLICE NUMBER – 911

PERSON RECEIVING CALL, IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY AUTHORITIES AND GIVE ABOVE INFORMATION, THEN NOTIFY PERSON-IN CHARGE.

DATE _____ TIME OF CALL _____

CALL RECEIVED BY _____

BUS ACCIDENT

Precautionary measures before leaving district

- Check to see if first aid kit and other emergency equipment is on the bus or school vehicle as required by law.
- Take along a list of students/sponsors in attendance. Leave a copy with the school office. Include for each a home telephone number, names of parents, parents' work telephone, home address, and any indications of health or medical problems.

In the event of an accident

1. Remain Calm.
2. If threat of fire exists, move children to a safe place.
3. Call 911 for emergency vehicles/services: police, fire, ambulance, highway patrol and begin administration of first aid.
4. Call Superintendent at 469-952-5400
5. Call Principal at 469-952-5400
6. Call Transportation Department at 469-952-5400
7. Call Local Police (If Applicable) at 972-736-3555

Do not issue statements to the press. Refer them to the Superintendent's Office 469-952-5400 ext. 3508.

CHILDREN LEFT AT SCHOOL

Each campus/department will develop procedures for children left at school or other school sponsored activities. District employees should be familiar with notification procedures for contacting district administrators.

1. Check the student's emergency card and call the parents or other persons designated by parents. DO NOT transport child in private vehicle unless authorized.
2. Call building principal or designee at school or at home.
3. Call the Princeton Police Department at 972-736-3555 if the parent cannot be reached.

DO NOT LEAVE A CHILD ALONE AND UNATTENDED AT THE SCHOOL SITE.

EXPLOSIONS / FIRE

- When advised by Person-in-Charge, evacuate building using Emergency Exit Information, with possible modifications.
- Or when advised by Person-in Charge, proceed to alternate site for your school.
- If possible, students will be sent home by walking or bus, or parents can pick them up at the alternate location. Information on student pickup will be supplied by the school administration and broadcast on radio and television if possible.

EMERGENCY (FIRE) DRILL PROCEDURE

- At the sound of the fire alarm (3 long bells), all students must walk as rapidly as possible into the hall and follow the emergency exit route without crowding or running. The teacher will check to see that all students are out of the room and will close the door.
- The first students outside must move away from the building so they do not block the exit for those following.
- Teachers are responsible to see that students move away from the building, crossing the street when necessary to clear the area.
- The principal of each building will be responsible for preparing an emergency exit diagram for each floor of the building under his/her supervision. (See tab for your building.)

The following bell signals will be used for the fire alarm: three long bells – evacuate the building (march out of building in orderly manner without rushing or crowding); two bells – return (march back to room); one long bell – halt (stand at attention).

FLOODING

When a Flash Flood Watch is Issued

- The building principal or designee should listen to local radio or TV or National Weather Service for possible flash warnings and flooding progress.
- Be prepared to quickly move from danger if required.
- If you are on a road, watch for flooding in highway dips, low areas and around bridges.
- Watch for signs (thunder, lightning) of distant heavy rainfall.

When a Flash Flood Warning is Issued

- Do not attempt to cross a flowing ditch or stream on foot where water is above your knees.
- Do not attempt to drive through dips of unknown depths. If your vehicle stalls, abandon it and seek high ground.
- Be especially cautious after dark, when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

After the Flash Flood Warning - General

- Recognize that flash flooding may have ended, but general flooding may come later in streams and rivers.
- Know the location of high ground and how to get there.
- Stay out of flooded areas, streets and intersections. Plan alternate bus routes to avoid flood prone areas.

GANG / CULT ACTIVITY

- Be knowledgeable of the warning signs of gang/cult involvement (just one sign by itself is significant).
- Interview the student.
- Document all information relating to gang involvement (even if it does not appear relevant at the time).
- Keep an open mind.
- Stay objective.
- Notify principal.

GAS LEAK

Natural gas leaks can occur inside or outside of a building. The potential hazards of a gas leak are fire, explosion, carbon monoxide poisoning, and suffocation. You should suspect a gas leak if you smell a very unpleasant odor, like that of rotten eggs. “Mercaptan” is added to gas to let you know that a leak exists.

For All Gas Leaks

- Contact your building principal or designee.
- Contact the Maintenance Department at 469-952-5400, state the emergency situation.
- If Maintenance is not available, and the situation is an emergency, call the Fire Department at 911.
- Notify Atmos Energy (If Problem Persists) at 1-800-817-8090.
- If the smell of gas is faint, open windows or doors and evacuate the area
- If the smell of gas is strong, evacuate the building, move upwind from any smell
- Remove all person(s) from area and contact school nurse. If person(s) is unconscious do not enter area without breathing protection.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL / SPILLS

The main threat is toxic fumes. **KEEP STUDENTS INSIDE WITH ALL DOORS AND WINDOWS CLOSED.** If the need for evacuation develops, the Person-in-Charge shall rely on instructions from local authorities.

Direct Contact

- Evacuate the area to avoid fumes.
- Remove contaminated clothing and flush the area with cold running water for fifteen minutes. If flushing the eye area, position the flow into the eye while holding the eye open.
- Notify the school nurse.

Indirect Contact

- Evacuate the area to avoid fumes.
- If the spill is outside, move upwind from the spill.
- Building principal or designee will contact the Superintendent, if evacuation from campus is necessary, and / or Maintenance Department at 469-952-5400 to shut down ventilation system that transports fumes.

Cleanup and Disposal

- Never enter a spill area alone.
- Spill areas should be ventilated with fresh air and directional fans to prevent direct exposure.
- Contact Building Principal regarding clean-up procedures.

For Traffic Control: Call the Princeton Police Department 972-736-3555.

Identify The Spill To Emergency Personnel With The Following Information

- Product information
- Manufacturer information
- Product contents/ingredients as given on container (whenever possible, spell names to avoid misunderstanding)
- Volume of spill/exposure
- Reactions on surface/individuals
- Product contamination with other chemicals

HOMICIDE

Homicide is defined as the killing of a human being.

Responses to Anticipate

- Anger – which may be manifested in blaming oneself or others and in aggressive behavior.
- Crying – which actually may be listed as a response+ in conjunction with all cases. It is of little significance by itself unless it becomes prolonged and inappropriate.
- Depression – including inability to concentrate, falling grades, loss of activities formerly enjoyed, truancy and absenteeism, sleep disturbances and hyper alertness.
- Fear – including fear for oneself and others. In young children, fear that one may lose a parent or be rejected occurs. Often, young children develop separation anxiety, the fear of losing a parent and the fear of being alone.
- Blame – which would only result in certain circumstances where an individual was present and felt he or she should have intervened or protected the victim or should have been present to aid them. This could happen when a victim is a date, companion or family member.
- Regret – which we usually see revealed in remarks such as: “Why didn’t I do more?” “If only I had done...” or “I wish I had been nicer...” (Note that blame and regret are two separate responses. Both can exist or each can exist independent of the other.)
- Involvement with drugs and alcohol. A tragedy such as homicide rarely causes drug or alcohol abuse, but it would likely increase such behavior if it already existed.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Guidelines For Cleaning Up Spills

All body fluids should be treated as if they contain potential infectious agents.

Use of Gloves

Gloves should be worn by any caretaker when cleaning up blood spills, vomitus, urine, feces, semen, or vaginal secretions. Gloves should also be worn when removing any body fluid spills from the environment, (e.g. furniture, floors, rugs, etc.).

Hand Washing

Hand washing after contact with an individual is routinely recommended. In the case of accidental contact with blood, hands and/or affected skin areas should be washed immediately. Proper hand washing requires the use of soap and water and vigorous washing under a stream of running water for approximately ten (10) seconds. A waterless hand rinse should be used when running water is not available.

Cleaning Methods

Soiled environmental surfaces should be promptly cleaned with a freshly prepared household chlorine bleach solution (1:10 dilution). Apply a disinfectant absorbent agent to soiled rugs, allow to dry, sweep up with a dustpan and broom and follow with a disinfectant rug shampoo applied with a brush. Using fresh bleach solution, soak mops, brooms and brushes for ten (10) minutes. Other cleaning equipment should also be thoroughly rinsed in fresh bleach solution.

Washable clothing should be presoaked and washed separately using one-half cup chlorine or non-chlorine bleach per wash cycle. All district owned garments must be appropriately cleaned before issued to students. Intimate apparel or garments worn without underclothing will not be reissued to another student.

Material involving direct oral contact, e.g. instrument mouthpieces, CPR mannequins and face masks, should be cleaned before reuse or reissue. Established guidelines for CPR should be followed. Scrub surfaces with alcohol (70%) and allow to remain wet for thirty (30) seconds before wiping dry. Surfaces cleaned with bleach solution should remain wet for ten (10) minutes before rinsing with fresh water and wiping dry.

Disposal of Materials

Clothing and other non-disposable materials that are soaked with body fluids should be placed in plastic bags and instructions for handling given to appropriate persons. Disposable towels, tissues, gloves, and cleaning supplies should be used whenever possible, and should be placed in a plastic bag, securely tied and disposed of daily. Used cleaning solutions should be flushed down a toilet.

INJURY / DEATH

Severe injury may be defined as grievous physical or mental damage or trauma. It could include rape, child abuse, abuse of one parent by another and other types of assaults.

Responses to Anticipate

- Anger – especially in the case of rape.
- Crying – which actually may be listed as a response in conjunction with all actions. It is of little significance by itself unless it becomes prolonged and inappropriate.
- Depression – including inability to concentrate, falling grades, loss of activities formerly enjoyed, truancy, and absenteeism.
- Fear – including fear of being separated from parent and the fear of school.
- Blame – which would only result in certain circumstances where an individual was present and felt he or she should have intervened or protected the victim or should have been present to aid them. This could happen when a victim is a younger family member.
- Passive Behavior – including withdrawal, especially likely in cases of a child witnessing abuse – particularly sexual or physical abuse of a sibling or a parent.

Accidental death may be defined as the unexpected demise of an individual resulting from carelessness, unawareness, or ignorance.

Responses to Anticipate

- Crying – which actually may be listed as a response in conjunction with all cases. It is of little significance by itself unless it becomes prolonged and inappropriate.
- Depression – including inability to concentrate, falling grades, loss of activities formerly enjoyed, truancy and absenteeism, sleep disturbances and hyper alertness.
- Fear – including fear for oneself and others. In young children, fear that one may lose a parent or be rejected occurs. Often, young children develop separation anxiety, the fear of losing a parent and the fear of being alone.
- Blame – which would only result in certain circumstances where an individual was present and felt he or she should have intervened or protected the victim or should have been present to aid them. This could happen when a victim is a date, companion or family member.
- Regret – which we usually see revealed in remarks such as: “I should not have let him drive while drunk,” “If only I had done...” or “I should have thought to warn him about...”

- Involvement with drugs and alcohol. A tragedy such as accidental death rarely causes drug or alcohol abuse, but it would likely increase such behavior if it already existed.
- Impulsive behavior – which is usually rare unless the child is very young and the victim was very close.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping may be defined as the seizing, detaining or abduction by an unlawful force or deception of a person. Sometimes accompanied by a demand for ransom. Most school-related incidences involve abduction by the non-custodial parent.

Responses to Anticipate:

- Crying – which actually may be listed as a response in conjunction with all cases. It is of little significance by itself unless it becomes prolonged and inappropriate.
- Depression – including inability to concentrate, falling grades, loss of activities formerly enjoyed, truancy and absenteeism.
- Sleep disturbances for a short while.
- Fear – including fear of being separated from parent and the fear of school.
- Blame – which would only result in certain circumstances where an individual was present and felt he or she should have intervened or protected the victim or should have been present to aid them. This could happen when a victim is a younger family member.
- Anger – especially toward the kidnappers.

LOSS OF UTILITIES

- When advised by Person-in-Charge, evacuate building.
- Proceed to alternate site as directed by Person-in-Charge.
- If possible, students will be sent home by walking, by bus, or parents can pick them up at the alternate location. Information on student pickup will be supplied by the School District Administration and broadcast on radio and television if possible.

MISSING CHILD / RUNAWAY

If a child becomes lost, or is suspected of being a runaway between home and school

- Check with parent if student does not arrive at school and has not been reported absent.
- Call building principal and give student or child's possible route to/from school.
- Advise parent to notify police if student has not been located within a reasonable period of time. **NOTE:** This notification to the police must be made by a parent.

If a child or student leaves school or is reported missing between school and home

- Call parent or guardian.
- Call building principal.
- Call police if student has not been located within a reasonable period of time. **NOTE:** It is important to maintain one contact person to the Police.

In Both of the Above Situations

- Call the Superintendent 469-952-5400
- Call the Princeton Police Department 972-736-3555.

Refer calls of inquiry from the media/press to Princeton ISD Superintendent Office 469-952-5400.

NATURAL DISASTER

Earthquakes

Because earthquakes can strike without warning, the immediate need is to protect lives by taking the best available cover. All other actions must wait until the tremor subsides.

School staff and students should be guided by the following:

If Inside

- Don't panic. If protected from falling objects, the rolling motion of the earth is frightening but not dangerous.
- To protect from falling objects, take cover in this manner:
 - Get beneath a desk, table, or bench. If possible, cover head with coat or other clothing to minimize injury.
 - If no cover is available, get against inside doorway or crouch against inside walls and cover head. Stay away from outside walls, windows, or other expanses of glass.
- All doors should be left OPEN to minimize jamming if the building shifts.
- Stay put and take cover. Do not attempt to run through building or outside because falling objects are found near outside doors and walls. If in a lavatory or other room with no desks or furniture, get against inside wall or inside doorway and crouch.

If Outside

- Move quickly away from building and away from overhead electrical wires.
- Lie flat, face down, and wait for shocks to subside.
- Take roll count of students and report to Person-in-Charge as soon as safe.
- Do not attempt to enter building until authorized to do so.
- Do not light fires or touch fallen wires.
- Be alert for instructions from Person-in-Charge.

Severe Storms/Other Weather Related Emergencies

- If a severe storm or other weather-related emergency is forecast or has hit the area, the Superintendent of Schools will determine if school will open for the day.
- Tune to the radio or television station for early morning reports. (WBAP radio 820AM; KRLD radio 1080, KDFW Channel 4, KXAS Channel 5, WFAA Channel 8, KTVT Channel 11).

- Other school district personnel not employed at elementary or secondary schools will be advised by the same radio report whether or not they are to report for work.
- If a storm develops during the day, the primary means of warning of a severe storm or other weather-related emergency will be by the Weather Alert Warning radio. The Superintendent will determine the action to be taken and advise principals. The news media will be informed by the school administration of the procedures being followed. Four short bells will be used to inform students and teachers of a bad weather alert. Students will be evacuated to designated areas where they will be instructed to lie face down on the floor with knees drawn beneath them and to put their hands behind the back of their heads.
- Lightning is a threat during any severe thunderstorm. Personnel should move students inside to safety if lightning is occurring.
- Officials in charge of athletic events should be aware of approaching severe storms or other weather-related emergencies. It is suggested that school officials could use the P.A. system to warn spectators of approaching severe weather. School officials may stop play when it is determined that it is unsafe to continue the activity.
- Whether or not trips (athletic, field trips, etc.) should be made when the weather is threatening will be the decision of the building principal in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools.

Students and parents are encouraged to tune to these radio and television stations after 6:00 a.m. for the latest school closing or class delay information: (WBAP radio 820AM; KRLD radio 1080, KDFW Channel 4, KXAS Channel 5, WFAA Channel 8, KTVT Channel 11).

Tornado

Information regarding tornadoes will be broadcast on the Weather Alert Warning radio.

- TORNADO WATCH – means no funnel clouds have been sighted, but tornadoes can be expected to occur. (If a Tornado Watch is declared, be prepared to evacuate quickly and be alert for special instructions.)
- TORNADO WARNING- means a funnel cloud has actually been sighted. The approximate location and direction for travel is usually given when the warning is broadcast.

NUCLEAR WARNING PROCEDURES

The primary means of warning of a nuclear incident will be by the Weather Alert Warning radio located in the administration offices of each building. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION.

Take the following steps:

- Remember SHIELDING IS REQUIRED. This means to move to the center of the building to the lowest level (if there is more than one story) away from outside walls or any openings to the outside.
- The heavier, thicker and denser the shielding material is between you and the outside, the better the protection.
- Radiation is carried by physical particles of dust or dirt. If you keep this dust and dirt out, you are minimizing the amount of radiation exposure.
- Shut down all ventilation systems.
- If at all possible, keep a portable radio and monitor the Emergency Broadcast Station. If this is not possible, be alert to attempts of Civil Defense officials to get information to you through special teams, public address systems, or on a door-to-door basis.

PLANE CRASH

Be prepared to evacuate if advised to do so. Follow the Emergency Exit Procedure with possible modifications.

POWER FAILURE

- Call Maintenance Department at 972-736-1411.
- Inform central office of the situation. (In the event the telephones will not operate, send someone to central office for assistance.)
- Evacuate the building by fire drill procedures if there is a danger of fire.
- Relocate the students from rooms without windows or direct outside ventilation.
- Keep refrigerated food storage units closed to retard spoilage.

Lines Down in Area

- Have an adult in the area of the downed lines to prevent children and people from going near them.
- Call the power company for your area. Texas-New Mexico Power Company 972-736-2461.
- Call Maintenance Department for backup 469-952-5400
- After 4:00 PM and before 7:30 AM call Princeton Police Department 972-736-3555.

SEXUAL ASSAULT/HARASSMENT

If Sexual Assault Is Suspected

- If emergency medical attention is needed, administer proper first aid and call 911.
- Once you feel a sexual assault has occurred, contact your building administrator who will contact local law authorities as soon as possible.
- Keep a written record of all calls made regarding the issues and document signs and suspicions in writing.
- The administrator is responsible for contacting the parent/guardian if a student is involved. The administrator should also contact the Superintendent.
- The administrator should follow up on the condition of the assaulted person.

SHOOTING

Gun in Building

- Notify campus administration that there is a gun in possession on campus.
- Administration will notify the Princeton Police Department 972-736-3555.
- Law enforcement and administrator should determine if evacuation is necessary if threat of danger is present.
- Evacuate immediately the area of concern.
- Advise all personnel to make no attempt to disarm the student unless he/she expresses a willingness to relinquish the possession of the gun.
- Contact parents of student involved.
- Establish a line of communication.
- Inform the Superintendent of Schools 469.952.5400.
- Turn situation over to the Campus Administrator and the Police Department and offer assistance as needed.

Shooting Involved

- Follow the above guidelines, administering basic first aid until health care professionals arrive.
- File necessary charges against persons involved.

School Policy

Students are prohibited from bringing to school or a school-related activity any weapons. Weapons include, but are not limited to: a firearm, illegal knife, pocketknife, explosive weapon, machine gun, short-barrel firearm, imitation firearms including pellet, BB, and pop guns, switchblade knife, metallic knuckles, ammunition, chemical dispensing device, zip gun, club, fireworks, razor, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens to inflict bodily injury on another person.

STRANGER ON CAMPUS

Preventive Measures

Measures preventative in nature and intended to control the access of strangers in the building may include:

- Entrances to the school should be kept locked during the school day to ensure use of main entrances by school visitors.
- Posting of decals at building entrances asking visitors to the building to go to the office and identify themselves.
- Buildings being properly marked (by readable maps posted near entrance or
- Building teachers, administrators and staff approaching, greeting and directing visitors to the proper office.

Stranger In The Building

- Approach strangers on campus in pairs of two. Ask the person to identify himself and state his purpose on campus.
- Direct strangers who fail to identify themselves or their business at school to leave the campus immediately.
- Never attempt to physically remove the stranger from the premises.
- Notify the Princeton Police Department 972-736-3555.
- Check periodically to make sure the stranger has not reappeared on campus. The principal may want to give staff members a description of the person in the event he may return to the campus.
- The principal may need to consult the Superintendent's Office in the event a warning or fact sheet needs to be sent to the media, parents or staff.
- The administrator must issue a Criminal Trespass Warrant to individual in presence of a police officer.

Special Note

Loitering on a school campus or in a building, or near a school campus is a misdemeanor and is covered under Education Code 4.23.

SUICIDE

Suicide is defined as the act of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally. A suicide may activate another suicide in an adolescent prone to suicide, especially if suicide is viewed as a heroic act, or if the outpouring of grief, memorials or publicity is viewed as an "attention producer" to the child who is yearning for attention. It sometimes appears to others as a "glamorous solution" to a problem or to an unhappy life.

Responses to Anticipate:

- Denial – including refusal to deal with or accept the fact that a suicide has occurred.
- Anger – which may be manifested in blaming oneself or others and in aggressive behavior.
- Crying – which actually may be listed as a response in conjunction with all cases. It is of little significance by itself unless it becomes prolonged and inappropriate.
- Depression – including inability to concentrate, falling grades, loss of interest in activities, sleep disturbances and feeling of helplessness, hopelessness and worthlessness.
- Fear – including recurring nightmares.
- Regret – especially the feeling of wishing that he or she had done more to prevent the situation.
- Involvement with drugs and alcohol. A tragedy such as suicide rarely causes or activates drug or alcohol abuse, but it would likely increase such behavior if it already existed.

Procedures for Acutely Suicidal Students

- Notify parents of the situation and have them come to the school. Do not leave the student alone.
- Conference with the parents, student and school personnel (counselor and administrator) in which the school presents their recommendations to the parents.
- If the parents refuse the school's recommendations, they should take the student home with them. The student is not to return until the school's recommendations are followed. The administrator must approve the student's return to school.
- If the parents refuse to come, are unable to come or are unable to be reached notify the Children's Unit of MHMR 972-562-0080.
- Counselor may continue to remain involved with student after return to school.
- Document all efforts with dates and times.

VANDALISM

Procedures for Building Vandalism by Intruder

- Princeton Police Department 972-736-3555 should be informed by the building principal or designee as to the kind, extent, location, and approximate time the damage was incurred.
- Before police arrival, the building space affected should be sealed off by appropriate means and all items within the affected area must be left intact for possible police investigation procedures.
- Within the limitations of the above, all possible efforts should be expended by building personnel to make emergency repairs to items deemed dangerous to persons or property within the building.
- The building principal or designee should make a record of the type and extent of damage to the building and its contents.
- Call custodian if cleanup help is needed.
- Call Maintenance Department 469-952-5400 if building damage needs immediate repair.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If communication is needed after regular working hours, calling dispatcher at 972-736-3555 will elicit assistance from on-duty police personnel.

- A maintenance request form detailing pertinent damage information will be forwarded to the Maintenance Department to effect damage repair. If building or content damage has produced safety, security, or educational process problems, immediate telephone contact with Maintenance Department is essential.
- The building principal or designee will note all pertinent information on a Burglary/Vandalism Report, with a copy forwarded to the Chief of Police for proper evaluation of affected fixed assets items.

WEAPONS

Suspicion of Possession

- Notify the Principal immediately for dispatching of a police officer.
- Have a designated adult bring the student to the office. The student should bring any books, backpack, purses, etc., that are in his/her possession at the time. At least two adults and a police officer should be present at the meeting.
- Further guidelines as enforced in the District Discipline Management Plan.

Threatening with Weapons

- Staff should remain calm and talk to the student in a calming voice. The staff member should not attempt to confiscate the weapon.
- Send for principal/assistant principal as quickly as possible.
- Notify the Superintendent.

WEATHER EMERGENCY

Prior to an Emergency

- Develop knowledge and an understanding of the characteristics of hazardous weather by reading and teaching students about the subject.
- Become thoroughly familiar with your school's plan for your room and your neighbors' rooms.
- Conduct practice evacuation drills under the direction of your campus administrator.
- Know your campus chain of command (see In-School Crisis Team) in the event a principal is off campus or injured and unable to take command.

In the Event of A Weather Emergency

- Be alert to developing situations.
- Cancel outdoor recess or PE classes. Avoid use of telephones, electrical appliances or prolonged contact with plumbing.
- Stay calm. Continue with class assignments.
- Establish an appearance of confidence. Speak slowly, softly, and distinctly.
- Move rapidly, but in an orderly way, to the designated shelter area for your room. Maintain full control.
- Take your roll book with you.
- Turn out the lights and close the door upon leaving your classroom.
- Check adjacent restrooms, vacant classrooms and storage areas.
- Make sure that all children have assumed the required safe position before taking your own position.
- Wait until you've been assured that the weather condition has passed.

After The Emergency

- If students or staff are injured, administer first aid promptly.
- Take roll of class and report all injured or missing.
- If possible, return to classroom, wait for instructions from designated authorities.
- If not possible to return to classroom, wait for instructions from designated authorities.
- Once in the classroom, reassure your students of their safety. Discuss and evaluate your response to the emergency

WEATHER CLOSINGS

Most weather closings of school will occur overnight; however, a few may occur during the school day.

Overnight Weather Closings

- Staff and students, along with parents, may be reminded to listen to local radio stations (WBAP 820AM or KRLD 1080AM) and to local television stations (KDFW Channel 4, KXAS Channel 5, WFAA Channel 8, KTVT Channel 11) for weather closing announcements.
- Building principals should develop plans for telephone calls to staff to confirm the weather closing. Building principals should develop plans for checking on building security as well as plans to aid students and staff who may arrive at a building unaware of a weather closing.

School Day Closings

- Information on daytime weather closings will reach the building principal through central office. Only the Superintendent or his designee is authorized to close schools, delay opening, or accelerate the end of the school day.

School Evacuations

- In the event that a school or district facility needs to be evacuated (flooding, chemical spill, explosion, etc.), the Superintendent will contact Transportation to make arrangements to transport students to an alternate school location as determined by central administration at the time of the emergency.
- Follow proper emergency escape procedures in the event a building must be evacuated.
- File out of the classroom in a single file, orderly fashion.
- Designated person should check adjacent restrooms, vacant rooms, storage areas, etc.
- Teachers should carry their class roll books with them when evacuating the building.
- Some special education students will need special transportation.
- Parental/guardian release forms will be provided to staff at the alternate school location by the Principal or designee. These forms must be signed prior to allowing a child to leave the school premises.

Alternate School Locations

In the event a building must be evacuated and alternate housing is needed:

- The decision of an alternate school site rests with the Principal of each campus.
- Try to relocate to another school facility.
- The following have agreed to make their facilities available if the need arises and a “Hold Harmless Agreement” is on file in the Superintendent’s office:
 - Church of Christ 972-736-2157 or 972-736-3055
 - Faith Baptist Church 972-736-3733 or 972-734-3344
 - Impact Assembly of God 972-736-3682 or 972-734-6317
 - First Baptist Church 972-736-2860 or 972-736-1613
 - First Christian Church 972-736-2159
 - First United Methodist Church 972-736-3241

In the rare event an alternate site is needed, contact should be made to alert the people in the alternate facility. If the alternate location is not a school, a “Hold Harmless Agreement” has been signed by the school district and the property owner assuring them that students will be supervised by district employees while on the premises, and that we have insurance to cover any injuries or property damage while the students were at their facility. Property owner, school, and administrative building will each have copies of the agreement.

OTHER

This category might include life-threatening disease or illness.

Responses to Anticipate

- Acting out behavior – including aggression, promiscuous sexual behavior, drug and alcohol problems, and running away.
- Crying – which actually may be listed as a response in conjunction with all actions. It is of little significance by itself unless it becomes prolonged and inappropriate.
- Depression – including inability to concentrate, falling grades, loss of activities formerly enjoyed, truancy and absenteeism.
- Fear – including fear of being separated from parent and the fear of school.
- Blame – which would only result in certain circumstances where an individual was present and felt he or she should have intervened or protected the victim or should have been present to aid them. This could happen when a victim is a younger family member.
- Anger – anger toward one or both parents or even toward God for “allowing” the situation to occur.
- Embarrassment – including being ashamed to discuss the situation especially in divorce cases.
- Feeling of failure and hopelessness for the future and a poor self-image.

TYPICAL REACTIONS TO CRISIS SITUATIONS

It is important to help students understand that they may be inundated with waves of emotion and that there is more than one way to feel or react. We have a tendency to expect all students to respond to bad news with feelings of remorse. Recognize that the student who says “I don’t care,” or “It doesn’t bother me,” today may be crying tomorrow.

- Statements of “I don’t care,” or “It doesn’t bother me,” may be denial of what’s happened or may indicate a lack of involvement. Be sensitive to the child’s needs.
- Students who initially react with an indifferent attitude may later identify with the victim and have a strong emotional response – expressions of sadness and/or guilt.
- Students who may not have known the victim may react strongly to the death. This is frequently due to identification with the victim or a reaction to unresolved issues in their lives (loss, death, thoughts of suicide).
- Anger and denial are common feelings. Students may also experience irrational feelings of guilt. Example: “My being angry at him caused this,” or “If only I’d been there, I could have stopped it.”
- Some students may have valid reasons to feel guilty if they had some knowledge or clue about the victim’s behavior. All students who are visibly upset and are having difficulty dealing with the situation should be referred to the In-School Crisis Intervention Team.

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS / ADULTS AT-RISK

After a traumatic death, suicide, or attempted suicide, at-risk students will be recognized by the following.

Students

- Any students who participated in any way with the completed death (helped write the suicide note, provided the means, were involved in a suicide pact, knew of plans for risk-taking behavior or violence).
- Any students who knew of the suicide plans and kept it a secret.
- Siblings, other relatives, or best friends.
- Any students who were self-appointed therapists to the deceased child who made it their responsibility to keep that child alive.
- Any students with a history of suicidal threats and attempts themselves or who have been hospitalized for emotional illness or substance abuse.
- Any students who identified with the victim's situation.
- Any students who had reason to feel guilty about things they had said or done to the student prior to the student's death.
- Other students desperate for any reason who now see suicide as a viable alternative.
- Any students who observed events that were indicative of the victim's suicidal intent or risk-taking behavior.

Adults

Probable high-risk adults after suicide are all of the categories listed above for adults. The following are also at-risk.

- Parents of victim.
- Those who had prior knowledge of impending suicide and did not take it seriously.

Additionally, the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta did a follow-up study on the 12 cluster suicides that occurred in Plano and Clearlake, Texas in 1983-84. The following were common denominators in each of the completed suicides:

- Youth who had attended more than four schools in two years.
- Youth who had lived with more than two parent figures in two years.
- Youth who had been in trouble with the law.
- Youth who were exposed to violence (home, peers, etc.)

What to Look For:

- Verbal Signs:
 - “I wish I were dead.”
 - “No one cares whether I live or die.”
 - “Things would be better if I weren’t here.”
- Behavioral clues:
 - Alcohol or drug abuse
 - Previous attempts
 - Giving away possessions
 - Making a will
 - Sudden change in behavior (e.g. quiet student becomes talkative, friendly student becomes quiet.)
 - Significant drop in grades
 - Risk-taking behavior resulting in accidents or injuries
 - Social isolation
 - Signs of depression
 - Apparent disorientation (appearing in a daze or wandering aimlessly)
 - Signs of changes in sleeping and/or eating patterns
 - Constant complaining, expression of helpless-hopeless feelings
- Situational clues:
 - End of serious relationship
 - Divorce
 - Death of a parent
 - Family financial difficulties
 - Moving to new location (other stresses among family members)
 - School failure in academics or failure to make a “team”

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Age Level Perceptions

- **Preschool Age** – The child does not understand the possibility of permanent destruction. Death is impermanent and reversible. For example, the child whose pet has died may continue to act as if the dead pet is still alive. He or she may ask to feed it or look for it under the bed. Because most preschool children are not able to make a clear distinction between life and death, they see death as a deep but temporary sleep or abandonment.
- **Ages 5 to 9** - One of the major perceptions is that death comes from an external source. Death is an ogre, a monster, a ghost, a skeleton, or an angel who comes to take people away. It comes from outside, and in that sense, it is not a person. Children think that by being clever and trying hard, they can escape death as they could escape an assailant. The majority of children think that death can be reversed or outwitted. Children in this age group also show an interest in burial as shown by “final rites” for pets.
- **Ages 9 to 12** – The majority understand that death is the end of life, that it is irreversible and that all things die eventually – even they may die someday. Death is no longer a boogiemán, but a biological process. They may also think that dying may be painful, and they begin to fathom the idea of death as obliteration or an after life. Some will consider abstract concepts; death is a vast darkness. There is also serious concern with the consequences of death and what changes will be necessary as a result of death. Anger and fear are often felt and verbalized with such statements as, “It is not fair.”
- **Adolescents** – Death is understood as an abstract concept. Death is supposed to be distant. At the same time that they try to set themselves apart from death, they also fear it. Because of this fear, they may try to prove themselves more powerful than death. It is a teenagers’ first realization of mortality, and some are moved to test their mortality. There seems to be some “magical” thinking among adolescents that death may not be permanent, and that after their own death, they may become observers of those activities and persons left behind.

- **Child's Reaction to Death** – The child's major reactions to death are fear, guilt, anger and confusion. By examining the various layers of feeling, as well as the variety of influential experiences that are a part of the child's world following a death, the caretaker can cope better with the child survivor's needs.

Fear After Loss During Childhood:

- Fear resulting from loss during childhood
- Fear of losing the other parent
- Fear of going to sleep
- Fear of being separated from a parent or sibling
- Fear of being unprotected
- Fear of sharing his or her feeling with others
- Fear of trusting

Guilt After Loss During Childhood:

- "The death is a punishment to me for misbehaving."
- "I wished the other person dead."
- "I did not love my brother, sister, friend, teacher enough."
- "It is not right for me to live when my sister, friend, mother, father is dead. I should be dead instead."

Anger After Loss During Childhood:

In addition to anger growing from guilt, it can grow from any of the following beliefs, which may be held by the child survivor:

- "I have been abandoned. Now I must cope with life on my own, and with little help."
- "I am unimportant. This is why my loved one could leave me."
- "My future has been taken away from me. I don't have anything to look forward to."
- "I have to fight forces that are bigger than I am; they are very powerful and I am inadequate. A feeling of helplessness prevails; sometimes there is also a loss of trust."

Confusion Resulting from Loss during Childhood:

- Confusion about God and religion.
- Confusion about others' expectations.
- Confusion about perceptions and memories.
- Confusion that results from depression.

- **Helping the Child Heal** - It is difficult to fully recognize the internal emotional battles of the child survivor. The observer may not realize the severity or extent of the child's sense of loss. There are some ways in which an adult can help the child through the grieving process so that he or she can heal.
- **Verbal Healing** - It helps for the caretaking adult to be aware of situations, which make possible more objective discussions about death. Children's questions deserve to be answered. The child needs to vent feelings, regardless of whether or not they seem appropriate. Encourage the child to verbalize feelings and memories.
- **Nonverbal Healing** - Identification with the loved one: by repeatedly engaging in the activities associated with the loved one, the child is recalling the loved one, fitting him or her into daily life, and silently asking other survivors to validate that experience.

Ceremonies – survivors may commemorate the dead person at special times, such as a birthday celebration or sharing memories.

Play – Children affirm what they know to be true, give themselves power over the event, and establish themselves as separate from the event through their play.

Writing – The child is able to “talk out” his or her feelings on paper. He or she may share it or keep it private. Sometimes a story about “other people” may be written, allowing the child to reveal deeply personal feelings.

Bonding – The bonding can be with a pet or an inanimate object, such as a pillow or a toy.

Art – A child at any age can gain control over emotional pain. Feelings are converted into products; this is a very important response to encourage.

Books – Review the book first to know what to expect. Don't use it as a substitute for direct exchange with the child.

Special Needs of Special Education Students

The Special Education Student will most often follow the same developmental stages of the grieving process as that of the regular education student. It is possible, however, that he or she may or may not go through all the stages and the time involved in each stage could vary considerably. Significant factors, which attribute to this difference, are as follows:

- Perceptual, cognitive and emotional deficits.
- Language capabilities, both receptive and expressive.
- The ability to think abstractly and/or concretely.

Any traumatic experience that creates sudden change in the routine of the handicapped student is likely to influence how that student responds to the trauma. The following examples are to assist you in developing a plan of action in an attempt to reduce the stress and maximize the success of the handicapped student's ability to deal with his or her grief following a crisis:

Student's Reaction	Teacher Responses
Anger	<p>"It's OK to be angry."</p> <p>"This is what you do when you are angry and it gets you into trouble."</p> <p>"This is what you can do which will NOT get you in trouble." (Give specific examples, which are age-appropriate.)</p>
Aggression	<p>Repeat techniques recommended for anger and substitute appropriate ways to release aggression.</p> <p>During a crisis, manipulate the environment rather than the student to prevent potential student/staff injury.</p>
Listlessness	<p>Keep the routine going as smoothly as possible with or without the student's participation. (Periodically let the student know that they may join in when he or she is ready.)</p> <p>Don't beg for participation.</p> <p>Be supportive and remain non-judgemental.</p> <p>Interject instructional material that is highly motivating to the student.</p>

The manner in which the teacher chooses to react to these behaviors may influence how the handicapped student proceeds through the grieving process. If the teacher is not aware that the inappropriate behavior demonstrations are the only means the handicapped student has learned to convey his or her grief, the teacher may choose to respond with negative consequences, which in turn, may accelerate the inappropriate behavior, possibly creating a new crisis. It is critical for the teacher to acquire the skill of rational detachment in order to separate the behavior from the student and provide pro-active alternatives, which the student can effectively use to release anxieties, brought on by the grieving process.

Things to Consider

- Remember, it may get worse before it gets better.
- Remain with the regular schedule and timeliness as much as possible.
- Be supportive.

Avoid comments, which appear judgmental. "It's not so bad." "Don't worry about it." Remember that the teacher's behavior is a model to the student on how to remain in control during a crisis. If the student gets extremely loud, the teacher should decrease his or her volume. If the student moves rapidly, the teacher should move slowly. If the student gets physical, the teacher should maneuver other students out of the way. Alter the environment considering the safety factors. Be sure that what is communicated verbally coincides with what is communicated with body language. Finally, consider the student's perspective.

REACTIONS TO LOSS AND DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

AGE RANGE: 1-3 YEARS	
Questions after loss: Who will take care of me now? The sense of loss is felt if contact has been regular and consistent with parent or parenting figures.	
DEVELOPMENTAL TASK	REACTION TO LOSS
Learn to trust and feel secure.	There may often be a heightened sense of anxiety around separation and feelings of rejection. Young children do not separate death and abandonment from rejection.
Form attachments to parenting figures.	Crying may increase and sometimes be uncontrollable and without explanation.
Communicate feelings and be understood.	There is intense searching. The child may look everywhere for the lost parent/ important person.
Development of a conscious need for care-taking.	The child may ask for the parent, the caretaker or nurturing parent figure often.
Gain control over one's body functions, speech and sphincters.	Sometimes there will be a delayed reaction to grief. There may be a honeymoon period with the new caretaker.
Gain control over one's impulses.	There may be a loss of appetite.
Develop a sense of self and separate-ness.	There may be a loss of interest in playing or using one's toys.
Develop a greater sense of autonomy.	There may be regressive behaviors: wetting, whining, clinging, heightened insecurity and the need for more reassurance.
Develop pride and confidence in one's ability to do the above.	Watchfulness of the environment. "What's going to happen now?"
There may be an increased need for control, power struggles may emerge.	There may be night terrors.

AGE RANGE: 3-6 YEARS	
Mourning and grieving are done behaviorally until age 2, followed thereafter by more direct feelings expressed verbally.	
Question After Loss: “What did I do? Where has Mommy (or Daddy) gone?”	
DEVELOPMENTAL TASK	REACTION TO LOSS
<p>Form attachment to parent figures.</p> <p>Develop an acceptable identity.</p> <p>Be curious and develop more knowledge of the environment.</p> <p>Develop an acceptable identity as a child with adult aspirations.</p> <p>Gain better control over internal impulses.</p> <p>Develop a sense of right and wrong with internal conflict.</p>	<p>There will be verbal expressions of the grieving and loss, including asking of questions about the “lost parent.”</p> <p>There may be repeated periods of prolonged crying and distress.</p> <p>There may be a restless searching.</p> <p>There may be night crying, night terrors, sobbing.</p> <p>There may be increased fears, phobias. School phobias may emerge now. Also fear of loss and fear of being alone.</p> <p>The searching for the lost parent continues with questions.</p> <p>The sense of self is very fragile.</p> <p>There may emerge a fear of one’s own death.</p> <p>There may be guilt about the death; the child may want to take on the responsibility for the loss.</p> <p>The child now has the capacity for sadness about life without the absent parent.</p> <p>There may often be rage and anger toward the parent/other who is left behind, or sometimes towards the parent who died.</p> <p>There may be a withdrawal or pulling away from those reminiscent of the lost parent/other.</p> <p>The child may engage in dramatic games with themes of death/dying.</p> <p>Reactions may be extreme: sadness, anger, loneliness, and isolation.</p> <p>There may be underlying depression masked by acting out behavior.</p> <p>There may often be a regression to soiling and wetting. In some cases, a child may want a bottle.</p>

AGE RANGE: 6-12 YEARS

Questions: Who can you trust, not even yourself?

DEVELOPMENTAL TASK	REACTION TO LOSS
<p>Make an adequate separation from home so that one can comfortably go to school & off to play with peers.</p> <p>Develop friends with children outside the home.</p> <p>Participate in activities outside the home.</p> <p>Learn work habits that enable one to work and follow directions in school and in games.</p> <p>Achieve successfully at school.</p>	<p>School phobias may emerge as well as continued separation and anxiety.</p> <p>Chronic depression marked by negativistic behaviors.</p> <p>Increased demands on the remaining caretaker.</p> <p>Hyper-aggressiveness in male.</p> <p>Determined denial.</p> <p>Regressive behavior.</p> <p>From age 10 on, grief reactions become more complicated and may be characterized with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Prolonged periods of painful crying.b. Inability to share grieving with a peer group or adults.c. Increased feelings of isolation, loneliness and despair.d. Daydreams about the lost significant other person.e. Increased withdrawal from social relationships. <p>There is often guilt related to a “fantasized, imagined punishment” as well as identification with the lost person.</p> <p>A child who had support for an acceptable identity may turn to a pattern of identifying with the strengths of the lost parent/other.</p> <p>When loss is coupled with rejection by the “lost parent/other” prior to the loss, the child may turn to alternative identification figures.</p>

AGE RANGE: 13-18 YEARS	
Question: "I don't need anybody do I? But gosh, I need them."	
DEVELOPMENTAL TASK	REACTION TO LOSS
<p>Maintain and develop an adequate sense of identity.</p> <p>Struggle to identify who one is. It's clearer sometimes whom one is not.</p> <p>Maintain and gain control over one's body and impulses.</p> <p>Begin to define one's adult sexuality and adult sex role.</p> <p>Gain greater autonomy with support when needed.</p>	<p>First and foremost, remember that adolescence is a period of paradox. Under the best of circumstances, grieving may simply complicate this further. Many teenage girls suffer Pre-Menstrual Syndrome, which adds to the total picture of behavior by contributing weeping, depression, irritability and other symptoms of grief.</p> <p>There may be a period of mourning followed by extensive defenses against grief.</p> <p>Suicidal fantasies emerge. Sometimes these are heavily colored by guilt for "abandoning the parent/the peer."</p> <p>Depression, running away, withdrawal, acting out, aggressive behavior and anger may be present.</p> <p>Often the ego is fragile, the independence from one's family and the sense of self are weakened by the stresses around loss and grieving. Identity is ill defined; self-concept may be distorted.</p> <p>In extreme cases where grief is overwhelming there may be behaviors including hallucinations, conversion disorders including emotionally induced physical reactions and symptoms.</p> <p>There may be a psychotic episode followed by grieving and sadness.</p> <p>Idealization of the absent parent/other with a devaluation of the parents/others left behind.</p> <p>There may sometimes be an inability to picture a positive future.</p> <p>Avoidance of school, inability to concentrate, lack of interest in activities.</p> <p><i>(Continued on next page)</i></p>

	<p><i>(Continued from page 26)</i></p> <p>There is a postponement of grieving, often an unconscious hostility toward the “lost parent/other.”</p> <p>There may be a displacement of the anger to the other parent, peers or even “early love relationships.”</p> <p>Relationships with both adults and peers may be characterized by volatility, testing.</p> <p>The normal task of adolescence, “accepting the parent for who he/she is”, may be interrupted due to the loss.</p> <p>If there is remarriage, there may often be intense hostility toward the partner of the remaining parent.</p> <p>Peer relationship issues include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lack of trust. b. Withdrawal from peers. c. Alienation. d. Lack of communication. e. Sudden volatility, acting out behavior. f. Monopolizing one peer, attempting to make this an exclusive relationship. If the peer is unwilling to provide the exclusivity desired, there may sometimes be suicidal acting out.
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Suggestions For Helpers

- Remember there may be manifestations of all kinds of behaviors.
- The child may or may not be receptive, depending upon the amount of support given or felt prior to the loss. Encourage the child to verbalize feelings. This is very important.
- If the early experiences have been painful, there may be an inability to trust, and the loss becomes more difficult.
- The more identification there is with the lost parent/peer, the more guilt may be experienced.
- Help the child/adolescent obtain closure regarding the loss with family and peer groups.
- The way in which parents, peers, those left behind, deal with loss is critical

EXAMPLE OF REACTION	HELPFUL RESPONSE
1-3 YEARS	
Anxiety, crying about the separation.	Holding, comforting and providing reassurance.
3-6 YEARS	
Fear of one’s own death, (Rare, since children communicating about death often do not understand death, only rejection and abandonment and so cannot relate the event of death to themselves).	Ongoing reassurance, gentle but open. Reminisce openly, warmly. Death of pets offers an excellent opportunity.
6-12 YEARS	
The child may talk about reunion with the lost parent/peer. There may often be guilt associated with the sense of loyalty to the lost parent or peer.	Ask the question: “What is it he/she would want for you?” “How would that be helpful?”
13-18 YEARS	
“Why did he/she do it?” “I think I’ll get stoned, drunk.”	“What can you tell me about this?” “I don’t know what happened.” “It must hurt awfully bad. Sometimes people hope they can wipe out the pain with drugs, booze.”
“I think I’m going to kill myself.”	Have you been thinking about hurting/killing yourself?” “Tell me about it.” “I take that statement very seriously because I want you to be safe.” “What would that solve?” “How would it make others feel?” “How would the deceased feel or think about that?” “Someone who can insure your safety needs to know. You need to be in a safe place until you can take care of yourself again.” Listen, give a sense of caring, and make sure the child is safe and not left unattended. If in doubt, see that the child is hospitalized immediately. <i>Take no chances.</i>

GRIEF AND RESOLVING LOSS

This chapter deals with the stages of a crisis and the experience of acute grief associated with untimely loss. It is written with the schoolteacher, the counselor and the mental health professional in mind as they position themselves appropriately to assist students in the wake of a suicide or sudden death of a peer.

There are four main sections in this chapter. Each section has an identifiable and predictable stage of a crisis. Within each stage the unique aspects of the grieving experience related to that stage are described.

Grief is the complex set of emotions experienced when there is a significant loss in our lives, while the term “anticipatory grief” is usually taken to mean the experience associated with knowing that death or loss will likely occur in the near future as a result of disease or aging or family disruption. It is important to note, however, that it is difficult, sometimes even impossible, for young people to prepare themselves for “anticipating grief” the way adults can. Anticipatory grief is based on a “predictable event” and adults can usually better prepare themselves, psychologically for that event better than children can. On the other hand, grief associated with a sudden and unpredictable loss is often more difficult to incorporate into adult human experience.

Even though we may not be able to control many of the events leading up to unexpected losses, we can manage them with more grace and dignity if we understand the predictable nature of a crisis. We can also be more effective caregivers if we know the issues at stake in working through the grief process.

Stages Of Grief

Stage One: Impact

The impact of the realization of a sudden and unexpected loss is often described as a “hammer blow.” When a young person or adult dies by some unpredictable means, we are not prepared for the news; and the first emotional response is shock. Denial or disbelief may be present, and in many cases there may be a postponement of reactions, as the grieving person goes through an almost dream-like state. Other reactions include over-activity to delay responses, or withdrawal to isolate oneself. Another psychological correlate is a sense of panic, a component of grief that is particularly contagious and easily “spread” in young populations. A third feeling associated with this stage is numbness, which usually occurs within a brief time after the initial shock and panic subside. People often report a sensation of being unable to respond or relate to others at this stage.

The impact stage is measured in hours and is oriented to the present; commonly grieving individuals feel stuck in the moment and tend not to respond significantly to comments we make regarding the past or future.

Any strategies for intervention that we develop must take into account the “immediacy” of Stage One. The rule of thumb is to “be there.” Urge students to vocalize feelings and emotions, and encourage them that it is all right to grieve.

Religious issues raised at Stage One have to do with questions of “suffering” and tend to be framed by the word, “Why?”

- “Why did this happen?”
- “Why did this happen to him/her?”
- “Why did this happen to him/her now?”

We need not attempt to address these questions here, but to understand that they will continue to be at stake throughout the grief process. Because of the intensity of feelings associated with shock, panic, and numbness, this is a very inappropriate time for giving sermons or offering platitudes to reassure the grieving person.

Rituals associated with Stage One have primarily to do with keeping a vigil. If conversation occurs, it usually involves the telling and re-telling of what happened as family and friends gather. Retelling the story or recounting the details of death can recycle the intense feelings among members of the group grieving.

Stage Two: Recoil and Turmoil

Depression symptoms appear more fully developed at this stage as the grieving process continues. The most likely feeling to dominate during this time is anger, which can be expressed as hostility toward others or toward oneself. Some grieving people will lash out; others withdraw and tend to isolate themselves from the group. If the anger is expressed toward us, we need to absorb it at this stage; if the hostility is expressed toward others, we need to acknowledge the fact of the grieving person’s anger without agreeing or disagreeing with it. The rule of thumb at this stage is not to argue with the grieving person.

Another significant expression of grief is the person’s perceived sense of guilt. There is a tendency to review the circumstances that led up to the death and say, “If only, I had . . .” The grieving person may seek to determine if the death could have been prevented or perhaps seek to establish culpability.

Finally, one other unusual expression of grief found in cases where the deceased has suffered a prolonged illness, is the survivor’s tendency to acquire the symptoms of the deceased person’s illness. In some cases, the survivor not only acquires the symptoms, he or she may actually suffer from the disease. The disease that people get may be anything and not necessarily the same disease as the deceased had. In these cases, the survivor needs to be referred to a therapist, as more long-term psychotherapy would be required.

The recoil and turmoil stage is measured in days and is oriented to the past. The feelings expressed have distinctly historical frames of reference and are associated with regrets, “Why didn’t I do . . .”

The strategies for intervention may now include “me too” in addition to just “being there.” We need to express our own feelings of loss and regret as well as listen to the grieving person’s feelings. In fact, our feelings should be put alongside, not on top of, the other’s experience. We also need to take care not to manipulate or control the feelings in others, although we could be very helpful in directing logistics, planning

funerals or memorial services, making phone calls, running errands or solving practical problems that arise.

The religious issues which may be addressed at this stage are extensions of the questions of “Why?” raised in stage One and may focus on the role of God in the experience of suffering:

- “Why would God allow this to happen?”
- “Does God actually make it happen?”

It is appropriate to begin to respond to the grieving person’s questions when there is an expressed and clear desire to understand what has happened. Do not attempt to answer religious questions that are not being asked. We might say instead that we do not know why these things happen, but we do not believe that they occur as punishment to victims or to survivors. Do not try to convert the grieving person to your faith. Remember that most healthy faith systems affirm God’s caring about our suffering - and the fact that He does not cause it or passively allow it.

Rituals are particularly important at this stage. So whether there is a funeral or memorial service, it is important for all who are grieving to attend. Grief is a shared experience in the community as well as a unique and personal set of feelings. Whether in a church, temple, funeral home or school assembly hall, it is the context, where individual feelings may be communally expressed and appropriately acknowledged.

“We all hurt” is very helpful for adolescents to hear since they tend to imagine their feelings in isolation from others.

Stage Three: Adjustment

At this stage of grieving, time begins to change the intensity of the expression of feelings and lessen the frequency of tears. The feelings of anger, guilt and sense of sadness remain, but now a new set of feelings having to do with acceptance begins to develop and take place alongside the earlier sadness.

The adjustment stage is measured in weeks. It is important to note that feelings of grief at this stage appear as “mixed.” In other words, there is not steady progression, smooth and uninterrupted into the next stage. Rather, there is a combination of the feelings associated with the past and the newer, emerging sense of acceptance. The grieving person may vacillate intermittently between times of relative composure and moments of recycled pain or loss.

Strategies for intervention consist of our beginning to offer assurance. Statements with some reference to the future possibilities for their lives may now be shared. Encouragement to do the next thing is helpful. Assurance that time will continue to change his or her feelings is greatly appreciated. The grieving person wants and deserves to know that his or her pain of loss will continue to lessen with time. We might also be aware of the fact that continuing depression, fear and phobias, as well as acting out behavior, may occur in some individuals; for the individual or group therapy may now be appropriate.

Religious issues, which arise at this stage, are often focused on forgiveness. It is important for the grieving person to forgive him or herself for not doing something or not

doing enough to prevent the death. It is also crucial that doctrinaire statements of “sin” not be attached to an event of suicide. Assurance that God is intent upon forgiveness might also allay some of the anxiety about future consequences.

Rituals in this stage of grieving could take many forms. Fund raising for a scholarship, planning a special event, and so on. A key issue in the ritual needs to be the “redemption” of a self-destructive act by some creative endeavor. Redirecting the psychological energy that is feeding depression into a creative cause is very helpful for young people and adults.

Stage Four: Reconstruction

The person entering the fourth stage of grief is reconstructing life patterns that are not emotionally tied to the past. The renewal of emotional energy to perform tasks and participate in activities is beginning to be apparent at this stage. Indeed, the work of grieving is so exhausting and energy-depleting that the resumption of normal life tasks and academic performance may have been postponed for months.

The reconstruction stage is measured in months and is oriented toward the future. The key emotional content of this stage is the sense of having relinquished the deceased. Letting go of both the relationship and the anticipations for what the relationship might have contained is central to this part of grieving. While there is not forgetting, there is a sense of closure.

Moving on to the next chapter, the next task, the next place and the next relationship, begins to enter the grieving person’s consciousness.

Strategies for intervention have to do with helping the grieving person say “Goodbye.” The closure of the relationship that was lost through death can be achieved by guiding the survivor to express his or her appreciation as well as regrets. This approach allows for ambivalence to be expressed. Since no relationship is all good or bad, it is important to give expression to all the ways the deceased was perceived by the survivor. Appreciation for the good times and regrets about not having enough quality time as well as remembrances of the idiosyncrasies of the deceased are all appropriate and should be encouraged.

Religious issues which arise in this fourth stage of grieving are associated with the grieving person’s capacity to hope, a feeling born out of the community’s sense of sharing a common loss. It is very difficult for isolated individuals to generate a genuine sense of hope for the future, but hope is contagious and can be shared by people who communally believe they can survive a common loss. Keep in mind that hope differs from wishful thinking in that it has a more global and powerful content. For example, people may wish that the death had not occurred but hope that some good may emerge from the tragedy.

Rituals, which foster hope, can be the traditional worship services of the larger community. Many times they give voice to hopes and beliefs when those closest to the deceased have a hard time expressing those same feelings. Rituals are most helpful when they reframe the tragic aspect of the untimely loss and help the survivor regain a sense of the wholeness of life. They also reclaim the “long view” of what occurs in the life cycle.

Another approach which has proven to be helpful in some cases is for friends to meet and each to verbalize what the deceased meant to him or her, to recall some memories or to contribute to the group in any other meaningful manners, such as a personal poem or anecdote.

Since this is the stage where positive feelings emerge and social integration resumes, the rule of thumb is “go with whatever works for the individual who is grieving,” whether or not the rituals make sense to us as helpers.

Conclusion: Variables

In conclusion, it is important for us to understand that the grieving process may continue to be recycled in healthy individuals from one to two years following a death. How well the deceased was known by all survivors may also determine the duration of their grief, since grief is largely a matter of reminiscence. The longer a person has been known, the greater the sense of loss will be felt. The quality of the relationship with the deceased may also be a variable, which produces a greater or lesser sense of loss.

If there is a sense of needlessness, senselessness and absurdity associated with an untimely death that, too, may also exacerbate the symptoms of grief. Whether or not death had mutilated or destroyed the body may also affect the duration and content of the grief process. And finally, whether or not the body can be retrieved and identified has a lot to do with resolving persistent and nagging questions on the part of the mourner about the loss.

All of the issues mentioned deserve elaboration, which would take us beyond the scope of this manual. Much of our sense of grief when children die is indescribable; we really cannot prepare ourselves fully to endure that tragedy.

What we can do is organize our thinking about the nature of the crises that do occur, create plans by which to immediately mobilize ourselves and enter the context where the death has occurred.

Most of all, we can be open about our own feelings of grief, so that those around us have a sense that the untimely death of a child is a loss of such great proportion that we must all bear it together. To help us all be more highly organized, we have included specific guidelines for the helper on the next few pages. We feel these are an invaluable aid.

GUIDELINES FOR HELPERS

Who is the helper?

Anyone who is there may need to be a helper, especially in the early stages of a loss. Certainly the parents, teachers, school personnel and sponsors of community youth activities, should be prepared by having some preconceptions of what they could do in such an event. While laypersons should refer to professional help rather than involve themselves in therapy, they should not ignore the situation and avoid involvement completely. Almost anyone may feel an initial awkwardness, however, and it is especially appropriate for laypersons to seek professional advice and guidance in responding to crisis events.

The first steps of response center on listening and talking:

- ***Be a Good Listener.*** People differ in their capacities to deal with a crisis event. Each event has a different meaning for each individual, and both the helper and the sufferer must have a chance to understand the impact of this event upon the sufferer. Do not interrupt as long as the person talks.
- ***Touch.*** Holding a hand or placing an arm around the shoulder, or a hand on the person's arm or shoulder – unless the person withdraws – can be very helpful.
- ***Acknowledge.*** As you listen, acknowledge the feelings expressed. You might say, for example:
 - “I understand that you think (feel) that . . . (repeat the feeling of the sufferer).”
 - “I can see you are really hurting.”
 - “It's very hard to accept the loss of someone (something) close to you.”
 - “It really hurts.”

Acknowledging or reflecting on the feelings expressed reinforces the idea that it is good and healthy to express feelings, even if they are painful, since all feelings are a normal part of living.

Some responses, which although they seem natural and hopeful, are usually NOT helpful:

- “You will feel better tomorrow.”
- “You shouldn't feel that way.”
- “Don't cry; it will be OK.”
- “Don't be upset.”

Further, you need to be brief. Do not relate a story about your experience or another person's similar experience. Do not say, "Everything happens for the best," "There is a reason for everything." These statements are neither comforting nor appropriate at this time.

- *Understand.* You need to understand the benefits of the talking and listening process. For instance, talking about the life of a lost friend usually provides smiles and laughter, lessens tensions, and provides balance for the sufferer. It can reaffirm the fact that both good and bad are a part of life. This kind of discussion also provides a context for understanding that the acuteness of this pain, as with physical pain, will also subside or diminish.

Recount the details of the death or loss to help yourself and the sufferer. This process allows the helper to listen for extreme emotional reactions of sufferers or for feelings of guilt or blame toward another. These reactions, as well as the inability to recount the details, are signals that professional help may be appropriate. In addition, recounting the details helps the sufferer to move toward acceptance of loss.

- *Inform.* Provide information about funeral services. This allows a context within which to discuss leave-taking rituals and their importance in helping us respond to our loss. It is important to objectively and non-judgmentally discuss the details of the current situation and to recognize that in our multi-cultural, multi-religious community, such rituals vary but all serve the same purpose and should be respected.
- *Be Aware.* Other losses besides death produce feelings of grief, and these must not be minimized. These include loss of a boyfriend or girlfriend, major disappointments such as the loss of an election or try-out for a performing team at school. Similar patterns of response are appropriate.
- *Be Sure You Have Heard and Fully-Acknowledged Feelings.* Before you express advice, make sure you have listened and understood. Some ideas which might be appropriate for discussion could include:
 - Many people think of suicide at one time or another; it is not necessarily psychopathological to do so. Suicide thoughts are reactions to emotional pain, but one need not act upon these thoughts. There are many alternatives for problem solving. If these thoughts seem to get out of control, one should seek professional help.
 - The intensity of the pain of grief does not remain constant; it may be compared to a physical wound, and the wounded may one day take an active role in recovery. The process of healing is not usually a smooth one; instead, there are ups and downs. Some good days, followed by bad days, are to be expected. Everyone does not respond to grief in the same way. Some cry, some don't; responses do not necessarily show the degree of grief one feels.

- A logical approach to guilt tells us that our bad thoughts or words do not cause others to die; we are just not that powerful. However, one must be careful not to challenge the feeling of guilt on a purely logical level. Telling someone they should not feel guilty when they do, may actually increase the feelings.

The *second* part of response is centered on action.

- *Help.* Help the sufferers develop appropriate and meaningful actions to take in response to the loss. Taking action shifts the focus from the passive experience of pain to an active response in order to begin healing. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, identifying sources of help for oneself and one's friends when experiencing profound stress or self-destructive thoughts. When a group or organization has suffered a loss, a memorial or other life-affirming action can be especially appropriate and uplifting.

- *Acknowledge.* Acknowledging that many in the larger group, (the team, the school, the church) as well as those in the inner circle are experiencing grief may help everyone. Care should be taken to acknowledge the feelings of loss and grief of all and to insure that the sense of despair is not exacerbated.

Choosing some symbolic gesture of acknowledgement (a moment of silence, announcement of a memorial, for example) is usually necessary. Doing nothing at all brings the risk of being thought cold and uncaring by individuals both inside and outside the larger group.

- *Evaluate the Actions.* After sufficient time has elapsed to allow objectivity, remember to evaluate the actions taken in response to the crisis. Consider what preventive actions might have been taken, what actions taken after the loss seem appropriate and meaningful in hindsight, and what actions might be added or modified in the event of a future loss crisis.

GROUP COUNSELING

Death and grief are difficult for adults to deal with, and sudden deaths further heighten the natural emotional responses to death. In the adolescent, the strong, confusing feelings normally associated with grief can be devastating. A peer is an extension of oneself.

Few adolescents have had any previous experience with death to prepare them to understand the grief process, and those who have suffered a previous loss have very likely not adequately processed that earlier grief. Potentially, every individual can be affected by sudden death.

- *Friends: “Why didn’t I do something to help?”*
- *Enemies: “I caused it.”*
- *Acquaintances: “If only I had known.”*
- *Classmates, bus mates: “If I had been a friend, I could have helped.”*
- *Strangers: “They had everything. I have nothing.”*

Individuals who have a previous loss or other trauma may experience their own personal grief anew. Emotionally disturbed or depressed individuals may take on the deceased’s sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

Group processes are beneficial in addressing the wide variety of student needs resulting from a sudden death. In conducting groups, the counselor can assist the student in expressing feelings and understanding the grief process. The group provides a safe and secure environment for the student to express a multitude of feelings through drawings.

It is important for students to accept their confusing emotions as being normal. They should understand that the stages of grief must be processed, but that their emotions will most likely jump in and out of the various stages before they can begin to let go.

In the group, they will dwell on “Why?” – which can be part of the denial stage since no reason is good enough for this to be true. They may not accept another’s grief as valid if it is different from their own. It is important for them to talk about the deceased and clarify all they think they know about the situation. The facilitator may be able to provide factual information to clarify any misconceptions or rumors. As they progress through the stages, more time may be spent on reminiscences and expressing their personal needs.

Goals for Student Groups Following a Sudden Death

- To recognize how confusing it is to deal with the stages of grief including denial, anger, guilt, depression, acceptance, and letting go.
- To accept “feelings” as normal. Other’s feelings are valid, too, even if they are not the same as your feelings. Even lack of feelings or feelings of indifference may be as normal as strong feelings.
- To learn how to “take care of yourself” by identifying your support system which might include parents, counselors, church and club leaders, teachers, friends and relatives.
- To learn how to express how you feel. And to teach adults how to listen, if they don’t know how, say, “Please let me tell you how I feel – just listen to me.”
- To begin to learn how to “take care of each other”. To listen to others’ feelings, report potential danger, and never keep a dangerous secret.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

Most teachers come into the field anticipating they will provide information and intellectual stimulation to their students. Perhaps they define their roles in a somewhat limited way, attending primarily to their areas of expertise.

However, the problems of contemporary adolescents necessitate that teachers be able to assist in prevention or coping when traumatic events occur. Adolescent suicide or other sudden death is one of the most serious problems teachers encounter, but they cannot respond in a compassionate, effective way without information.

This chapter of the Crisis Management Manual aims to provide that vital information. It will include warning signs for potential suicide, verbal and listening skills, handling the aftermath of a sudden death, and helping teachers cope with their own reactions to these events.

Warning Signs

Although there is not a foolproof checklist for identifying students at risk for suicide, we will present two lists, which can greatly assist in the recognition of high-risk students. The presence of one or two signs should be taken seriously, but is not always indicative of immediate potential. However, the presence of any warning sign should be reported to the appropriate resource.

The following list contains the general warning signs which both professionals and laypersons should be familiar with. *It is recommended that you thoroughly know this material so that you can be attuned to signs when they first appear.* Remember that the presence of any sign is serious, but not necessarily indicative of imminent risk.

Suicide Warning Signs

- Preoccupation with themes of death or expressing suicidal thoughts.
- Giving away prized possessions, making a will or other “final arrangements.”
- Appearance of peace, relief, contentment – especially following a period of unrest. This occurs when the individual has finally made a decision – suicide – a way to finally solve the problem. It often accompanies the second sign listed above.
- Changes in sleeping patterns – too much or too little.
- Sudden and extreme changes in eating habits, losing or gaining weight.
- Withdrawal from friends and family or other major behavioral changes; or the opposite – acting out behavior such as aggression.
- Changes in school performance, lowered grades, cutting classes, dropping out of activities or loss of interest in activities.
- Use of drugs or alcohol.
- Recent suicide of friend or relative
- Previous suicide attempt.

Teachers are in a unique position to observe students on a daily basis and to have a perception about the regular or normal behavior of each student. With this in mind, the following list is more specific to the needs of teachers.

Signals of Depression or Pain

- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities.
- Alienation or withdrawal from social context.
- Loss of sense of humor.
- Decreased energy, fatigue, restlessness.
- Feelings of pessimism, guilt, worthlessness, failure.
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, a drop in grades or performance.
- Loss of friends, withdrawal from social contacts.
- Frequent physical complaints, trips to school nurse, visits to doctor, sleep disturbances, extreme loss or gain of weight.
- Increasing neglect of personal hygiene, appearance.
- Humiliating life event.

Once you are familiar with the warning signs, it is important to be able to listen and talk effectively with your students. We recognize that some teachers are more comfortable than others in pursuing certain subjects. However, by using the information in this section, each teacher should be able to increase his or her comfort level and ability to effectively intervene.

Before moving to a specific listing of skills and suggestions, we would like to make some general observations about establishing the best conditions for good communications. Generally, it is important to hear what your students are saying; teachers have ample opportunity to listen to the context of student conversations. It is amazing what students will allow teachers to overhear. Obviously, it is easier to talk to a student with whom you have good rapport. Less obvious is the fact that you can develop this rapport by encouraging students to talk with you and by letting them know that you are available. Of course, you should not wait until there is a crisis to begin developing this rapport.

Specific Verbal and listening Skills

- Avoid saying or doing things that would stop the flow of the conversation.
- Listen and “tune-in” to what the student has to say, and then in your own words tell the student what you just heard.
- You can communicate that you care and can be trusted by being non-judgmental. Although you should never say or do anything that would support suicide as an appropriate course of action, you should always accept the student’s thoughts and feelings as they present them. Do not reveal shock at anything the student says. At the same time, do not necessarily condone what has been revealed; instead, just listen.

- Encourage students to express their feelings and accept that these feelings are valid.
- If a student's words or actions concern you, say so.
- Be reassuring, confident and calm.
- If the situation warrants, encourage the student to go to the school counselor or, if necessary, go with him.
- If the student seems to be in imminent danger of self-destructive behavior, do not leave the student alone. If in doubt that he or she may be suicidal, see that the student is in the hands of a professional.

Remember that some students open up more easily than others, even among those who are suicidal. Also some students won't talk to you, but you should trust your intuition when you feel they are at risk.

In the aftermath following sudden death, there is certain to be confusion on the school campus, whether the death was accidental or intentional. After the initial reaction of shock and disbelief, the teacher has a need for accurate information regarding the details of the incident and guidance in the method of relating and interacting with the students.

Implementation of a Post Crisis Plan

- The teacher should read a brief statement of information regarding the tragedy to the first period class. In most cases this information should be provided by the administration.
- The teacher should facilitate a brief discussion with the class.
- The teacher should encourage the students to express their emotions by listening and furnishing feedback.
- The teacher should lead a discussion in selecting positive alternatives to coping with problems.
- The teacher should recognize that students handle grief in different ways and should be alert to those who need to be referred to the counselor or school psychologist.
- The teacher should realize that for many students this is the first experience where he or she faces the reality of the possibility of his or her death or that of a "significant other." This will require a discussion of life and death.

Teachers are very sensitive and vulnerable to a crisis situation that affects their campus. In the midst of rumors and chaos it becomes vitally important that teachers be kept informed. We must keep in mind that teachers also have a need to express their own feelings and to be understood. The following is a list of suggestions for assisting teachers:

- It is recommended that an in-service on adolescent crisis be provided at the beginning of the school year.

- Following a crisis, communicate accurate information to the school staff through an emergency faculty meeting or through written communication.

It is suggested that the school psychologist or other professional be made available to the school staff. The school psychologist will be able to brief the staff on what to expect and provide guidance.

Teachers should be provided with small group counseling support throughout the school day as needed. The school counselors, psychologist or outside professionals could facilitate this.

The school day should proceed as normally as possible. Teachers should acknowledge the death or trauma without dwelling on it unnecessarily.

How Teachers Can Help During A Crisis

- Step 1: Listen and hear. Of vital importance to those in an emotional crisis is someone who will listen and hear what they are saying. Avoid false reassurances that “everything will be okay” and never demean suicidal expressions. Don’t be judgmental or moralizing.
- Step 2: Be supportive, communicate your concern. Empathize with the pain they are feeling. Share your feelings and give the students a chance to express theirs.
- Step: 3 Be sensitive to the relative seriousness of the thought and feelings. Inquire directly about thoughts of suicide. If we don’t respond to students’ suicidal thoughts, they may interpret our reaction as not caring. Suicide is a topic that makes us all uncomfortable, but we must face it with open, honest communication. When the person speaks of clear-cut self-destructive plans, the situation is usually much more serious. Take any suicidal complaint seriously even if expressed in a calm voice or if the person downplays it. Example: “Oh, I don’t really think I will.”
- Step 4: Trust your own judgment if you believe someone is in danger of suicide, and act on your beliefs. Don’t let others mislead you into ignoring suicidal signals. Be an alarmist.
- Step 5: Act definitively.
 - Tell others. Share your knowledge with the counselor, assistant principal, or dean of students. Say “I care enough about you to get you (or your friend) some help.” You may betray a secret to save a life.
 - Don’t leave a suicidal person alone if you think there is immediate danger. Stay with the person until help arrives. Call upon whoever is needed. Do not try to handle everything alone.

Step 6: A student who has made a previous attempt is at high risk to try again. If you are aware of a student that has made a previous attempt, tell the counselor and/or the assistant principal or dean of students. Make sure they know.

What happens after the teacher alerts the counselor or other trained school personnel?

The counselor and other school personnel will utilize their expertise to assess the lethality risk of the student's suicidal ideation. The parents of the student will be contacted, and the school will work with them to increase the supervision of the student and refer the family for counseling outside the school and possibly even hospitalization. Feedback about the severity of the situation as well as how you, as a teacher, can help will be provided as much as professionally reasonable.

LEGAL ISSUES INVOLVED WITH SUICIDE

Confidentiality

Administrators and counselors often face situations in which responsibility to parents or the public may conflict with the privacy rights of students. However, privacy rights, regardless of their source, are not absolute rights. Other important interests, such as accountability, the rights of others, and the protection of human life, are the basis for invading some privacy rights.

Confidentiality is the general legal and ethical obligation of professionals to maintain secrets revealed to them by clients. In the case of child abuse and suicide threats or gestures, confidentiality does not apply, and the counselor must report the incident to the appropriate authorities, parents, or guardian of the student. This obviously applies to all school personnel such as administrators, teachers, and nurses.

Liability

Acting in good faith to insure the safety of a student is generally considered by the courts to be a correct action. An established policy that has the best interests of the student in mind is usually sufficient to keep the school free of liability.

Implication of Senate Bill No. 1122

Senate Bill 1122, which amended section 35.03 of the family code, addresses some of the concerns which affect how a school can legally deal with issues which concern providing assistance to a child.

The law states that a minor may consent to counseling by a physician, psychologist, counselor, or social worker licensed or certified by the state, within the scope of professional's license, if the minor consents to treatment for sexual abuse, physical abuse, and/or suicide prevention. It also states that a physician, psychologist, counselor, or social worker licensed or certified by this state may, with or without the consent of a minor who is a client, advise the parents, managing conservator or guardian of the minor, of the treatment given or needed by the minor. The bill goes on to state that a mental health professional, counseling a child under the authority of this section, is not liable for damages except those damages resulting from his or her negligence or willful misconduct.

A "Notification of Emergency Conference" form (on page 45) is provided as Form I. The purpose of this form is to help provide documentation of contact with the parents. This documentation may be helpful in terms of demonstrating "good faith" in the event of a legal challenge by a parent or guardian.

Involuntary Commitment Procedures

In the event that a student is being recommended for involuntary commitment due to a decision by school personnel that the student is likely to cause serious harm to self or to others, an application for temporary commitment for mental illness must be submitted to the county clerk. Any adult person, or the county or district attorney may file the sworn Application for Court-Ordered Mental Health Services. The form may be notarized or

signed by the county clerk or deputy clerk. A medical assessment must be submitted with the application and can be obtained from the Mental Health Mental Retardation Clinic or a medical doctor in the private sector.

This procedure may be necessary when the student is sixteen or older and not willing to accept the recommendation of school personnel regarding temporary placement in a mental health facility. However, this procedure is not limited to students sixteen or older. Other situations may warrant involuntary commitment of a minor as defined by the mental health code.

In other cases a peace officer on the site may make an Involuntary Emergency Admission (I.E.A.) based on his assessment of the situation. The custodial parent may hospitalize a student less than 16 years of age without his or her consent.

**FORM I:
NOTIFICATION OF EMERGENCY CONFERENCE**

Notification of Emergency Conference

I/We _____ the parent(s) of
_____ had a conference
with _____ on _____.

We have been advised that our child appears to be in a state of psychological emergency, (state type). We have been further advised that we should seek some psychological/psychiatric consultation immediately. We have been provided with a list of agencies, emergency numbers and private practitioners.

Parent or Legal Guardian

Parent or Legal Guardian

Counselor

Principal

HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY SYSTEM



Levels of Threat Response System:

During Low (**GREEN**), Guarded (**BLUE**), and Elevated (**YELLOW**) levels of threat, PISD will follow the procedures listed below:

Campus Visitors:

- All visitors will report to front office.
- All visitors will produce photo identification, and sign the visitor's log.
- All visitors will be issued a visitor's pass and under normal circumstances will then be given unescorted access to the campus.

Campus Buildings:

- Campuses with outside portables will keep all internal classroom doors locked and secured during normal operational hours.
- All classroom windows will be kept secured and free of clutter.
- All exterior doors except the main entrance at the elementary and intermediate campuses will remain locked and secured during normal operational hours.
- All internal doors at the middle school and high school will remain locked and secured during normal operational hours.
- All internal and external doors will remain locked and secured after hours.

During High (ORANGE) level of threat PISD will follow all of the above listed procedures as well as the following:

- At the discretion of the Principal, all visitors will be escorted when on campus.
- All campus and district staff will be on heightened alert.
- All vendors will check in with the main office prior to making deliveries.

During Severe (RED) level of threat PISD will follow all of the above listed procedures as well as the following:

- All campuses will secure all internal and external doors except the main entrance during operational hours. The main entrance will remain monitored during operational hours.
- There will be no visitor access to campuses without authorized approval of the Superintendent, Campus Principal or their designee.
- All outside activities and field trips will be cancelled unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or his designee only.
- All vendors will provide each applicable campus with a schedule of delivery dates and times, prior to making deliveries.
- All sports complexes and ball fields will remain locked and secured at all times.
- Director of Auxiliary Services – Nody Parker will provide extra patrol and walkabouts of all campuses during normal operational hours.
- No parking will be allowed within 100 feet of campus entrances.
- Any unauthorized vehicles left on district property will be towed.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

CHECKLIST FOR PRINCIPAL

- _____1. Ascertain that a Crisis/Emergency Procedure Manual is prominently displayed by each telephone in your building.
- _____2. Confirm that each manual and checklist has current names of the In-School Crisis Management Team listed.
- _____3. Determine command post in your building (that location where Person-in-Charge or his designee can be found at all times), usually the office so there is access to a telephone. Appoint a person to stay by the phone.
- _____4. Assign written chain of command (Person-in-Charge plus at least three others) in your building and have posted in the building administrative office. The principal shall record the names on the tab "Media Procedure-In-School Crisis Management Team". Alert all personnel to their assignment.
- _____5. Have first aid equipment and instructions in the clinic of your building.
- _____6. Review teacher checklist with staff at the beginning of the year and be certain each teacher has a checklist at his/her desk in his/her room.
- _____7. Review custodian checklist with staff at the beginning of the year and be certain each custodian has this list immediately available in his/her office.
- _____8. When in a "Crisis Mode" it is mandatory that every member of the In-School Crisis Management Team has and wears a Disaster Area Permit badge (supplied) for easy identification. Team members will arrange for checking all rooms, restrooms, vacant rooms, and locker rooms.
- _____9. Secretary will secure all records and office valuables in safe place.
- _____10. Teachers will take grade books and call roll in their assigned areas.
- _____11. When situation permits, the building principal or designee will attempt to keep records on students who are picked up by parents or persons acting for the parents.

TEACHER'S CHECKLIST

If Indoors:

- _____ 1. If advised by Person-in-Charge, stay in your room or move to assigned area. Immediately take roll of students.
- _____ 2. Take protective action if building is threatened.
 - _____ a. Keep children away from windows and outside walls.
 - _____ b. Take shelter under desks, tables, and heavy furniture.
 - _____ c. Move from under light fixtures and other suspended objects.
 - _____ d. Shut off or disconnect any electrical or gas operated appliances.
 - _____ e. Be alert to any developing threats such as broken water pipes or electrical wires.
 - _____ f. Communicate roll count of students and situation to Person-in-Charge as soon as possible.
 - _____ g. Be prepared to evacuate if advised to do so.
 - _____ h. If advised to evacuate, follow the emergency exit routes.
 - _____ i. EARTHQUAKE ONLY – Leave doors to room open to prevent jamming.
 - _____ j. NUCLEAR WARNING – Move to inner core of building to the lowest level (if there is more than one story) away from outside walls and any openings to the outside. Close any open windows or doors.
 - _____ k. PLANE CRASH – Be prepared to evacuate if advised to do so, following emergency exit plan with possible modifications.
- _____ 3. If possible take attendance record with you during evacuation.

If Outdoors:

EARTHQUAKE (Can happen without warning)

- _____ 1. Move away from building to open space.
- _____ 2. Avoid overhead wires and utility poles.
- _____ 3. Lie flat, face down. Wait for earth to stop moving. The rolling motion of the earth is frightening, but not dangerous.
- _____ 4. Keep students assembled and take roll count of students. Be prepared to provide this information to Person-in-Charge.
- _____ 5. Do not light fires or touch any fallen wires.
- _____ 6. Do not enter building until authorized to do so.
- _____ 7. Be alert for instructions from Person-in-Charge.

CUSTODIAN CHECKLIST

- ____ 1. Cut off electricity, gas and water supplies when directed to do so by Person-in-Charge.
- ____ 2. Immediately contact building principal (or Person-in-Charge) and report emergency actions taken.
- ____ 3. In the event of an explosion, earthquake or crisis that damages the building, provide the Person-in-Charge with condition report and damage assessment. Always use two people for initial damage assessment.
- ____ 4. Principal will contact the Superintendent and the Maintenance Department.

Additions unique to your building:

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

In the event of a disaster or emergency, the Superintendent acting under Board Authority, may close the schools and arrange transportation for bus students. Schools affected will be advised by the Superintendent's Office as to the option to exercise depending on the nature of the disaster.

OPTIONS:

1. Immediate closure of specified school and transportation of the students either to their homes or to alternate locations.
2. Placement of school buses at pre-determined schools in readiness to transport should the situation require.
3. Holding of students at schools and provision of shelter at the school, or returning the students to the school for shelter.
4. Acceleration of regular transportation schedule. (Run the regular routes but ahead of schedule with no deviations.)
5. Walking students to staging areas to be picked up by bus or parent.

PUPIL DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Once the dismissal order is received from the proper school authority, the principal will:

1. Relay dismissal instruction to every classroom teacher by most rapid and efficient means.
2. Review dismissal procedure already provided to parents to assure that it will be followed. This procedure should provide guidance regarding parents who have made special arrangements for care in the event the parents are not at home.
3. Designated school personnel will inspect the entire structure once dismissal is completed to assure the building is empty and any precautions dictated by the Fire Plan or other specific disaster plans are taken.
4. School principal may request assistance from Administration and/or Civil Defense to assure that students disperse from the school building to minimize hazards and reduce congestion.
5. All dealings with the news media and the public must be handled through the Superintendent's Office.