

CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

The overall purpose for responding to critical incidents is to help with the emotional impact that will undoubtedly follow. In times of high intensity staying focussed can be a challenge. In these times, it can prove helpful to have a checklist to refer to – following is such a checklist.

Please note that not all points listed here are relevant to every situation. Also, some items may be tabled for a second or third meeting rather than at the initial gathering of the team. This crisis response checklist has been categorized into three sections: the initial response, responding to emotional needs of those impacted, and after the initial crisis response. In reality things may not always occur in the presented order.

INITIAL RESPONSE

Verify facts

- Have facts been confirmed with family and/or police?

Contact relevant parties

- Who else needs to be informed? Other communities, schools, police?

Write statement for phone inquires

- What will the receptionist tell people who phone with questions?

Staff considerations

- Which staff need to be relieved of responsibilities in order to help?
- Which staff may not be in the position to carry on with their normal duties?

Consider accessing outside agencies for more assistance

- Do you need more help?
- Who have you made prior arrangements with?
- How will you deal with unfamiliar people entering the school/community/organization?

Organize staff meeting

- What will staff be told? What will their role be?
- Possible agenda: media policy, debriefing/counselling procedures, CIGD, what to watch for in people, etc.

Deal with media issues

- If the event will bring media, how will this be managed?

Determine if legal counsel is needed

- Do you have questions about what you should or shouldn't say in order to minimize the risk of litigation?

Ensure building security

- Is a presence needed? If so, when and where?

Other helpers

- How will you respond to local helpers (staff from agencies, clergy) who show up to “help”?

Technology

- Should networking websites be monitored?

Determine when team will meet again

- Will you meet again throughout the day – is it even possible?

Other considerations for schoolsSecure locker and materials of deceased

- What are family wishes? What will students/friends do with locker, etc?

Consider school closure

- Will the school be closed? If so, how will parent notification and childcare be handled?

Review who is missing that day

- Why aren't they there? Who will connect with them?

RESPONDING TO THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THOSE IMPACTEDContact with family

- Will a school/community/organization representative visit, send food or flowers?
- In the case of suicide, is the family wanting it publicly identified as a suicide?
- What are the family's wishes for funeral and memorial activities?

Identify high risk people

- Who is closely connected that may need immediate support?
- Who is at risk of violence, suicide, etc.?

Carry out individual debriefing

- Those who have been identified as high risk should be met with.

Offer individual counselling

- Trained counsellors should be available to meet with students individually who require more in-depth and long term support.

Write statement for school/community/organizations members

- Will people simply be informed or will the statement be followed by debriefing? The statement should be clear and give facts but not go into unnecessary detail. Handouts on reactions and tips are often helpful (Appendix, page 48-49)

Consider a large group (e.g. town hall) information session

- Would it be beneficial? What are the potential problems that may arise?

Organize Critical Incident Group Debriefing (CIGD)

- Would some groups benefit from CIGD? Who will lead the groups?

Other considerations for schools

Prepare parent letter and handouts

- In most cases parents should know what happened and what the response of the school is. Contact information should be provided.
- Will a letter be sent home with students or mailed out?
- Parents may find handouts of issues related to the incident helpful.

Prepare materials for students

- Handouts regarding what to expect, what might be helpful, etc.

Organize safe room/grief room

- Who will staff the room? Where will it be located? What will be there?

Consider a parent information session

- Will parents ask for this? Would it be beneficial?

AFTER INITIAL CRISIS RESPONSE

Consider memorial options

- Will there be the formation of a permanent or temporary memorial?

Evaluate and debrief response

- Spend time evaluating the team's response and debriefing the experience.

Plan follow-up

- Who will continue follow-up with at-risk people?

Assess those who continue to be affected

- Refer to specialized resources if trained counsellors are not available.

Consider anniversaries

- How will anniversaries be handled? Is there need for involvement from the team?

Manage additional issues

- Unexpected issues may arise for the team.