

Leading during times of crisis: How to support students, staff and ourselves



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NATIONAL CENTER
FOR SCHOOL CRISIS
AND BEREAVEMENT

In partnership with



NEW YORK LIFE
FOUNDATION

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& National Philanthropic Trust**
Current Support: New York Life Foundation

- Promote appreciation of role schools can serve to support students, staff, and families at times of crisis and loss
- Enhance training in professional education programs
- Serve as resource for information, training materials, consultation and technical assistance – provided at no cost to the school



NATIONAL CENTER
FOR SCHOOL CRISIS
AND BEREAVEMENT

Through a transdisciplinary team of medical, mental health, and school professionals, the NCSCB provides:

- Confidential on-site/remote technical assistance and consultation for school leadership and professionals
- Practical, timely advice via 24/7 toll-free number and email
- Ongoing support in the immediate aftermath of a crisis and throughout the long-term recovery period → renewal
- Educational resources and crisis management tools
- School staff training and community presentations; professional development for range of professional audiences

Psychological First Aid

- Provide broadly to those impacted
- Supportive services to promote normative coping and accelerate natural healing process
- All adults should understand likely reactions and how to help children cope



Anyone that interacts with children can be a potential source of assistance and support – if unprepared, they can be a source of further distress.

Basic steps to support someone in crisis – Psychological First Aid

source: American Red Cross

Observation or
Awareness

Make a
Connection

Help People Feel
Comfortable and
at Ease

Be Kind, Calm, &
Compassionate

Assist with
Basic Needs

Listen

Give Realistic
Reassurance

Encourage
Good Coping

Help People
Connect

Give Accurate
and Timely
Information

Suggest a
Referral
Resource

End the
Conversation

Common Adjustment Reactions to a Crisis

Fears & Anxiety;
School
Avoidance

Sleep problems;
Change in
Appetite

Difficulties with
Concentration &
Academic
Performance

Sadness &
Depression;
Anger &
Irritability

Alcohol & Other
Substance Use

Physical
Symptoms

Post-traumatic
symptoms/PTSD

Grief

Guilt

Some people may need more assistance

7

- Concurrent, cumulative stress/loss; intersectionality
- A crisis often awakes feelings related to pre-existing or past crisis
- Children may act less mature, become more demanding or selfish, or have more difficulty getting along with peers
- While crisis can bring out the best in people, it also brings out their stress – we likely won't be at our best
- Be patient with students/families, staff, and yourself
- Try to set reasonable expectations; don't try to keep the same pace of learning in aftermath of crisis

Academic accommodations

- It is common for students to experience temporary academic challenges after a death; pre-existing learning challenges often become worse
- Offer academic support proactively – don't wait for academic challenges to become academic failure
- Change an assignment, e.g.,
 - Allow student to work with a partner
 - Adapt formal research paper into more engaging assignment
- Change focus or timing of lesson
- Reschedule or adapt tests



COALITION *to* SUPPORT GRIEVING STUDENTS

Lead Founding Members



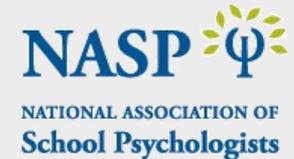
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Founding Members



School Social Work
Association of America



Supporting Organizational Members



www.grievingstudents.org



DOES YOUR SCHOOL NEED ADVICE NOW? Contact us at 877-53-NCSCB (877-536-2722) or info@grievingstudents.org



Search

ORDER FREE MATERIALS

BECOME A GRIEF SENSITIVE SCHOOL

CONVERSATION & SUPPORT

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PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION & SELF-CARE

CRISIS & SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

TEACHER TRAINING MATERIALS

Children's Grief Awareness Day is November 17

This offers guidance to educators on how to recognize Grief Awareness Day in their school.

Additional Resources

GUIDES AND POLICIES

FAMILY MATERIALS

ADDITIONAL MODULES

ARTICLES & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

https://grievingstudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Recognizing-Grief-Awareness-Day-in-Your-School-10272022.pdf



NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL CRISIS AND BEREAVEMENT

www.grievingstudents.org – Order Free Materials



After a loved one dies—
How children grieve and how parents
and other adults can support them.

After a Loved One Dies – Parent Booklet

This guide reviews how children grieve and how parents and other caring adults can help them better understand and adjust to a death. The information this guide provides can help parents and adults who are part of the lives of children who have experienced a loss know what to expect and how to help. Download the booklet in one of the available languages. PDF format.



ENGLISH



JAPANESE



ITALIAN



SPANISH



KOREAN



TAGALOG



HAITIAN-
CREOLE



SIMPLIFIED
CHINESE



TRADITIONAL
CHINESE



HEBREW

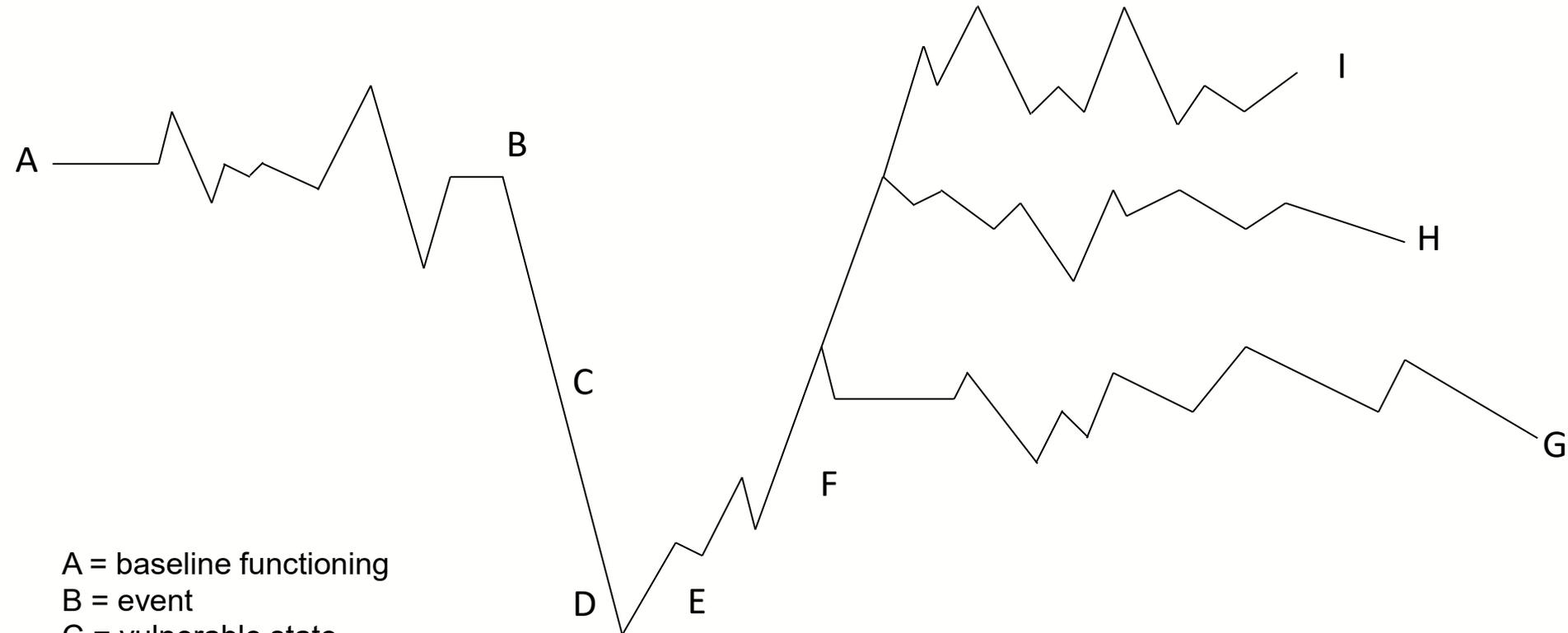
What to say and what not to say

Tips for Talking to Grieving Students



COALITION *to* SUPPORT
GRIEVING STUDENTS

Adjustment Over Time in Crisis



A = baseline functioning

B = event

C = vulnerable state

D = usual coping mechanisms fail

E = helplessness, hopelessness

F = improved functioning

G = continued impairment

H = return to baseline

I = post-traumatic growth

Importance of organizational support

- The well-being of professionals is not only an individual responsibility
- Organizational approaches to burnout prevention are often more effective than individual approaches
- Organizational leaders should:
 - establish policies and practices that promote employee well-being
 - cultivate a culture of institutional support
 - provide tangible resources and supports to professionals

Support for staff

- Organizational support
 - Substitute teachers
 - Modify workload and expectations
 - Supportive supervision
 - Professional development
 - Employee Assistance Program
- Family and peer support
- Uncouple student and teacher performance

Importance of professional self-care

- Recognize it is distressing to be with students and staff who are in distress
- It's critical we find ways to have personal needs met and appreciate and address impact of supporting our students who are grieving, traumatized, or otherwise distressed
- Create a culture where:
 - it is ok to be upset
 - members normalize asking for help and model willingness to accept assistance

Compassion fatigue

- Exposure to trauma and suffering of others can lead to compassion fatigue
 - Empathy: understanding and taking perspective of another
 - Compassion: requires empathy but includes wanting to help and/or desiring to relieve suffering – “to bear or suffer together”
- Warnings about compassion fatigue imply that compassion is necessarily tiring
- Compassionate approaches can be gratifying; bring meaning to the work → compassion satisfaction

Supporting those most in need can be gratifying

- Realistic objectives of purpose of interactions
- Have skills and resources to provide meaningful assistance and are empowered and supported to provide this help to others (or risk moral injury)
- Are aware of and have sufficient support to deal with personal impact of work

Moral injury

- Professionals may experience moral injury when they feel that, in their professional role, they are not allowed to do the things most needed for students and their families, such as after a crisis or for students and families dealing with adversity.
- Moral injury can also result when we assume we, or our organization, have more control over a situation or outcome than we actually have.

Strategies for preventing moral injury

- Challenge perfectionism. In crisis situations or other situations of scarcity/adversity, you have limited choices.
- Identify ways to advocate within schools, district, or community for more services or support to those in need.
- Rethink responsibility. Responsibility is not all or nothing. We can feel some responsibility for unfortunate events and feel badly we didn't do more, but that doesn't mean we had the primary responsibility for causing them.
- Be an advocate for both the school/district AND your students. Ensure that taking on role as an advocate for students and families does not conflict with school or district policies and practices.

Challenges for leadership after a crisis

- No matter what you do, or how well you do it, you won't be able to make everything ok
- Those impacted by a crisis often react to feeling out of control by trying to exert more control
- People will have very different views about what should be done and feel strongly about those views
 - Safety
 - Timeline for returning to academic focus
 - Commemoration and memorialization
 - Use of funds
- Reactions can challenge working relationships
- You can't stop and focus just on recovery

www.schoolcrisiscenter.org



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ABOUT RESOURCES PROJECTS NEWS EVENTS SUPPORT



HE TRAVELS TO SCHOOLS AFTER MASS SHOOTINGS. HEAR HIS ADVICE TO PARENTS.

READ MORE

TALKING TO CHILDREN AND TEENS ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE

READ MORE

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT TRAGEDIES (SUCH AS SHOOTINGS AND TERROR ATTACKS) IN THE NEWS

READ MORE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL CRISIS AND BEREAVEMENT

Dedicated to helping schools support their students
through crisis and loss

I Need Help Now

Help Me Prepare

Guidelines for schools responding to a death by suicide

These guidelines are designed to help school administrators, teachers, and crisis team members respond to the needs of students and staff after a suicide has impacted the school environment, as well as when an individual student's life may be impacted by a suicide within the student's family. Ideas are offered for addressing the issue of suicide, including how to talk to children about this difficult topic.

Death by suicide is one of the top two causes of death for children 10-24 years of age; for every child that dies by suicide, several hundred have attempted suicide. Approximately 3% of high school students makes a serious attempt that requires medical treatment. More than one of every six high school students has seriously considered suicide and approximately one of every seven has made a plan. Suicide is believed to be widely underreported because many are classified as unintentional or accidental. Death by suicide of school personnel or family members may also touch the lives of children.

ACTIVATE THE SCHOOL CRISIS TEAM

As with any death or other crisis event, the school crisis team should be activated after a suicide has occurred.

2. Involve the Public Information Office (PIO) for the school district as early in the process as possible.

It is important that a death by suicide not be sensationalized. If the media is involved, the PIO for the school should discuss coverage of the story with the media. Media coverage should acknowledge the loss, but not sensationalize it (e.g., avoid front page coverage or details about the means of suicide) or risk making suicide appear appealing to depressed or disenfranchised students. The focus of the message should be the importance of talking to someone when upset. Stress prevention and provide information about school- and/or community- sponsored programs for suicide prevention. Note that suicide is usually the result of underlying mental health problems (for which there are sometimes, but not always, observable signs) such that the individual is not thinking clearly and cannot effectively consider other

Cómo hablar con los niños sobre las noticias de ataques terroristas y tiroteos en las escuelas y en la comunidad

Esta guía tiene consejos sobre cómo hablar con los niños sobre sucesos trágicos, como tiroteos y ataques terroristas de los que pueden enterarse en la escuela o en las noticias.

PREGUNTARÁN QUÉ PASÓ

Los niños y los adolescentes reaccionan mejor a las noticias inquietantes cuando entienden más sobre el suceso. Al igual que los adultos, necesitan estar informados. Para empezar, pregúnteles qué es lo que saben sobre lo que pasó. Es probable que se hayan enterado de algo por la televisión, Internet o las redes sociales, o quizá lo escucharon en la escuela o les dijeron algo sus amigos.

sentirse a salvo en la escuela, en su casa o en la comunidad. Si bien es útil que los niños sepan lo suficiente sobre lo que pasó como para sentir que entienden lo sucedido y lo que deben hacer, no es recomendable que los niños (ni los adultos) estén expuestos a información o imágenes gráficas, o a una cobertura continua y repetitiva en los medios de comunicación. Ese tipo de imágenes y detalles a menudo se muestran en las coberturas de estos eventos en la televisión, en la radio y en los medios impresos, al igual que en las redes sociales y otros sitios de Internet. Limite la cantidad de exposición a la cobertura de los medios de comunicación y a las conversaciones en las redes sociales. Inmediatamente después de una crisis, es un buen momento para apagar la televisión, las computadoras y

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