

Post Incident Planning and Recovery

WSSCA FEBRUARY 2022

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WHO WE ARE + WHAT WE DO

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- WSSCA Incoming President

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- WSSCA Incoming Board Member



GOALS RELATED TO POST INCIDENT PLANNING AND RECOVERY

- Understand trauma and how it impacts schools
- Post incident response to a traumatic event

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE RECOVERY PHASE

1. Physical/Structural Recovery
2. Business Recovery
3. Restoration of Academic Learning
4. **Psychological/Emotional Recovery**

**“All disasters, both natural and manmade,
carry with them destruction, devastation,
stress and trauma”**

West, 2006



WHAT IS TRAUMATIC STRESS?

- Traumatic stress is an acute distress response that is experienced after exposure to a catastrophic event
- Traumatic stress occurs because the event poses a serious, or perceived threat to:
 - The individual's life or physical integrity
 - The life or a family member or close friend
 - One's surrounding environment

FOUR ELEMENTS RELATED TO TRAUMATIC STRESS

1. The event was unexpected
2. Person was unprepared for the event
3. Nothing could be done to prevent the incident
4. The event happened repeatedly

THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

Traumatic experiences change the makeup of the brain and create different behavior patterns

- ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Vicarious Trauma
- Acute Stress Disorder (ASD)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

HOW DO TRAUMATIC EVENTS IMPACT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

- Example from a school shooting...
 - Increase in student **violent behavior** and disciplinary problems:
 - “After the incident, firearms incidents increased 58%, mainly due to fear and students feeling a need to protect themselves.”
 - “The principal reported that in previous years there were about 10 discipline referrals per month. Since the incident, the average has increased to about 15 discipline referrals per month.”
 - “The middle school enrollment was only 66% of last year’s. The primary reason given by parents for transferring their students to other districts was **fear for their safety and frustration at what was seen as a slow response to problems resulting from the incident.**” (High School Shooting)



Describe a traumatic event that impacted your school or district

RESPONDING TO A TRAUMATIC EVENT

- Have a plan made ahead of time
- Determine the Crisis Coordinator
- Create the perception of safety and security
- Basic Needs should be addressed before mental health needs



PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO A TRAUMATIC EVENT

Physical Proximity (the closer the students were to the event, the greater the risk of psychological trauma)

Emotional Proximity (Individuals who have close relationships with victims should be made treatment priorities)

Internal Vulnerability Risk Factors

- a. Avoidance coping style
- b. Pre-existing psychiatric challenges
- c. Poor ability to regulate emotions
- d. Low developmental level and poor problem solving
- e. History of prior psychological trauma

ACES AND OTHER VUINERABILITY FACTORS

ACES

- Physical, Emotional, Sexual Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Mentally ill Household Member
- Emotional or Physical Neglect
- Violence, unsafe neighborhood, bullying, foster care, discrimination

Lack of Family Resources

- Not living with nuclear family member
- Family dysfunction
- Parental PTSD/ maladaptive coping
- Ineffective and uncaring parenting
- Poverty and financial stress

Lack of Extra-familial Resources

- Social isolation
- Lack of perceived social support

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS

1. Identify where crisis intervention will take place (individual, small group, or classroom)
2. Reestablish social support systems
 - Family
 - Formal (counselors, teachers, etc.)
 - Informal (friends, other adults, etc.)
3. Empower survivors and their caretakers
4. Classroom based or individual crisis intervention (Utilize PREPaRE handouts and cards)
5. Refer for long-term crisis intervention if necessary
6. Establish follow-up plans
 - Emotional debrief and support for both Response Teams and school staff
 - Review procedures

TABLE TOP EXERCISE

Scenario Part I High School Shooting:

During passing time in a hallway a female student took out a gun from her backpack and shot a male student. A teacher intervened and was hit in the head with the gun but was not shot. Some students witnessed the event. The student that was shot and the teacher required immediate medical attention for non life threatening injuries.

The school implemented ALICE procedures. There was mass confusion and some classrooms evacuated, while some classrooms locked down, and some went on without knowing what had happened.

Emergency response was quick and flooded the school within minutes of the event. The school was completely evacuated and the school began the reunification process.



What were all of the traumatic events that the students/staff faced in this scenario?

TABLE TOP EXERCISE

Scenario Part 2 High School Shooting:

After the shooting incident at the high school, all students and staff have evacuated and all students have been reunited with their families.

The school crisis response team has gathered at the end of the day after the event concluded to complete planning for a return to school.



As a member of the school Crisis Response Team, what are your key considerations for a return to school?

(communications, supports, return date, etc.)

GOALS OF THE RECOVERY PHASE IN SCHOOLS

- Restore a safe and healthy learning environment
- Ensure that students have emotional and/or mental health support
- Example of how these goals are completed in one district.....Crisis Response Teams

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS

- Structured Plan as Part of the EOP
- Members:
 - Counselors
 - Social Workers
 - Nurses
 - Psychologists
- Pre-Designated Crisis Response Teams and Protocols

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS PROTOCOL

Determine Level of Response Needed

- Minimal Level
- Building Level
- District Level
- Community Level

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WHEN RESPONDING TO A CRISIS...

- Consult your emergency response manual and have clear directives for students and staff
- Have a plan for communicating information to students and families and provide plan to staff
- Remain calm and ensure perceptions of safety and security
- Reassure students of their physical safety
- Consult with CARE Team and district level administration (if beyond building level)

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WHEN RESPONDING TO A CRISIS...

- Contact Director of Pupil Services if additional support staff are needed
- Evaluate students for level of psychological trauma before providing crisis intervention support
- Refer students who appear to be distressed to pupil service staff
- Direct media requests to appropriate administrator
- Take time to debrief with staff afterward

WHAT YOU SHOULD **NOT DO** WHEN RESPONDING TO A CRISIS...

- Assume students are in need of crisis intervention support
- Allow students that were affected by the crisis to congregate in groups
- Establish memorials- neither permanent nor temporary
- Attempt to confiscate student phones or social media devices
- Speculate or pass along rumors or information about the crisis that is not factual in nature

WHAT YOU SHOULD **NOT DO** WHEN RESPONDING TO A CRISIS...

- Lead students in prayer or other religious rituals
- Attempt to prevent students from praying or performing religious actions on their own accord
- Allow students to go home during the school day (with parents or others) without following protocol established by the district for reunification
- Be afraid to ask for help
- Ignore your own need for support

LOOK THROUGH MY EYES

- Students
- Staff/Teachers
- Administrator
- Pupil Service
- District
- Parents
- Community



LESSONS LEARNED

- Provide at least one (or more) days off immediately after the event
- Provide time for students to come in and claim their belongings
- Provide a day with JUST staff in the building
- Have a “soft landing” with students and staff
- Have staff present at entrances and in the hallways welcoming students back
- Provide counseling support in a variety of methods

WORDS OF WISDOM...

- Our school was closed the day after and then the 2nd day after it was just staff. This allowed us to debrief as a staff, share our stories, and prepare for the return of students the following day...that was a lot. We all needed to think about how to make the day smooth for kids.
- I think it is also important to share that I (principal) was involved in a lot of debriefing and at first, the focus was so much on the district and funds and all of that, rather than on what **OUR SCHOOL** community needed. So, making sure you tell school officials that focusing on how to take care of the impacted students and staff **MUST** be a priority.
- After the incident, our own custodial staff cleaned up all of the blood and such...sorry to be graphic, but it was a **LOT** of blood all over the place. The district should have a crew **NOT** attached to the school doing that job once Department of Justice approves clean up.



What is one action you are going to take immediately, in the next month, in the next school year?

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