

Core Recovery Team Initial Meeting

Core Team, Teachers

This meeting with staff is to inform them of the incident and prepare them for student response needs.

- 1) Give factual information about the incident. Only information parents/family have approved.
- 2) Discuss possible rumors that may be shared among students.
- 3) All media questions are to be directed to Principal
- 4) Staff will be informed of any new information.
- 5) All staff will meet after school in the auditorium to debrief what happened during the day. (Staff includes custodians, cafeteria staff, transportation)
- 6) Staff members need to hear that one cannot predict what kinds of reactions they may see in students, staff, or even themselves and that at the afterschool meeting, possible reactions will be further addressed.
- 7) Incident script (will be delivered to each teacher and then the teacher reads it to the students.
- 8) Teachers may respond to student reactions in the following ways.
 - ❖ If student/s are having a difficult time, the student/s can be seen by a Recovery Team member by following these steps.
 1. Call extension ??? or email ????
 2. Recovery Support Team member will be notified and a team member will retrieve and escort student to assigned area. **ONLY RELEASE STUDENTS TO A STAFF MEMBER.**
 3. Library will be the Recovery Support Team work area for most students
 - ❖ Before allowing restroom breaks, be aware of student/s mental and emotional state.
 - ❖ Students need to understand that you, as a teacher, may deviate from the lesson to provide time for students to talk and support each other within the classroom.
 - ❖ It is OK for individuals to express shock, sadness, tears, or difficulty talking about the incident.
- 9) Core Recovery Team will make sure that outside support (team members from administration and other schools) are available before information is released to anyone else on campus. Staff needs to remember that there will be some wait time between the time we are given information and the time we release it, so that we have support staff available. With all the electronic communication devices available, staff and students may get information before the Core Recovery Team. First, please let the principals know of this kind of information, but also realize that we have to try to control the release so that support is in place. Next, your statement to a student may be: *"I am not aware of an incident at this time. If an incident has occurred, I will be informed by the office and will then let you know. Let's continue the lesson."*

Memorial services should be encouraged at places other than school property. There should be no plans for permanent memorials on campus.

Recovery Support Team Information Sheet

Date: _____

District: _____

Main Contact: _____

Recovery Team Packet containing:

1. Clip board
2. Pencil/or Pens
3. Note pad
4. Released Incident Information (same facts given to staff)
5. Sample Phone Message to Notify Parent
6. Student Contact Log

The library will be used for most counseling. You will be assigned students as they are referred. Check on and escort assigned students to and from the library. Please do not allow students to go anywhere without an escort or a pass.

It is **critical** that a list of all students involved in counseling be documented for follow-up sessions. Please fill out the Log in sheet with the appropriate information.

If in your professional judgment you feel a student needs to go home, please contact parent/guardian and escort the student to the attendance office. A parent or guardian will be required to sign the student out.

Please make sure to turn in your packet before you leave.

SAMPLE PHONE MESSAGES TO NOTIFY PARENT For Recovery Support Team

Hello, my name is _____, I am a counselor/member of the crisis team with _____ ISD. I visited with your child today concerning _____ (incident) _____. I wanted to let you know that _____ (student) _____ is _____ (emotional state). Do you have any questions or concerns?

We have visited with your child today concerning a student who has passed away. ??? was a student here at ??? School. Please talk to your child about this. We wanted you to know that we talked with him/her.

Date: _____

[illegible]

1. A Recovery Team Member will notify each classroom teacher.
2. Each teacher will be given or emailed a script to read to the classroom.
3. Only factual information will be given and discussed. As new information becomes available it will be emailed to staff.
4. Any teacher who does not feel comfortable sharing the announcement with students should let a recovery team member know so that assistance can be provided.

Example Classroom scripts:

(Yesterday, This morning, Last night) we were given some sad news. Person's name died. Person's name was (murdered, injured/died in an accident, committed suicide, died suddenly, etc.) according to officials. We do not have all the information at this time but will inform you as we learn more. Person's name (death, accident, etc.) may upset some of you more than others and it could upset you in different ways. If you want to talk with someone, please let a teacher or staff member know and arrangements will be made.

(Yesterday, This morning, Last night) we experienced (natural disaster, hazardous spill, lockdown). We do not have all the information at this time but will inform you as we learn more. We realize that this incident may upset some of you more than others and it could upset you in different ways. If you want to talk with someone, please let a teacher or staff member know and arrangements will be made.

After Reading Announcement:

1. Ask students if they have any questions. Answer honestly using only the facts provided. Do not speculate or elaborate.
2. It's okay to show tears and emotions. This is a difficult time.
3. If a student needs to see a counselor:
 - a. Call extension ??? or e-mail ???
 - b. A counselor or other Recovery Team Member will retrieve and escort student to assigned area.
 - c. Library is the assigned area for most students.
4. Know that students may have difficulty concentrating. Homework may not be a good idea for a day or two.
5. Finally, there is no way to predict how your students will respond. Be flexible and compassionate.

Phone Message/Statement

Receptionist- Phone
Calls

Initial Phone Message:

??? School is not releasing any information at this time.

Possible Phone Message After Principal Authorizes:

We have suffered a loss on our campus. We do not have any details at this time.

_____ (Name) _____ has _____ (passed away). The ??? Recovery Support Team is on campus to work with students.

We have no further information about the _____ (funeral arrangements). We will release this information as soon as it is provided.

School Letterhead

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian:

On _____, one of our students, _____, (died, killed, etc.). The cause of death was _____ (or still being determined by the coroner's office.) _____'s death has had a major impact on our students and staff.

The Recovery Support Team has been on ??? campus to assist both students and staff. The Recovery Support Team will continue to help as needed.

It would not be unusual for your child to behave and express him or her self differently during the next few weeks. Such an incident can have a profound effect on students, even when they were not in the same class or grade as _____.

If you have questions or concerns please call the counseling center at ????.

Sincerely,

Principal

Academic

- Inability to focus or concentrate
- Failing or declining grades
- Incomplete work or poor quality of work
- Increased absences or reluctance to go to school
- Forgetfulness, memory loss
- Over achievement, trying to be perfect
- Language errors, and word finding problems
- Inattentiveness
- Daydreaming

Behavioral

- Noisy outbursts, disruptive behaviors
- Aggressive behaviors, frequent fighting
- Non-compliance to requests
- Increase in risk-taking or unsafe behaviors
- Hyperactive type behaviors
- Isolation or withdrawal
- Regressive behaviors to a time when things felt safer and in control
- High need for attention
- A need for checking in on surviving parent

Emotional

- Insecurity, issues of abandonment, safety concerns
- Concern about being treated differently from others
- Fear, guilt, anger, rage, regret, sadness, confusion
- "I don't care" attitude
- Depression, hopelessness, intense sadness
- Overly sensitive, frequently tearful, irritable
- Appears unaffected by the death
- Preoccupation with death, wanting details
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

Social

- Withdrawal from friends
- Withdrawal from activities or sports
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Changes in relationships with teachers and peers
- Changes in Family roles (ex. taking on the role of the deceased parent)
- Wanting to be physically close to safe adults
- Acting out
- Difficulty in a group or crowd

Physical

- Stomachaches, headaches, and heartaches
- Frequent accidents or injuries
- Increased requests to visit the nurse
- Nightmares, dreams or sleep difficulties
- Loss of appetite or increased eating
- Low energy, fatigue
- Hives, rashes, itching
- Nausea, or upset stomach
- Increased illnesses, or low resistance to colds, flu
- Rapid heartbeat

Steps to Help:

- Tell the truth. Use accurate words such as died, killed.
- Listen without judgment
- Say something that acknowledges you know about the death, like, "I am sorry about _____, and I would like to help you in anyway I can."
- Talk about the person who died, using their name and sharing their memories.
- Maintain structure and routine, but allow for flexibility as needed.
- Seize those special moments that may arise in class to teach about grief.
- Know that you cannot take away the pain, fear, or aloneness or feeling of being different. Understand your role is not to get rid of those feelings, but provide a safe atmosphere where they can be expressed.
- Provide a safe, secure environment for grief.
- Allow for grief, sorrow, anger, and other feelings.
- With young children, give concrete examples about death. For example, you can say when a person dies they don't have to go to the bathroom; they don't sleep or think; they don't feel pain; get scared, etc.

Words and Actions to Avoid

- Do Not suggest that the student has grieved long enough.
- Do Not indicate that the student should get over it and move on.
- Do Not expect all students to complete all assignments on a timely basis.
- Do Not act as if nothing has happened.
- Do Not say things like:
 - "It could be worse."
 - "I know how you feel."
 - "You'll be stronger because of this."

Take Care of Yourself

- Take time to talk to staff members about experiences.
- Talk to those you trust about your own feelings.
- Remember grief issues take time to process and that there is no set time frame.
- Seek professional support when necessary.
- Stay physically active
- Get plenty of sleep
- Allow for reflective time
- Drink plenty of water.

As a teacher, you have the opportunity to touch children's lives in a very special way. Your actions have a lifelong impact. When a crisis influences the lives of your students, you and your school can make a life-long difference by creating an environment for healing and support.