



Policy Title: Crisis Response for School-Related Traumatic Event	Date Adopted: August 28, 2024
Policy #: 5004	Date Revised:
Purpose: To provide students and employees access to mental health supports in the event of a school-connected traumatic event.	
Scope: This policy applies to all students enrolled in ASPIRA Delaware schools and to all school employees.	

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ASPIRA Delaware recognizes that safe learning environments are necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. ASPIRA Delaware strives to provide safe learning environments for all students and all employees.

I. District Crisis Response Team Roles and Responsibilities

This section establishes the ASPIRA Delaware Crisis Response Team, its composition, and roles of each crisis response team member in a school-connected traumatic event.

Team Member	Role	Responsibilities
CEO	Media Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approving the communication/message to the school community and beyond
Communication Coordinator	Media Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares messages to disseminate to staff, students, parents, and the community. After approval of communications/messages by the CEO, the media coordinator is responsible for dissemination of the communication. Maintains ongoing contact with police, emergency services, hospital representatives, and the district office to keep information current. Handles all media requests for information and responds after coordinating a response with the media coordinator for the district-level team.
Heads of School	Implementation of Mental Health Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer training to team members to learn how to recognize signs of physical and/or mental stress due to trauma. Offer selected multi-disciplinary team members training on the use of assessment tools and case management systems to help recognize signs of distress and facilitate the evoking of action plans.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer in-depth training to members of the crisis response team training to learn how to assist in managing stress due to trauma. ▪ Offer parents/guardians tips on how to recognize signs of physical or mental stress due to trauma. ▪ Ensure that a media coordinator or public information officer is available and trained to prepare announcements and media releases on the incident and actions taken. ▪ Work with the media coordinator and CEO in drafting communications that will be disseminated to staff, students, parents, and the community. ▪ Convene a staff meeting to discuss how the situation is being handled and what resources are available to staff, students, and families. ▪ Set up crisis centers and designate private rooms for private counseling and include outside mental health professionals to assist with grief. ▪ Provide guidelines to and encourage teachers to facilitate class discussions about the incident and allow students to openly discuss feelings, fears and concerns shortly after the incident. Any students who are excessively distraught or of concern should be referred to the crisis response team for counseling. ▪ Remind staff of coping and educational resources available for them. ▪ Restore regular school functions as efficiently and as quickly as possible. ▪ Accept donations. In the first hours and days after a major incident, offers of help will probably be plentiful; however, offers will diminish considerably as time passes. Donations given and not used can always be returned. ▪ Designate a place for staff, students, and community members to leave well wishes, messages, and items.
School Counselor(s) or School Psychologist	Crisis Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make referrals. ▪ Assist in maintaining control. ▪ Follow up. ▪ Educate others. ▪ Recognize warning signs. ▪ Work with staff, parents, and external agencies to coordinate support and connect to resources. ▪ Maintain communication with the family to monitor progress.
School Social Worker	Crisis Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serve as a liaison between school & families.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with families to gain insight into family dynamics and possible antecedents contributing to the student's behavior. Identify family strengths and challenges. ▪ Work with staff, parents, and external agencies to coordinate support and connect to resources. ▪ Maintain communication with the family to monitor progress.
Lead Constable	Security Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serve as liaison between school and law enforcement. ▪ Responsible for ensuring school and campus, students, staff and visitors are safe and secure. ▪ Exchange of information between school and law enforcement.
School Nurse	Crisis Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with others. ▪ Provide care. ▪ Plan and prepare. ▪ Provide parent education when needed. ▪ Promote school sponsored mental health resources. ▪ Support individualized health care plans. ▪ Participate in mental health screenings and follow up.
School Safety & Security Officer	Ensure School Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsible for ensuring Emergency Plans are followed during emergencies. ▪ Ensures compliance with the mandatory requirements set forth by DEMA's Comprehensive School Safety Program (CSSP).
Other Administrators as Needed	Support Student and Team Member Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop programs and services. ▪ Provide training for team members. ▪ Promote social-emotional skills. ▪ Support staff well-being.

II. Verification of the School-connected Traumatic Event

LAAA will utilize various resources to verify that a school-connected traumatic event has taken place. Here are a few examples.

- a. LAAA Emergency Action Plans – If one of the emergency action plan procedures is enacted in a response to a school event, then that would verify that a school-connected event has taken place and the District Crisis Response Team would need to determine the response level needed.
- b. Crisis Fact Sheet - The resource below from PREPaRE (Workshop 2, 3rd Edition, 2019) can be used to verify a school-connected traumatic event without the enactment of an emergency action plan.



Workshop 2
(3rd Edition, 2019)



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i Handout 16: Crisis Facts That Inform Psychological Triage

	Sources
<p>Basic Information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What happened? 2. When did the event occur? 3. Where did the event occur? 4. Is law enforcement involved (did a criminal activity take place)? 5. Who was involved (i.e., who are the crisis victims)? 6. What is the prognosis for those involved? 7. Was anyone injured or killed? YES NO <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If YES, who was killed? 	
<p>Physical Proximity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who witnessed the event? 2. Who was exposed to the aftermath of the event (e.g., saw victims being medically treated)? 	
<p>Emotional Proximity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who knew the crisis victim(s)? 2. Who is considered close friends of the crisis victim(s)? 3. What classroom(s) was(were) the crisis victim(s) a part of? 4. What activities (e.g., clubs, athletics, organizations) did the crisis victim(s) participate in? 	
<p>Personal Vulnerability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have there been other crisis events that have affected students/staff this past year? 2. Have any of the staff or students been affected by an event similar to the current crisis? 3. Has anyone experienced a sudden loss of a loved one over the past year? 4. Are there staff or students who have any mental health concerns that may affect their ability to cope with the crisis? 5. Have staff and/or students already learned of the event? YES NO <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If YES, how were staff and students informed (e.g., media, social media, pictures, videos)? 	

Note: Brock, Sandoval, & Lewis (2001); Conolly-Wilson (2009).

Note: Schools using the PREPARE Third Edition Curriculum may recreate and/or adapt content from this handout on school or district letterhead as part of the school or district crisis preparedness process. The integrity of the core content must be maintained and the PREPARE curriculum properly cited and credited. Schools may not alter content on the PREPARE branded document. No other use is permitted unless otherwise expressly permitted by NASP.

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After an incident is determined to be a school-connected traumatic event, the District Crisis Response Team will determine the level of response using the indicators below.

Severity Description

SEV 1: A critical incident that affects a large number of people and will require a large response and resources.

SEV 2: A significant problem affecting a limited number of people that will require a significant response and amount of resources.

SEV 3: An incident that causes errors, minor problems for people and will require a limited response and resources.

SEV 4: A minor problem that affects the school but doesn't have a serious impact on the people and will require very little response and resources.

SEV 5: A low-level deficiency that causes minor problems and may not require much of a response or resources.

III. Procedures for the School-connected Traumatic Event's impact on Students and Employees

a. Identification and Referrals for Students or Educators

Identifying that a student or educator may be in need of grief counseling or crisis responses services can come from any member of our school community. Notification will occur by our regular means of school communication (email, phone, etc) to a member of our school staff.

It is helpful to identify students and educators who may be at higher risk of emotional distress. This might include students who:

- are friends of the deceased or affected person(s)
- had a complicated or difficult relationship with the deceased (for example, someone who recently ended a romantic relationship with the deceased)
- believe they are somehow responsible or contributed in some way, even indirectly, to the death
- may share a relevant affiliation (for example, a situation where a student died of cancer and another student has a family member with cancer)
- are friends of a sibling of the student who died
- have experienced prior losses or emotional difficulties

Peers often know which students are most deeply affected by a death. They might have personal knowledge of the issues or see content posted on social media.

b. Assessment

When a concern arises for a student, a member of the crisis team and/or their designee will perform the crisis assessment below. The crisis team will be notified if a student concern is substantiated. Then, the student will be referred for outside mental health services.

In an imminent safety threat to self or others, notify principal immediately and take immediate action to isolate the individual. Attach copies of any materials which may be useful in conducting a preliminary risk assessment (i.e., writings, notes, printed email or internet materials, books, drawings, etc.)

STUDENT INFORMATION:		
Student Name:	Age:	Grade:
Person Completing Form:	Title:	
Contact Phone Number:	School:	
IMMINENT WARNING SIGNS: (check all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Possession and/or use of firearm or other weapon <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibiting impulsive violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away <input type="checkbox"/> Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide threats or statements <input type="checkbox"/> Self-harming <input type="checkbox"/> Giving away favorite possessions <input type="checkbox"/> Making a last will, writing a suicide note <input type="checkbox"/> Homicidal threats <input type="checkbox"/> Giving verbal hints with statements such as "I won't be a problem much longer," "Nothing matters," etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Saying other things like "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead," "I shouldn't have been born" <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
DOCUMENTATION OF ACTION TAKEN: (check all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Notify Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Law Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Contact EMS <input type="checkbox"/> Contact DHS <input type="checkbox"/> Community Mental Health Referral given to Parent/Guardian		

PROVIDE A COPY OF THIS FORM TO THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDER OF YOUR CHOICE

Here is a sample list of local mental health resources available to students. A complete list of mental health resources (local & national) will be provided to the identified student's family.

- Children and Families First provides school-based therapeutic programs. Linked [HERE](#) or for more information, call 302-290-9279.
- Delaware Guidance provides a number of services including school-based counseling services and crisis response (1-800-969-HELP)
- [New Hope provided by Delaware Hospice](#) is a nationally recognized program that helps young people ages 6-17 sort through the maze of emotions they're experiencing before and after a loved one dies.
 - New Hope counselors provide grief education and support to children and their families through a variety of workshops, support groups, and individual discussions, as well as a summer camp. New Hope services the entire state and supports are available to both Delaware Hospice families and to the wider community at no charge, thanks to generous donors. For more information call 1-800-838-9800 or email newhope@delawarehospice.org.
- Crisis Intervention – (800)-652-2929 or (302)-577-2484
- Delaware Child Priority – (800) 273-8255
- Rockford Center – (866) – 847-4357
- Terry Children's Center (Children Under 13) 302-577-4270

c. **Coordination of Grief Counseling and Crisis Services**

The Department of Education shall cover the cost of grief counseling offered at the school to students for 45 days after a school-connected traumatic event. After 30 days, the Department and the school administration shall consult about the need for continuing grief counseling services, and the Department shall continue to cover the cost of grief counseling at the school for an additional 45 days where a showing of significant need for and utilization of the services has been made.

To access this resource, the building administrator should email the DOE Education Associate for Student Services and Special Populations (jennifer.davis@doe.k12.de.us) and include the following:

1. Grief Counseling Assistance Needed (as the subject line)
2. Brief description of the traumatic event
3. Date of the traumatic event
4. Provider information (Name of provider, business name)
5. Estimated cost for anticipated services

Once services have concluded, an invoice or receipt must be forwarded to the above email and include the provider's Delaware business license information and dates of services provided.

A member of the District Crisis Response Team, along with the building administrator, will track individual services received by identified students.

IV. Evaluations for Further Continued Support After the Expiration of Initial Grief Counseling

Teachers often serve as the first point of contact for students. It is essential for teachers, staff members, and families to be vigilant in observing any warning signs or concerning behaviors exhibited by students following a school-connected traumatic event. Please be aware that this list is not exhaustive and does not encompass all potential warning signs or alarming behaviors.

Depression – Signs of depression may include:

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Appetite changes
- Difficulty with peers, social isolation
- Sadness and irritability
- Decreased academic performance
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, helplessness
- No longer enjoys previously pleasurable activities
- Disruptive behavior – angry reactions, fighting, acting out

Examples of alarming behaviors may include:

- Writing or talking about death and dying
- Giving away prized possessions
- Writing a will, suicide, or good-bye note
- Telling someone dark thoughts

- Expresses sudden euphoria following depression

Teachers and staff members will notify a school counselor or a member of the Culture and Climate team or school psychologist when a warning sign or concerning behavior is observed.

If a Student Was Previously Identified as Needing Crisis Support - When a referral is made for outside mental health services, that organization will provide the school with recommendations for the student. Based on the recommendation made, the responsible staff member (ex. school counselor) will follow the prescribed recommendation and track student progress at the 30-day mark, where appropriate. Progress at the 30-day mark will guide next steps for the school.

V. Release of Information Procedures to Students, Families, and Staff

- The Crisis Response Team (CRT) will call 911, if not called already, to provide all relevant information to emergency responders.
- Identify the best method to inform ASPIRA team members about the incident or emergency (e.g., overhead speakers, text, email, in-person team meeting, assembly, School Messenger platform).
- The ASPIRA Crisis Response Communication Coordinator and Heads of Schools (HOSs) will determine the necessary support and focus for communication based on the crisis level, deciding whether it should be schoolwide, grade-level, or campus-specific.
- The Communications Team will provide ongoing updates during the event and direct calls and questions to the agency in charge (e.g., law enforcement or other state agencies).
- After the event, a debrief communication will be sent to the school community with additional information as appropriate, following legal protocols as it pertains to confidentiality and/or ongoing investigations. The communication will also include information about resources to support directly impacted students, families, and team members, such as mental health support, grievance services, and community-based programs.

VI. Policies Providing Behavioral Health Support for Crisis Response Team Members Involved in the Response To a School-connected Traumatic Event.

Crisis Response Team members, as well as all employees, will have access to services provided by the State of Delaware, including the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The ComPsych® GuidanceResources® program offers FREE EAP services to eligible state employees. For more information, employees can visit www.guidanceresources.com (WebID: State of Delaware) or call the 24/7 helpline at 877-527-4742.