DoDEA Crisis Management Guide | February 2007

PREVENTION

PREPAREDNESS

RESPONSE

RECOVERY

SCHOOL

SAFE
Schools

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Preface

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Crisis Management Guide is a resource designed to assist school administrators and other personnel in understanding effective crisis management procedures and the role of the crisis management team. A major focus of the guide is on Incident Response Planning.

The DoDEA Education Directorate and Office of Safety and Security, in collaboration with DynCorp (Safe Schools Program) developed this guide as a resource for school crisis teams. It is a supplement to *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners.* This guide incorporates practices and procedures from DoDDS-Europe: *A Guide to Crisis Management in the Schools* (December 2001), DoDDS-Pacific: *Crisis Response Guide* (August 2003), and the DDESS: *Crisis Management Plan for Schools.*

Federal and national resources were also used and include the Federal Emergency Management Administration, the Department of Education and the Department of Defense. This guide has been peer reviewed by representatives from the American School Counselor Association, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the National Association of School Psychologists.

This guide addresses the prevention of and response to crisis incidents as related to safety and security in DoDEA's schools. Safety relates to safeguarding against injury, accidents, or danger to people and property. Security relates to safeguarding against criminal acts or conditions of vulnerability that could result in injury, loss of life or property. There is often an overlap between the areas of safety and security, as both view the health, safety and welfare of students as their most important consideration.

This Crisis Management Guide includes a description of the four areas of crisis management: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. Included are four tabs corresponding to each area that include research articles and tools that can be used for many types of crises.

The DoDEA Crisis Management Guide, dated February 2007, supersedes D.S. Manual 2943.0, *DoDDS School Action Plan for Crisis Intervention and Response to Death* (February 1990), DoDDS-Europe: A *Guide to Crisis Management in the Schools* (December 2001), DoDDS-Pacific: *Crisis Response Guide* (August 2003), and the DDESS: *Crisis Management Plan for Schools.*

Introduction

Crisis management encompasses prevention of, and preparation for, a critical incident or crisis event. It is a time-limited, problem-focused intervention to identify, confront, and resolve a crisis event. Effective Crisis Management restores equilibrium, reduces emotional trauma, and supports appropriate adaptive responses from the affected community.

- **Critical Incident** – A situation that may disrupt the normal functioning of a school community and can have a cognitive, physical, or emotional effect upon students, school staff, and community.

- **Crisis Event** – A situation that has harmed or threatens to greatly harm life or property and requires outside assistance.

Crisis management includes the planning components of Risk Reduction and Incident Response.

1. **Risk Reduction Planning (RRP)** is a proactive approach that addresses Policy, Prevention Programs, and Physical Security. RRP can also be thought of as the steps and actions necessary to prevent a critical incident from occurring. DoDEA administrators have been trained in a Five-Phase Process found in *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners*. The Handbook provides the tools and references necessary to implement Safe School Planning. The most important considerations of the Safety and Crisis Management Program are the health, safety and welfare of the students, staff and parents.

2. **Incident Response Planning (IRP**) is preliminary planning designed to manage critical incidents, in order to avoid a crisis, or in the event of a crisis – to react effectively. A well planned response managed skillfully and effectively can prevent a critical incident from becoming a full blown crisis. If delivered within a population that is well supported and educated in effective coping skills, a single crisis event, with the potential for long-term trauma, can be transformed into an opportunity to generate healing, growth, and resiliency.

The Crisis Management Team is a group of school staff trained in intervention and post-intervention procedures. Team members generally include the administrator, school psychologist, school counselor, school nurse, a classroom teacher, and other professional staff as needed.

The role/responsibility of the Crisis Management Team is to assist in:

- Developing a written crisis management plan to guide school staff in responding to a critical incident or crisis event,
- Coping with a critical incident which could lead to a crisis event, and
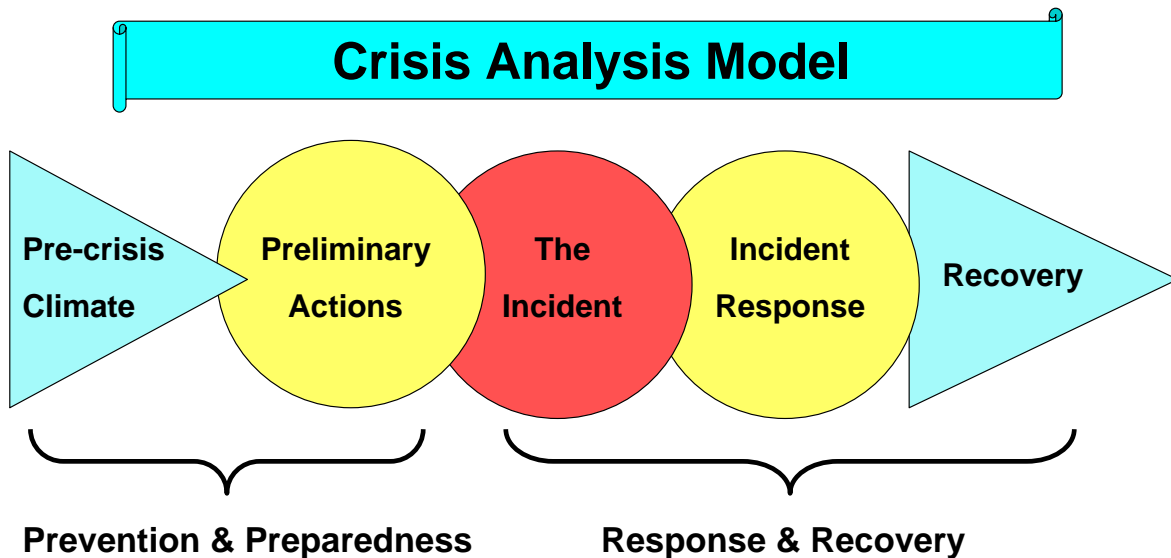- Responding to a crisis event.

The Crisis Management Plan addresses procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to a critical incident, restoring equilibrium during and after the incident, assisting in emotional recovery from the trauma of an incident, and ensuring appropriate communication with all stakeholders, and when appropriate, the public.

Schools should develop individual Crisis Management Plans based upon the information presented in this guide. Plans may be customized to meet the specific needs of each school community. For example, a useful reference is the Department of Education guide: *Practical Information on Crisis Planning* available on the Department of Education web site. Crisis Management Teams, drills of emergency procedures, communication protocols, and support structures are all essential factors that come into play when a crisis event occurs. Chaos, confusion, anxiety, and escalation of stress can be greatly minimized if these important factors have been addressed.

Crisis Management

The Crisis Analysis Model

The *Crisis Management Guide* follows the U.S. Department of Education's four phases of Crisis Management: Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery. The Crisis Analysis Model depicts the relationship between each of these components and the chronology of a crisis event.

Crisis Analysis Model

Pre-crisis Climate	Preliminary Actions	The Incident	Incident Response	Recovery

Prevention & Preparedness   **Response & Recovery**

PREVENTION

Prevention is what the school can do to reduce or eliminate a critical incident or crisis event. Prevention includes guidelines, programs, and physical security measures that reduce the risk that a crisis will occur. Prevention efforts should target established concerns and risks for student populations. High-risk environments include conditions where bullying and harassment exist, depression and suicidal tendencies are undetected and unaddressed, substance abuse is high and resiliency is low. Alleviating psychological stress on students is critical to preventing school violence perpetrated by students.

The Crisis Team can help the principal assess the threat from individual students based on early warning signs such as bullying or discipline referrals. Designing targeted interventions for individual students can prevent a series of minor incidents from becoming a critical incident. Referring students to counseling or including them in a group intervention can provide the additional attention needed to prevent a serious incident. Typical group interventions are designed to

develop effective decision making or conflict resolution skills. In addition, military-related issues such as deployment, force protection, and high operations tempo can have a significant effect on school functioning that would require specific interventions.

Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners equips administrators with the tools to conduct an assessment of their school's security vulnerabilities. Awareness is a significant factor in preventing school crime, violence and threatening incidents that affect the school community or its individuals. School leaders ensure the following components regarding safety and security are in place and annual updates on these three components are provided to staff, students, and parents.

1. Policies/School Guidelines
2. Prevention Programs
3. Physical Security

Policies/School Guidelines

Administrators can reduce the risk of violence by articulating DoDEA policies and school guidelines that address safety and security issues. School guidelines must be clearly written, effectively communicated, and consistently enforced. When reviewing safety and security procedures, eliminate or revise those that are not currently applicable. Do not establish procedures that are not needed. Make sure that procedures are in compliance with laws, regulations, and agreements.

Prevention Programs

Prevention programs help create a safe and secure learning environment by teaching effective life and decision-making skills, modeling positive behaviors, and reducing individual and group tension. DoDEA recognizes the importance and value of preventative educational programs that address:

- Bullying and harassment;
- Symptoms of depression and suicidal tendencies;
- Teen dating violence;
- Substance abuse;
- Physical wellness; and
- Developing resilience.

Additionally, due to the unique needs of military dependents during war-time deployments, DoDEA recognizes a need for pro-active educational programs that focus on stresses of deployment, reintegration; and re-deployment.

Schools should have educational and guidance plans that target these concerns at various age levels and in a variety of settings to include: existing curriculum, counseling and guidance programs, and seminar and school-wide orientation programs. Counselors and school psychologists often deliver these educational programs and supplement these efforts by providing individual and group counseling and mental health services to students, parents, and staff. These proactive educational and guidance programs are essential elements of a school prevention program.

Physical Security

Physical security measures are addressed in *DoDEA's Safe Schools Handbook* (see page 3-63) and should be applied only after completing a systematic analysis of the school's security needs. The main elements of consideration should include:

- Assets to be protected
- Threats likely to be faced
- Environment of the school

Continual evaluation of physical security can be achieved through a series of broad functions. Select physical security solutions that supplement your efforts to deter, detect, delay, and/or investigate crimes and violence.

PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness focuses on the process of preparing for the worst-case scenario. Comprehensive preparedness must start with communication and collaboration within the school and community. Each individual must know his or her role and responsibilities before a critical incident occurs. The following steps are essential to preparedness:

1. Establish a School Crisis Team
2. Provide Emergency Supply Kits (Administrator Grab-and-Go Kits)
3. Establish Incident Command System relationships and procedures
4. Practice, Drill, Exercise
5. Develop a Post-Crisis Recovery Plan

Establish a School Crisis Team

The School Crisis Team is a group of key school personnel who will quickly respond to a critical incident. Team members generally include the administrator, school psychologist, school counselor, school nurse, a classroom teacher and other professional staff as needed. The specific role of this team and its members is to assess the incident, determine impact, and identify the pre-planned response that is appropriate and relevant to the critical incident. Crisis

Management Team members should be trained and available to quickly mobilize to address a range of immediate needs. For example, a nurse may be called upon to administer CPR or other basic first aid procedures. Counselors may be assigned to communicate with troubled students—offering consolation and diffusing anxiety.

A description of the roles/responsibilities of Crisis Management Team members, a Sample Crisis Management Team List, and a Timeline for Annual Crisis Planning are provided in the Preparedness Tab (pages 17-22).

Provide Emergency Supply Kits (Administrator Grab-and-Go Kits)

The Administrator Grab-and-Go Kit (not to be confused with classroom "Go Kits") should contain all the items and information necessary for a school administrator to effectively manage the Critical and Post-Critical stages from an alternative location or the Incident Command Center. An individual will be assigned by the principal to help with this aspect of safe school planning. The administrator, or another designated person, should be able to easily pick up the Grab-and-Go Kit as they evacuate the school office. Many schools put their kit in a rolling suitcase. The kit should include key phone numbers, student rosters, and the Crisis Management Team Plan. These items will help guide schools through the appropriate actions to mitigate harm to the students and the school. A suggested list of items for inclusion in the Grab-and-Go Kit is provided in the Preparedness Tab (page 23). The Emergency Supply List should be reviewed annually.

Establish the Incident Command System Relationships and Procedures

When a critical incident is beyond the capability of the school staff, it becomes a crisis event and the Incident Command System (ICS) is activated. The ICS is a nationally recognized organizational system used to address crisis events when a multi-agency response may be required. This system facilitates priority-setting, interagency cooperation, and the efficient flow of resources and information necessary during a crisis. All responding agencies (e.g., local/post/base police and security officials, fire department, health/medical services, EOD/bomb squad, etc.) come together to:

- Determine the overall objectives and gain control of the critical situation
- Select strategies to achieve objectives
- Plan for response activities
- Integrate necessary response operations

At the installation level, adaptations to the ICS should be made to maximize the use of both local and installation resources.

Practice, Drill, and Exercise

During a critical incident, the school community must know what to do, how to do it, and where to do it. Practices, drills and exercises are outlined in DoDEA's *Safe Schools Handbook*. Consult Chapter 2, page 2-14, for detailed information regarding orientation seminars, emergency drills, tabletop exercises, functional exercises and full-scale exercises. A Crisis Team's ability to respond immediately, effectively, and skillfully will be directly related to their rehearsed response to a given emergency scenario.

Develop a Post-Crisis Recovery Plan

The Post-Crisis Recovery Plan describes what must be done after a crisis event occurs. The Post-Crisis Recovery period begins after an emergency response has stabilized any immediate threat or danger and may last an extended period of time depending on the severity of the situation. The objective of the Post-Crisis Recovery Plan should be to return the school to the state or condition of normalcy that existed prior to the crisis or as close to it as possible.

A Post-Crisis Recovery Plan should address the management of the following concerns:

- Injury and death notifications
- Casualty assistance
- Rumor control
- Media management
- Counseling and support for grief and loss reactions
- Memorial activities
- Identification of symptoms of post-traumatic distress
- Resiliency activities
- Relief efforts

Following a crisis, administrators can expect to face the challenge of; educating students to cope with the aftermath of a tragedy, reducing the fear that is being experienced by the students and faculty, and facilitating the grieving process.

RESPONSE

Response consists of the steps taken during a crisis. When responding to a critical incident, administrators, school staff/faculty, students and others must know what to do. When a school is experiencing an incident, the principal, or designee, should follow the easy three-step process (shown below) to implement an effective protective action. By internalizing this three-step process, the principal can rapidly and decisively choose a proper response.

3 STEPS TO INCIDENT RESPONSE

DETERMINE THE THREAT

Dial Emergency #

DECIDE COURSE OF ACTION → *STAY INSIDE!*

→ *GO OUTSIDE!*

IMPLEMENT PROTECTIVE ACTION

Lockdown
Shelter-in-Place
Take Cover

Evacuate
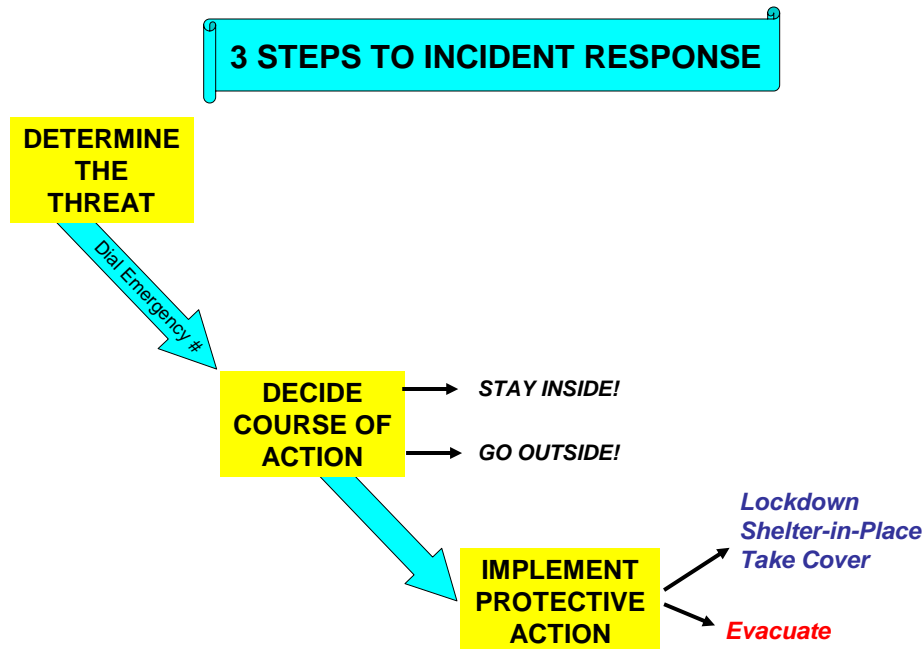
Step 1: Determine the Nature of the Crisis/Incident

The School Crisis Team can assist the administrator in determining the nature of the incident. As soon as it is apparent that the situation is life threatening, the principal or designee should activate the ICS by phoning 911 or the appropriate emergency control number.

Step 2: Decide on a Course of Action

In the case of a crisis or incident that affects the entire school, basically there are only two choices: **Stay Inside** or **Go Outside**. The proper course of action should either keep the threat from reaching the students or move the students away from the threat.

Note: Not all situations affect the entire student body. Treating one injured student or notifying students of the death of a faculty member might constitute a

critical incident, but these incidents can be managed to de-escalate the situation and avoid crisis.

Step 3: Implement a Protective Action

If the decision is to stay inside, the nature of the threat will dictate whether to lockdown, shelter-in-place, or take cover. A Protective Actions Checklist with steps for each of these actions is included in the Response Tab (page 29). If the threat dictates getting out of the building(s), then evacuation is the proper protective action.

Regardless of the origin of a crisis, the response must address the physical and emotional welfare of the individuals affected and the protection of personal and institutional integrity. The response must deal with the concerns and anxiety experienced by the people who are in a crisis. Appropriate crisis planning and intervention can minimize long-term effects on individuals and communities. It is important to take time to plan to ensure the safety of everyone in the DoDEA schools. Crisis can affect an individual, a group, or an organization. Effective crisis management requires:

- Forming Crisis Management Teams
- Preparing supplies
- Practicing protective actions
- Establishing communication protocols
- Coordinating support structures

RECOVERY

The Post-Crisis Recovery Plan, included in the Crisis Management Plan, describes what must be done after a crisis occurs. The Post-Crisis Recovery period may last a long time, depending on the severity of the situation. A recovery plan must:

- Make certain that all students and staff in the school are safe;
- Ensure the school administration knows where all students and staff are located (e.g., school, home, hospital);
- Inform the school community about how the crisis was resolved;
- Provide students and staff with access to school counselors, school psychologists, community mental health professionals, and other post-incident specialists; and
- See that staff and students affected by the crisis receive continuing mental health assistance.

When appropriate, elicit assistance from community mental health professionals in debriefing the school community. Crisis Teams usually make arrangements in

advance with trained grief counselors throughout the school district and in the community so that counselors will be available at school on the day following a tragedy. The majority of students usually benefit from:

- An opportunity to process their emotional response to an incident; and
- Reassurance that their physical and emotional reactions are normal.

Professional medical personnel can work with school staff to perform "emotional triage" to identify severely affected students, or students with pre-existing conditions who might benefit from additional assistance. Some incidents such as an injury or suicide attempt may involve one student or a limited group of students rather than affecting the entire student body.   Some tools and references have been included in Tab 4: Recovery to assist in responding to these types of incidents.

The school community may be permanently affected by the tragedy and administrators and Crisis Management Team members should recognize the long-term impact.   Accordingly, administrators should continue the excellent modeling that the intervention activities provide and let the students understand that it is acceptable for them to take their time in completing the grieving process. The process must accommodate the return to school and the memorials or other follow-up activities as appropriate.

When the crisis event has been resolved, everyone involved should be given the opportunity to discuss what went right or wrong throughout the process and how it can be improved.

Prevention
(Tab 1)

Crisis can affect an individual, a group, or an organization. A critical incident becomes a crisis event when it disrupts cognitive, physical, or emotional functions. Tragic death, natural disasters, terrorism, and violent assaults may have a devastating effect on people. In addition, military-related issues such as deployment, force protection, and high operations tempo can have a significant effect on school functioning that would require specific interventions.

Prevention is what the school can do to eliminate a critical incident or crisis event. The reference material in this section provides some background information on sources of psychological stress affecting DoDEA students:

- Suicide Awareness
- Deployment

These materials serve as a starting point for background information. Schools, districts, and Crisis Management Teams are encouraged to supplement these materials with their own references as needed, and to consult with their District/Area Safety and Security Officers for assistance.

Suicide Awareness

The following information summarizes two prevention programs that can help students, school staff, and parents understand warning signs and methods for dealing with depression and youth suicide. Suicidal ideation or attempts (suspected or actual) must be reported using the *DoDEA Serious Incident Report* (DoDEA Form 4705; *S.I.R.*) found in the Response attachments, Tab 3.

The Jason Foundation

The Jason Foundation developed the suicide awareness program, *A Promise for Tomorrow*, to teach students about the prevalence and warning signs of suicide. This program gives students the information necessary to recognize the signs of suicidal ideation in their friends or themselves. Students learn how to:

- Recognize signs that troubled friends might be suicidal, and
- Encourage them to seek help from a responsible adult.

The program does not prepare students or staff to counsel suicidal students, instead it shows them how to encourage peers to seek help from a mental health professional. The program includes statistics on the magnitude of the problem, warning signs that suicide might be imminent, and information on factors that increase a student's risk of committing suicide. A copy of the program was provided to each DoDEA middle and high school.

SOS Signs of Suicide

Provided to DoDEA by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, *SOS Signs of Suicide* helps protect youth by identifying those who may be at risk for mental health problems and encouraging help-seeking and appropriate treatment. Through the SOS program, middle and high school students, school staff, and their parents will learn about depression, suicide, and the associated risks of alcohol use.

This program highlights the relationship between depression and suicide. SOS participants learn that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression. SOS teaches the steps individuals should take if they encounter the signs of depression or suicide. The program summarizes the steps with the acronym **ACT**: **Acknowledge** you are seeing serious signs of depression or suicide, let the person know that you **Care** about him or her, and **Tell** a trusted adult — either with your friend, or on his or her behalf.

Deployment Stressors

Among the many types of stress that you can address to prevent incidents is the stress that accompanies deployment. One burden of being in a military family is the separation that most likely will occur when family members are deployed to distant military locations for extended periods of time. Children of deployed members of the armed forces may react to the change in atmosphere around their family's home in different ways. Though most will acclimate, especially with age, some will not deal with the deployment process as maturely as others.

Elementary school students and young middle school students may whine, complain, become aggressive or otherwise "act out" their feelings. They may focus on the soldier-parent missing a key event, for example: "Will you (the soldier) be here for my birthday?" Depressive symptoms may include: sleep disturbance, loss of interest in school, not eating, or not playing with their friends. They will need to talk about their feelings and will need more physical attention than usual. Keeping routines as close to normal is best for students.

High school students will generally be more mature about the deployment of family, but when a student is affected by the absence of a parent or family member, it will have greater impact on their behavior. They may become irritable, rebellious, and fight or participate in other attention-getting behavior. Also, they may show a lack of interest in school, peers, and school activities. In addition, they are at greater risk for promiscuity, alcohol and drug use. Although they may deny problems and worries, it is extremely important for caregivers to stay engaged and be available to talk out their concerns. At first, lowering academic expectations may be helpful; however, return to their usual school performance should be supported. Sports and social activities should be encouraged to give normal structure to their life. Likewise, additional responsibility in the family, commensurate with their emotional maturity, will make them feel important and needed.

Some children may have great difficulty adapting to the stress of a deployed parent. If they are unable to return to at least some part of their normal routine or display serious problems over several weeks, a visit to the family doctor or mental health counselor is recommended.

Despite all these obstacles, the vast majority of spouses and family members successfully negotiate the sustained absence stage and begin to look forward to their loved ones coming home. Believe it or not, extended deployment of a family member can also have positive effects.

Deployment Stressors (Continued)

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment
(Pincus, 2000; www.hooah4health.com/environment/deployment/emotionalcycle.htm)

Note that the Emotional Cycle of Deployment shown below does not reflect age and maturity. The response of children to the extended deployment of a parent is very individualized and also depends on their developmental age: infants, toddlers, preschool, school age, and teenagers. It is reasonable to assume that a sudden negative change in a child's behavior or mood is a predictable response to the stress of having a deployed parent.

- **Pre-Deployment:** Characterized by denial and anticipation of loss. Deploying family member "bonds" more with unit and distances from family. Family strives for intimacy, but pulls-back some in anticipation of separation.

- **Deployment (first month after leaving home):** Characterized by mixed emotions including feelings of disorientation, being overwhelmed, relief, anger, numbness, sadness, and abandonment.

- **Sustained Absence (second through next-to-last month of deployment):** Characterized by feelings of being in control and able to cope. Some frustration arises when trying to coordinate communication with deployed family member. Watch out for rumors.

- **Re-deployment (last month of deployment):** Characterized by anticipation of homecoming, excitement, and apprehension.

- **Post-deployment (3-6 months after deployment):** Characterized by a honeymoon period, loss of independence, a need for "own space," renegotiating routines, reintegrating into the family.

Peacetime versus Wartime Deployment
Research on military induced separations has shown that deployment puts greater emotional and physical demands on families. Fortunately, during peacetime, for most military families, their "feelings of emotional disorganization" are expected but temporary. These feelings usually last between two and six weeks after which the rest of the deployment passes in a state of relative calm. Any negative effects of extended deployment abate within the first couple of months after the deployment ends.

For military families, routine deployment is an expected or "normative" family stressor. However, during wartime, deployment moves along the stress

Deployment Stressors (Continued)

continuum and becomes a catastrophic stressor. This distinction is important to keep in mind when supporting students and their families when a parent is deployed during wartime.

Some of the differences include:

Peacetime Deployment	Wartime Deployment
Anticipated	Unexpected
Time to prepare	May have little time to prepare
Low threat	Higher threat possible
Previous experience with deployments	No prior experience with wartime deployment
Know others who have been through it	Occurs in atmosphere of crisis and fear
Guidance available for getting through it	Undetermined length
Support system at typical functioning levels	Potentially lethal
Less time spent in actual crisis	Time in crisis lasts longer and may not abate
Predetermined length	Media reports may maintain heightened stress

*Source: Supporting Students and Their Families During Military Deployment (February 2002),
Okinawa District; Department of Defense Dependent Schools.*

During peacetime deployment, the stress is typically transitional and problems are rarely chronic. Evidence suggests that this is not the case during wartime deployment because it is difficult for families to achieve the relative state of calm that typically occurs during the middle stages of peacetime deployment and within weeks after the deployment ends.

Preparedness
(Tab 2)

Preparedness focuses on the process of planning for the worst-case scenario and involves efforts to provide planning, training, and equipment for the Crisis Management Team so they are ready to react to any type of incident.

The following tools are helpful in the selection and establishment of the Crisis Management Team and assembling emergency supplies. The material includes examples and suggestions regarding:

- Roles and Responsibilities of Crisis Management Team and Members
- Team Member Form
- Community Resource List
- Timeline for Establishment and Maintenance of Crisis Management Team
- Lists for Supplies and Emergency Kits
- Protective Action steps

Additional resources that can assist in preparing for Crisis Response include:

- Crisis Management Toolkit on the DoDEA Crisis Management website http://www.dodea.edu/instruction/crisis/
- "Tool 13: Incident Command System Assignment Form" in the handbook, *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners*

These materials serve as a starting point for information. Schools, districts, and Crisis Management Teams are encouraged to supplement these materials as needed, and to consult with their District/Area Safety and Security Officers for assistance.

The Crisis Management Team[1]

As described in the handbook, *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners*, the Crisis Management Team helps the administrator in decision-making and in managing the Emergency Transition Period. See page 2-1 in the handbook for background on the Incident Escalation Model.

A chain-of-command is assigned within the Crisis Management Team. If time permits, decisions should be made by consensus of the team members. If time does not allow for convening the team, the school personnel highest in the chain-of-command will be responsible for crucial decision-making. In the event that he/she is unavailable, then the next in the chain-of-command will become the decision-maker.

The following lists comprise suggested examples for assigned roles and their respective responsibilities for members of a school's Crisis Management Team. Each school should tailor the quantity of team members and the personalities involved to fit their needs appropriately. Administrators will need to ensure appropriate coverage and release time for teachers leaving their classrooms.

Crisis Management Team Leader – Administrator

- Verify crisis – Notify DSO and local military command if appropriate
- Assemble Crisis Management Team
- Notify Media Liaison
- Write announcement with input from Team
- Designate Family Liaison
- Inform parents of plan
- Schedule emergency staff meeting
- Establish Crisis Room
- Write condolence letter to family
- Grant staff release time to attend funeral
- Maintain high visibility during crisis

School Psychologist/Counselors

- Staff the Crisis Room – Talk with students about the crisis
- Contact community support services
- Provide grief information – support students and staff
- Encourage students and staff to express their feelings
- Contact parents as needed – Provide referrals to community agencies

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[1] Suggested roles/responsibilities are based on a 1998 article by Opalewski and Robertson. The roles have been adapted to make them relevant to DoDEA.

The Crisis Management Team (Continued)

Nurse/Medical Personnel

- Assist with communications with medical treatment facility
- Clarify and verify information
- Provide medical information and emergency care as needed

Roamers

- Check hallways and bathrooms to ensure no students are left in the school during evacuation
- Visible in halls to help identify students in need and maintain order
- Temporarily relieve teachers who may need to go to the command center or need time alone
- Available in the cafeteria to talk with students during all lunches
- Escort students when necessary
- Keep media out of the school
- Available to speak with classes about how to respond to others after a crisis

Maintenance/Custodian

- Assist in identifying details of evacuation routes, assembly areas, and command center
- Coordinate plans with appropriate installation agencies
- Communicate plan and details to school staff
- Ensure classroom and school routes are posted
- Ensure classroom emergency information packets are complete

Public Affairs

- Administrator informs teachers and staff that the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) is the school's media contact
- The PAO is the school's *one and only contact* person and all inquiries are referred to the PAO
- The PAO is the spokesperson for the school – the person who knows what information is allowed to be given to the media and what is sensitive to public knowledge

Sample Crisis Management Team List

Role	Name	Responsibilities
Crisis Management Team Leader *(Principal)*		
Alternate Leader *(Administrator)*		
Psychologist		
Counselors		
Nurse		
Maintenance/Custodian		
Public Affairs		
Roamers . . . *(Teachers)*		

Sample Community Resources List

Resource	Name	Telephone Number
District Superintendent's Office		
Transportation Office		
School Liaison Officer		
District/Area Safety and Security Officer		
Installation Commander		
Host Military Installation NEO Coordinator		
Military Police/Security		
Fire Department		
Emergency Room		
Community Mental Health / Counseling Center		
Social Work Services		
Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Services (ASACS)		
Family Service Center		
Chaplain		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		

Annual Timeline for Crisis Planning

DoDEA Manual 1005.1 *Administrators' Manual* stipulates that administrators "should have a well-coordinated and practical antiterrorism plan, school evacuation and lockdown plans, and crisis management plans for students and staff" (DoDEA Manual 1005.1 paragraph 47.3.3.1, p. 131; available on the DoDEA Web site).

As described in the Administrator's Manual, the crisis plan should address:
- Lockdown procedures for use in response to the threat of a violent perpetrator;
- Shelter-in-place procedures to protect students from an environmental threat;
- Procedures for taking cover in the event of natural disasters; and
- An evacuation plan for use in response to a bomb threat.

DoDEA Regulation 4700.2 *Internal Physical Security* provides additional guidance on protective actions and requires an annual table top exercise followed by a lockdown drill (Regulation 4700.2, Enclosure 2, paragraph E2.2.1.3, p. 11; available on the DoDEA Web site). Fortunately, it is possible to update the antiterrorism and crisis response plans at the same time. The following sequence of actions provides a checklist for updating your crisis plan annually to fulfill these requirements.

Week 1 (Before school year begins.)
- Administrator establishes the Crisis Management Team and defines each member's role
- Submit Crisis Management Team list to DSO
- Develop faculty phone tree, with Crisis Management Team members at the top

Week 2 (First week of the school year)
- Review protective actions and emergency school closing procedures, modify as appropriate
- Confirm specifics and communicate procedures to appropriate community agencies (installation command, MP, fire department, etc.)
- Communicate plan and procedures to school staff and parents

Annual Timeline for Crisis Planning (Continued)

- Host Crisis Management Team Kick-Off Meeting to:
  - Introduce Crisis Management Team members to each other
  - Explain purpose of the team
  - Discuss roles of members
  - Review protective actions
  - Establish timeline for drills

Week 3 – Review *Crisis Planning Guide* procedures with Crisis Management Team

Monthly Updates: Brief staff on a regular basis concerning school Crisis Management Team procedures and specific concerns related to:
- Accidental Injury
- Sudden Death
- Deployment
- Suicide Threat
- Bomb Threats

Ongoing: Principal seeks opportunities for community sponsored training for Crisis Management Team members (i.e., violence intervention, threat assessment, prevention programs)

Ongoing: Drills & Exercises
- According to DoDEA 1005.1 *Administrator's Manual* the National Fire Protection Association requires 10 fire drills per year, four fire drills at the beginning of the school year conducted one drill per week, and six drills throughout the remainder of the school year
- DoDEA 4700.2 *Internal Physical Security* requires an annual table top exercise followed by a Lockdown drill
- Conduct protective action drills, to protect from natural and manmade hazards such as fire, chemical spill, violent intruder or severe weather, in accordance with current guidance (see DoDEA 1005.1 Administrator's Manual, available on the DoDEA Web site)
- Conduct table top exercises and lockdown drills as required by DoDEA 4700.2 Internal Physical Security (Available on the DoDEA Web site)

Emergency Supply Lists

Suggested Grab & Go Kit Supplies:

- [ ] A copy of your emergency policies and procedures notebook.
- [ ] List of Crisis Management Team, roles, and responsibilities.
- [ ] A complete list of phone numbers for emergency assistance.
- [ ] Clearly marked master keys to buildings.
- [ ] Site and surrounding-area maps.
- [ ] School building blueprints.
- [ ] Information and instructions for shut-off procedures for alarms and utilities.
- [ ] Maps with routes to evacuation sites.
- [ ] A means of accounting for all students, faculty, and staff.
- [ ] Parent/Guardian signature forms for releasing students.
- [ ] Adhesive labels for student name tags.
- [ ] Protocol for all students with special needs or medical plans.
- [ ] A bright vest that readily identifies you as the principal.
- [ ] A battery operated radio/extra batteries.
- [ ] Communication devices (i.e., walkie-talkies).
- [ ] Writing supplies (i.e., paper, pencils, index cards, markers, poster board).
- [ ] A first aid kit and handbook.
- [ ] Lights (i.e., flashlights/plenty of batteries, candles and matches).
- [ ] A bullhorn.
- [ ] Storage materials (i.e., plastic trash bags).
- [ ] Batteries or power sources for walkie-talkies, flashlights, and bullhorns.

Emergency Supply Lists (Continued)

First Aid Supplies:

- ☐ Disposable Plastic Gloves (synthetic)
- ☐ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ☐ Iodine
- ☐ Alcohol Swabs
- ☐ Assorted Band Aids
- ☐ Oval Eye Patches
- ☐ Tongue Depressors
- ☐ Sterile Water (for burns)
- ☐ Instant Ice Packs
- ☐ Hypoallergenic Tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Gauze Rolls
- ☐ Sterile Pads (all sizes)
- ☐ Ace Bandages
- ☐ Sewing Needles and Thread
- ☐ Safety Pins (all sizes)
- ☐ Slings
- ☐ Anti-bacterial Ointment, Waterless Anti-bacterial Soap
- ☐ Steri-strips (butterfly closures)
- ☐ Eye Protection Masks
- ☐ CPR Shields
- ☐ First Aid Handbook
- ☐ Insulin and Syringes with MD Order for Diagnosed Diabetic Students
- ☐ Source of Sugar for Diabetic Students

- ☐ Sanitary Napkins
- ☐ Cotton Tip Applicators
- ☐ Finger Splints
- ☐ Cardboard Splints
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

General Emergency Supplies:

- ☐ Sheets
- ☐ Candles
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Matches
- ☐ Pillows, Disposable Pillow Covers
- ☐ Bottled Water
- ☐ Flashlights
- ☐ Radio (battery operated)
- ☐ Walkie-Talkies
- ☐ Batteries for Flashlights and Radio, and Walkie-Talkies
- ☐ Duct Tape
- ☐ Meals Ready to Eat
- ☐ Aluminum foil "survival" blankets
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Protective Action Steps

The protective action steps below enable an administrator to protect students. These four protective actions are presented again in the Response attachment (Tab 3) as a checklist to assist Crisis Management Teams in conducting drills. The steps are presented here to familiarize teams with the required actions.

General Actions

- Assess and evaluate the nature of the threat
- Decide on appropriate Protective Action
- Clearly communicate Protective Action signal
- Phone emergency number to activate ICS
- Implement appropriate Protective Action procedures in classrooms
- Alert School District Office
- Establish a Command Post
- Locate and use "Grab and Go" kit
- Operate from a Command Post
- Maintain contact with ICS

Lockdown

- Lock doors and windows
- Move children out of line-of-sight
- Cover windows and glass panes in doors
- Ensure students are not left in common areas
- Turn off lights in classrooms
- Require students to be quiet in classrooms
- Take attendance. Report results to the Command Post

Shelter-in-Place

- Lock exterior doors and windows
- Turn off HVAC or ventilation system
- Move students to pre-designated location(s)
- Make provisions for moving students with special needs
- Ensure rest room facilities are available within Shelter-in-Place area
- Take attendance. Report results to the Command Post

Protective Action Steps (Continued)

Take Cover

- Secure doors and windows
- Take students to pre-designated interior "take cover" safe areas
- Ensure students are not left in common areas
- Take attendance. Report results to the principal or Command Post

Evacuation

- Evacuate building in orderly and timely manner
- Implement procedures for students with special needs
- Assemble students at designated evacuation areas
- Take attendance. Report results to the principal
- Establish an alternative Command Post
- Establish Parent-Student Reunification Center and implement sign-out procedures
- Have a plan for dismissing students from the evacuation site when all-clear signal is given
- Make provisions for evacuation site security

Response
(Tab 3)

Response refers to the steps taken during a crisis. The more familiar staff and students become with protective actions and emergency procedures, the more smoothly they can respond during an actual incident. The Incident Response graphic on page 8 of this guide depicts the three steps required to respond to a critical incident. This simplified approach works for all hazards.

The materials presented in this section include checklists and forms to remind individuals of the actions required of them and to record critical information about the incident. Some of the reference material may be useful in addressing limited situations that require immediate response but do not threaten all students. The material includes:

- Protective Actions Checklist
- Bomb Threat Form
- Hostage Situation Checklist
- Guidelines for Responding to Death
- Checklist for Response to Death
- Parent Notification of Student Death – Letter
- DoDEA Serious Incident Report Form
- Terrorism, Antiterrorism and War

These materials serve as a starting point for information. Schools, districts and Crisis Management Teams are encouraged to supplement these materials as needed and to consult with their District/Area Safety and Security Officers for assistance.

Protective Actions Checklist Background

The Protective Actions Checklist below serves two purposes, it:

1) Describes the actions that need to be completed to execute the protective actions: Lockdown, Shelter-in-Place, Take Cover, and Evacuation; and

2) Provides a checklist that the Crisis Team can use to evaluate the school's performance during drills.

Both purposes are critical to response. Reviewing the actions required during lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover and evacuation helps the teachers and students understand what is expected of them. The more familiar staff and students are with their duties, the better they can prepare to respond. The three steps graphic and explanation on page 8 of this guide describe the essential decision making needed to respond effectively to an incident: determine the threat, decide on a course of action and implement that action.

Practicing protective action procedures through drills helps the staff and students internalize the procedures and perform the actions more smoothly. During an actual incident, we perform the way we trained.

Some actions are general and will be executed during any incident. These actions are listed in the initial section of the checklist. For example, in all incidents, the Crisis Team members available will help the principal assess the threat, select the appropriate protective action (e.g., evacuation), and assist with implementing the action (shepherding students to the evacuation rendezvous site, checking rest rooms and halls for stray students).

Response involves both how you prepare to respond to an incident and how you respond during the incident. The actual incident you encounter might require slight modifications to your plan. However, practicing your response increases your principal's decision making ability, your Crisis Team's flexibility, and staff and students' capacity to respond as directed.

Protective Actions Checklist

Name of Observer: _____

Date: _____

Location Observed: _____

Instructions:

1) Check column beside the action to indicate whether or not it was implemented.

2) Use special comments section for data pertaining to items in drill categories.

3) Note narrative observations in the area provided.

Crisis Team Procedures			
#	**General Actions**	**YES**	**NO**
1	Assess and evaluate the nature of the threat.		
2	Decide on appropriate Protective Action.		
3	Clearly communicate Protective Action signal.		
4	Phone emergency number to activate ICS.		
5	Implement appropriate Protective Action procedures in classrooms (see pages 32-33).		
6	Alert School District/Area Office.		
7	Establish a Command Post.		
8	Locate and use "Grab and Go" kit.		
9	Operate from a Command Post.		
10	Maintain contact with ICS (simulate during drill).		
Time elapsed until full implementation of drill:			

Protective Actions Checklist (Continued)

Classroom Protective Action Procedures			
11	**Lockdown**	**Yes**	**No**
11.1	**Lock doors and windows.**		
11.2	**Move children out of line-of-sight.**		
11.3	**Cover windows and glass panes in doors.**		
11.4	**Ensure students are not left in common areas.**		
11.5	**Turn off lights in classrooms.**		
11.6	**Require students to be quiet in classrooms.**		
11.7	**Take attendance. Report results to the Command Post.**		
Special Comments:			

12	**Shelter-in-Place (SIP)**	**Yes**	**No**
12.1	**Lock exterior doors and windows.**		
12.2	**Turn off HVAC or ventilation system.**		
12.3	**Move students to pre-designated location(s).**		
12.4	**Make provisions for moving students with special needs.**		
12.5	**Rest room facilities available within SIP area.**		
12.6	**Take attendance. Report results to the Command Post.**		
Special Comments:			

Protective Actions Checklist (Continued)

13	Take Cover	Yes	No
13.1	Receive Take Cover signal.		
13.2	Secure exterior doors and windows.		
13.3	Take students to pre-designated interior "take cover" safe areas.		
13.4	Ensure students are not left in common areas.		
13.5	Take attendance. Report results to the principal or the Command Post.		
Special Comments:			

14	Evacuation	Yes	No
14.1	Evacuate building in orderly and timely manner.		
14.2	Implement procedures for students with special needs.		
14.3	Assemble students at designated evacuation areas.		
14.4	Take attendance. Report results to principal.		
14.5	Establish an Alternative Command Post.		
14.6	Establish Parent-Student Reunification Center and implement sign-out procedures.		
14.7	Have a plan for dismissing students from the evacuation site when all-clear signal is given.		
14.8	Make provisions for evacuation site security.		
Special Comments:			

Bomb Threat Report Form

Be calm & courteous. – Do not interrupt the caller. – Quietly attract principal.

Name of Operator: _____

Time: _____ Date: _____

Check appropriate boxes below.

Caller Is:
☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Adult   ☐ Juvenile
☐ Other _____

Origin of Call:
☐ Local   ☐ Long Distance   ☐ Caller ID   ☐ Within School   ☐ Not Known

Caller's Voice Characteristics:
☐ Loud   ☐ Deep   ☐ High Pitched   ☐ Persistent   ☐ Raspy
☐ Soft   ☐ Other _____

Caller's Speech Patterns/Characteristics:
☐ Fast   ☐ Distorted   ☐ Distinct   ☐ Nasal   ☐ Stutter
☐ Other _____

Caller's Grammar:
☐ Excellent   ☐ Poor   ☐ Fair   ☐ Foul   ☐ Good
☐ Other _____

Caller's Accent:
☐ Local   ☐ Foreign   ☐ Can't Identify

Caller's Manner:
☐ Irrational   ☐ Angry   ☐ Calm   ☐ Incoherent   ☐ Rational
☐ Emotional   ☐ Coherent   ☐ Laughing   ☐ Deliberate
☐ Other _____

Background Noises:
☐ Factory   ☐ Mixed   ☐ Music   ☐ Planes
☐ Traffic   ☐ Animal   ☐ Office Machines   ☐ Other _____

Additional Information:

When will it go off? _____   Hour? _____   How much time is left? _____

What kind of bomb? _____   Where are you now? _____

How do you know so much about the bomb? _____

What is your name? _____

Notes: _____

Hostage Situation Checklist

Preparation:

☐ Establish a local Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) adapted to school, installation, and District/Area Schools Office (DSO) expectations.

☐ Establish and practice notification methods/signals with all staff.

☐ Practice making contact with the Installation Commander and Military Police (MPs); have their contact numbers clearly posted.

☐ Conduct drills to allow students and staff to practice lockdown procedures.

☐ Conduct drills to allow students and staff to practice evacuation to predetermined safe havens, including calling class role, assigning runners, and reporting missing persons.

☐ Notify parents that their school's Safe Schools Plan includes procedures for hostage situations.

Response:

☐ Make decisions to lockdown or evacuate, partially or fully.

☐ Give the signal/message to staff.

☐ Notify Installation Commander and MPs.

☐ Notify DSO and others as appropriate.

☐ Have cell phone and classroom phone/intercom numbers in hand.

☐ Function as on-scene commander until relieved by MPs.

☐ Provide accurate information; practice rumor control.

☐ Secure headcount from safe haven points to account for all students and staff. Identify missing persons.

☐ Make appearance at parent rallying point.

☐ Convene school's Crisis Team and discuss short and long-term intervention plans.

☐ Designate a Crisis Response Coordinator for this specific crisis.

☐ Hold emergency staff meeting to debrief, provide accurate information, and thank/support staff.

☐ Send letter and/or pamphlet home to parents and students.

☐ Allow ongoing functioning of school's Crisis Team to address post-trauma needs of staff and students.

☐ Submit ***Serious Incident Report*** within 24-hours.

Guidelines for Responding to Death

Overview
Sudden death is shocking. When a sudden death occurs (including suicide) no preparation for the death has taken place. People need help coping with the loss and readjusting to their daily routines.

A response to death involves activation of the management plan by the Crisis Team. Initial and follow-up actions could continue for several weeks or months. The management plan is designed to help the school community cope with the impact of a death and to prevent or treat delayed stress reactions. The team uses the crisis plan to provide stability in an otherwise fragmented environment. Listed below are guidelines and precautions to consider when developing a plan for response to death.

General Procedures and Team Interventions
As in any crisis, the team must first determine the degree to which their participation is warranted. Recommended general procedures include:

- Notify the principal immediately. The principal will then convene the Crisis Team and contact the Installation Commander, the District/Area Superintendent's Office, and other school principals in the immediate area. The principal will designate a person to contact the appropriate Public Affairs Office who will assist in disseminating information.

- Notify the staff via telephone tree or schedule a faculty meeting as soon as possible. Present the facts to the faculty. Contact itinerant resource educators and non-school based members of the team who provide additional support.

- Hold a Crisis Team meeting to appoint counselors, support staff, parent contacts, and hall monitors. Relieve team members from their normal duties for 3-5 days if possible. Review the crisis management plan with other schools that may be involved in the crisis.

- Brief the faculty before they meet with students. Anticipate students' questions so that the faculty can provide appropriate responses. Schools should not be dismissed. Maintain stability of the school environment by continuing regular schedules.

- Verify all facts before releasing information. Be as truthful as possible, but continue to respect the family's right to privacy. Rumor control during staff meetings and meetings with students is very important.

Guidelines for Responding to Death (Continued)

- Honor the family's desires regarding public announcements and memorial services.

- Prepare a statement to read to students. **Do not** use the public address system.

- Teachers should deliver the message simultaneously. Provide assistance to teachers who do not wish to deliver the message themselves.

- Make arrangements to counsel some students (e.g., close friends of the deceased) individually, as needed. It is important to deal with students' emotions before continuing with scheduled instruction. For example, spend the first 10 to 15 minutes of class time on discussion. Accompanying attachments in this Recovery section include guidelines for talking with students about death.

- Tell students that counseling is available and how to access help.

- Be aware that stress can aggravate physical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy. The school nurse is an important contact for students with these types of problems.

- Provide group and individual counseling at the school for several (3-5) days following a crisis. Maintain information cards that contain students' name, grade level, counselor, phone numbers, parent contacts, and the need for follow-up. Discuss confidentiality with faculty members. Release information on a strict "need-to-know" basis.

- Meet with faculty to discuss concerns about the crisis, review facts, and dispel rumors. Several faculty meetings might be necessary.

- Hold team meetings for debriefing and planning. Several of these meetings might be necessary to ensure that personal needs and concern of team members are met.

- Make individual counseling available to school personnel who have had personal relationships with the deceased.

- Be on the "lookout" for high-risk students. Check absentee lists, monitor halls and school grounds for the first week. This is very important for high-risk students.

Guidelines for Responding to Death (Continued)

- Notify the parents of students who are affected by the crisis. Provide information about the incident. Include a brochure that describes the warning signs of emotional difficulty and actions parents can take.

- Ensure that students have an opportunity to attend memorial services.

- Provide follow-up counseling. Check rotation dates and recommend continued support for students needing counseling at their next assignment location.

- Send letters of appreciation to agencies and individuals involved in the response. Meet as a Crisis Team one last time to evaluate policies and procedures.

- Document Crisis Team activities in an After Action Report.

- Debrief members of the team. Consider a debriefing conducted by someone employed outside the school, possibly from another agency.

Death of a Faculty Member

In addition to the above guidelines, the following considerations will help the Crisis Team to respond to the death of a faculty member.

- Convene a faculty meeting to provide information and review the Crisis Response Plan. Encourage faculty to support one another as they respond to the loss of their colleague.

- Students enrolled in classes previously taught by the deceased might be more willing to express their feelings to a familiar staff member rather than to a substitute.

- Provide assistance to substitutes in preparing lessons and in preparing strategies to use with grieving students.

Decide who should be informed and in what manner depending on the ages and the grade levels of students.

Checklist for Response to Death

1.   Notification

❑ Principal.

❑ District/Area Schools Office and Area.

❑ District/Area Crisis Team Coordinator (if applicable).

❑ District/Area Safety and Security Officer.

❑ Crisis Team leader and team members.

❑ Grief counselors from the community who have agreed to help.

❑ Other principals.

❑ Faculty (via telephone tree).

❑ School Liaison Officer.

❑ Public Affairs Officer (PAO).

❑ Parents of students who were close to the victim.

2.   Information Dissemination

❑ Faculty meeting for a briefing.

❑ Prepared statement to be read to students (assistance for teachers provided).

❑ Statement/letter for parents.

❑ Suggestion for responses to anticipated questions.

❑ Background information on developmentally appropriate responses to death.

Checklist for Response to Death (Continued)

3.   Student Support.

❑ Triage students for services needed: immediate crisis intervention; safe room discussion group; and classroom intervention with trained person.

❑ High priority and at-risk students and staff identified (e.g. friends, teammates, etc.)

❑ "Comfort Center" established (tissues and water should be available).

❑ Record keeping procedures established to document student contacts.

❑ Individual, faculty and parent referrals.

❑ Classroom discussions.

❑ Parent contacts.

❑ Outside referrals.

4.   Management Issues.

❑ Crisis Team Coordinator determined.

❑ Office contact arranged.

❑ Substitute coverage arranged.

❑ Hall monitors/roamers arranged (to "sweep" hallways/bathrooms to identify students who need assistance).

❑ Statement for teachers to read/share with their students.

❑ Letter for parents.

❑ Brochure describing warning signs of emotional difficulty and actions parents could take.

❑ Letter for Crisis Team members (including expanded Crisis Team with community resources).

Checklist for Response to Death (Continued)

❑ Phone numbers of parents of students who were close to victim (to advise them to monitor their children).

❑ Documentation of student counseling contacts (i.e., index card).

❑ Reports filed (i.e., After Action Crisis Report).

5. **Follow-up**

❑ Faculty debriefing.

❑ Contact family/families of deceased.

❑ Contact chaplain and command for memorial arrangements (i.e. time, transportation and location).

❑ Thank you notes written to community members involved in intervention.

Parent Notification of Student Death

Date _____

Dear Sponsors and Parents

The following statement was read to your student's class concerning the death of _____

[Insert prepared statement read to class.]

Due to the traumatic nature of this death, parents are urged to be alert for any abnormal reactions such as:

- Continuing rejection of support.
- Withdrawal from family, friends and social activities.
- Sharp decline in grades and/or loss of interest in school.
- Inability to express feelings about the death.
- Projection of sense of helplessness, hopelessness or emptiness.
- Expression of sudden new fears.
- Deep loss of self-esteem and self concept.
- Disturbance in sleep patterns and/or excessive or recurring nightmares.
- Overly preoccupied with death.

If any of the above signs and symptoms persist more than one week, or you notice other unusual reactions in your child, please feel free to contact any of the resources that may be available to you, such as those listed below:

- Counselor
- Family Health
- Family Services
- Medical Professional/Nurse
- Mental Health
- Psychologist
- Religious Leader/Chaplain
- Social Worker

Sincerely,

Principal

Serious Incident Report Form (*S.I.R.*)

The Serious Incident Report (DoDEA Form 4705; *S.I.R.*) that follows is the standard form that administrators are required to fill out for crisis incidents in accordance with current guidance (DoDEA 4700.2 "Internal Physical Security" available on the DoDEA Web site).

DoDEA SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORT

AREA:	DISTRICT:	SCHOOL NAME:

DATE OF INCIDENT:	TIME OF INCIDENT:

INCIDENT OCCURRED: ___ ON SCHOOL GROUNDS   ___ OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS (Enroute to or from school or while at a school sponsored activity)

TYPE OF INCIDENT
(Refer to DR 4700.2, Enclosure 1, Definitions)

DRUG/ALCOHOL OFFENSES

___ Use of Drugs/Alcohol
___ Possession of Drugs
___ Possession of Alcohol
___ Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
___ Possession of Drugs/Alcohol for Sale
___ Sale and/or Furnishing of Drugs/Alcohol
___ "Other" Drug/Alcohol Offenses

CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS

___ Battery
___ Assault with a Deadly Weapon
___ Homicide
___ Robbery/Extortion
___ Sex Offenses
___ "Other" Crimes Against Persons

CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY

___ Personal Property Theft (over $100 loss)
___ Govt. Accountable Property Theft (generally, bar-coded property)
___ Vandalism (over $500 loss)
___ Graffiti (over $500 loss)
___ Arson
___ Burglary
___ "Other" Crimes Against Property

SECURITY THREATS (Affecting School, Staff, Students, or Operations)

___ Bomb Threat
___ Force Protection Issues (i.e., suspected surveillance or other suspicious or actual activity constituting a threat or potential threat to students, staff, or operations)
___ Threats of Extreme Violence (i.e., written, verbal, internal or external, by students or others)
___ "Other" Security Threats

OTHER INCIDENTS

___ Destructive/Explosive Devices   ___ Loitering/Trespassing   Possession of an Actual Firearm

___ Possession of "Other" Weapon (i.e., report knife with 3 inch blade or lock-in-place blade/razor of any length, BB/Pellet guns or realistic "replica" guns, nun-chucks, clubs, and other items possessed or used to inflict bodily harm. Whenever a question arises as to whether a device is a legally classified "weapon," the supporting Command/host law enforcement authority interpretation will prevail.

___ Other (Use this area to record those incidents which do not tit comfortably within the categories listed above, but which may develop into incidents of negative media attention or other issues felt by the reporting official to warrant a report for the record.

PARTICIPANTS (List name as last, first, MI)	GENDER (M/F)	AGE	GRADE	STATUS (Subject/Victim/Witness)

NOTIFICATIONS: ___ Police   ___ District   ___ Area   ___ DoDEA HQ
Police Responded? ___ Yes   ___ No   Police Investigating? ___ Yes   ___ No
Notifications made/coordinated by: _____

DESCRIBE IN DETAIL WHAT OCCURRED. STATE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, & HOW. EXTENT OF ANY MONETARY LOSS, DETAILS OF ANY WEAPON, ETC._____

DoDEA Form 4705
March 2001

Terrorism, Antiterrorism and War

Overview

DoDEA has a number of regulations and publications pertaining to force protection and terrorism. Planning documents containing specific procedures relating to a school facility should be kept in a separate binder for obvious security reasons.

The following DoDEA publications provide guidance about antiterrorism and force protection:

- DoDEA Regulation 4700.2: "Internal Physical Security" describes policy, responsibilities, and procedures to protect against loss of life, destruction of property and disruption of activities.
- *Safe Schools – A Handbook for Practitioners* (DynCorp and NASSP)
- DoDEA Regulation 4700.1: "Antiterrorism Program"

Procedures

In any force protection situation, our responses are coordinated with the command and governed by the security posture that the command sets. Specific guidance is contained in the individual school's Antiterrorism/Force Protection Plan.

Team Interventions

As in any crisis situation, teams can follow the steps outlined in the Crisis Team's Intervention Response Checklist. Additionally, teams could incorporate the following guidance provided by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA):

Safety and Security
- Provide victims with a place where they can rest and feel secure–at least momentarily.
- Provide victims with protection from intrusive strangers or the media.
- Reassure victims of the availability of assistance in coping with the physical and emotional reactions to crisis.

Terrorism, Antiterrorism and War (Continued)

Ventilation and Validation

- Allow victims to tell their stories and talk about their reactions.

- Assist them in discussing what happened in chronological order.

- Encourage them to try to remember what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted or touched at the time the tragedy occurred and for each stage thereafter. Any of the senses may take a "traumatic imprint."

- Assure them that most of their reactions are not uncommon for people in the midst of a crisis.

- It is not unusual for people to be in a state of shock for days after a tragedy of a great magnitude.

- Fear and anxiety may characterize their days–they are struggling with regaining a sense of safety. Assure them that they can feel safe again.

- Reassure victims and survivors that they are not at fault for the tragedy or its consequences.

- Grief or sorrow will be overwhelming to many. Remember that tears are good. Tears relieve stress.

Prediction and Preparation

- Predict for those who are distressed or traumatized what will happen over the next weeks and months. It can be predicted that there will be a continuing need for assistance. Lives will never be the same, but they can be reconstructed for the future.

- Prepare those who are distressed by developing a plan for what will happen. Help people begin to plan for what will happen in their lives and to explore ways to overcome the problems facing them, their families, and friends.

Suggestions from the United States Department of Education for Educators

In the aftermath of any act of terrorism or war, everyone involved in education faces a great challenge: helping our children to feel safe and secure. There are children whose lives may be directly affected by terrorist attacks and will never be the same. Most of our children have seen terrifying images of destruction on television and the Internet. They read newspapers and have heard stories on the radio about the huge loss of life. Educators must offer students their undivided attention and unequivocal support.

Terrorism, Antiterrorism and War (Continued)

Administrators may want to consider the following suggestions:

- Evaluate the counseling resources you have at school and consider what services and assistance may be available in your community. If you need help counseling your students, community organizations can help.

- Meet with the faculty of your school as a group and individually. Many of your teachers and staff are feeling stress and anxiety, and your leadership can help to comfort them and build a strong sense of camaraderie that will assist them in meeting the needs of their students.

- When you meet with teachers, encourage them to listen to the questions and concerns of their students, and to answer the questions honestly with age-appropriate facts. Remind them that we can overwhelm young children with too much information.

- Share suggestions with your faculty about how to discuss the terrorist attacks with the students in their classrooms, and how to look for signs of distress or special needs among their students so they know where to direct extra help.

Teachers may want to consider the following suggestions:

- Listen to your students and assess their behavior. Sometimes the quietest child may be the most frightened. Some children may daydream or have trouble concentrating on their schoolwork. Some may act out. Others may be just fine.

- Take the time to reassure your students that their homes and schools are safe places. Show them that their school is functioning normally, and tell them that their government is working and that it will continue to protect them.

- Help students discuss the known facts and to separate fact from rumor. Avoid speculating, exaggerating graphic details, or stereotyping groups of people.

- Maintain structure and stability through the daily schedule and engage in classroom activities that do not focus on the recent attacks. Children are comforted by their normal routine, and "back-to-normal" activities will help them.

- Remember that images on television are frightening, even to adults.

- Reduce or eliminate the presence of television in the classroom.

- Remind your students about the value of living in a country that respects individual liberty and the rule of law.

- Talk about the principles that led to the independence of our country, and why they are still important today.

Terrorism, Antiterrorism and War (Continued)

- Engage in patriotic activities to give your students comfort. Say the Pledge of Allegiance, sing patriotic songs, or read books about courage.

- Encourage your students to participate in constructive activities relative to the tragedy. They can write notes to those in mourning or write about acts of courage or bravery. Give them the opportunity to come up with ideas about how they can help those in need.

- Care of themselves and their colleagues. Though some will show it more than others, teachers are feeling the effects of the terrorist attacks just as their students are.

You can access the **National Association of School Psychologists** (NASP) website at www.nasponline.org to find more information on resources to help students, staff, and parents cope with crisis.

Recovery
(Tab 4)

Recovery deals with how to restore the learning and teaching environment after the crisis. The recovery phase of the crisis plan should help students resume normal learning as quickly as possible. The Crisis Team can assist the psychological recovery of the school community and its individuals by:

- Making counselors available to help students process their emotional response to an incident;
- Providing information to parents on expected student behavioral, physical and emotional reactions; and
- Identifying victims or witnesses directly affected by a violent incident, who might require referrals for additional counseling.

The reference material in this section serves as a start for Crisis Management Team members researching recovery. The materials include:

- Risk Factors for Psychological Trauma
- Recovery Plan: Planning for the Psychological Aftermath of a School Tragedy
- General Guidelines for Group Processing of Critical Incidents
- Group Processing Procedures
- Special Considerations for Death by Suicide
- Teacher Guidelines for Talking About Death
- Memorial Service Guidelines for Death by Suicide
- Memorial Service Guidelines for Non-Suicidal Death
- Planning a Memorial Service for a School Staff Member
- Dealing with Natural Disasters

These materials serve as a starting point for information. Schools, districts, and Crisis Management Teams are encouraged to supplement these materials as needed, and to consult with their District/Area Safety and Security Officers for assistance.

Additional reference material is available on the DoDEA web site, in the handbook, *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners,* and from a variety of other sites on the internet. Potential sources of useful information include:

- National Association of School Psychologists
- American School Counseling Association
- American Psychological Association
- National Association of School Nurses

Risk Factors for Psychological Trauma

Goals

Crisis events vary in their potential to traumatize and there is no simple cause-and-effect relationship between a given crisis and subsequent traumatization (Carlson 1997). Traumatization is not merely the consequence of what has happened (Brock, 2000). It is also a consequence of how the survivor experiences the crisis, called individual crisis experience variables, as well as the personal characteristics of the survivors, called personal resiliency and vulnerability variables (Brock, 2000). The interaction of the crisis event, the individual's unique crisis experience, and personal resiliency and vulnerability variables determine whether or not an individual is at greater risk of traumatization (Brock, 2000).

It should be noted that for children the reaction of adults in their lives has a significant impact on their perceptions of threat (Brock, 2000). Children are strongly influenced by the post-traumatic reactions of their parents and others around them. Extreme adult reactions elevate the perception of crisis threat for children. In addition, children may be too developmentally immature to understand the potential danger of a certain crisis event, and the event may only become traumatic after the situation is explained to them.

Individual Crisis Experience Variables

Traumatization Minimized	Traumatization Maximized
Low crisis exposure–individual was not in close proximity to the crisis event and/or exposure to the crisis event was brief.	High crisis exposure–individual was in close proximity to the crisis event and/or exposure to the crisis event was prolonged.
No relationship with victim(s).	Close relationship with victim(s).
No crisis reactions—individual managed his/her initial response to the crisis and over time his/her arousal normalized.	Severe crisis reactions–individual's initial response to the crisis was one of panic/dissociation and over time his/her arousal level did not normalize.
Low perceived threat—individual's subjective impression of the crisis is one of low threat.	High-perceived threat—individual's subjective impression of the crisis is extremely negative. Individual considers that type of critical incident a high threat.

Risk Factors for Psychological Trauma (Continued)

Personal Resiliency and Vulnerability Variables

	Traumatization Minimized Resiliency Variables	Traumatization Maximized Vulnerability Variables
External Factors	Family resources available—nuclear family is intact, there is effective and caring parenting, there is extended family relations and guidance, and caregivers cope well with trauma.	Family resources unavailable—child does not live with nuclear family, there is ineffective and/or uncaring parenting, there is family dysfunction (ex: alcoholism, violence, mental illness), the parent has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and there is a history of child maltreatment.
	Social resources available—there are close peer friendships, there is access to positive adult models, and a connection with pro-social institutions such as school and church.	Social resources unavailable—the family is socially isolated, and there is a lack of perceived social support.
	Adequate financial resources.	Financial resources unavailable.
Internal Factors	Active coping style, Mental health, Good self-regulation of emotion, Developmental maturity and higher IQ, Adaptive coping with prior trauma, High self-esteem, Internal locus of control, and Religious belief system.	Avoidance coping style, Pre-existing mental illness, Poor self-regulation of emotion, Low developmental level, History of prior traumatization, Low self-esteem; and External locus of control.

Recovery Plan

Planning for the Psychological Aftermath of a School Tragedy
(Federal Emergency Management Agency on-line training: IS 362: Multi-hazard Planning for Schools)

1. **Plan for Morning-After Staff Meeting**. The school day following the tragedy should begin with an emergency meeting of all school staff, teachers, custodians, nurses, counselors, administrators, substitute teachers, cafeteria workers, resource room volunteers, and counselors volunteering from the community. This meeting should take place before the next normal school day.

The principal should begin the meeting by announcing what has happened, giving as much information about damage, death, funerals, and family wishes as possible. Staff will function best if they're well informed. Succinct staff questions should be answered and the plan for the day should be spelled out including introduction of community resource people, family liaison people, Crisis Team, location of the crisis center/counseling rooms, and plans for the after-school staff meeting.

The school psychologist or crisis expert can then address the group on what type of student reactions to expect and how to respond to them. They can advise teachers on what to say in the homeroom or first class, special issues raised by the event, and the importance of paying attention to the staff members' own feelings and reactions to the tragedy.

2. **Identification and Contact with At-Risk Students.** Through the telephone networking and other channels the crisis response team should make an intense effort to identify two kinds of at-risk students, boyfriends, girlfriends, and close friends of the student; and students who are known to be depressed, under great stress, or readily "set off" for other reasons.

Each identified student should be contacted sensitively and privately by a school staff member to assess his/her current state, let the student know someone cares, and offer individual counseling or support at any point in the day and days that follow. If serious cause for concern is detected, the student's parents may be notified to insure their support. In certain instances the at-risk student's closest friend or friends may be notified for the same reason.

Additionally, those close friends of the student may be invited and encouraged to meet as a group with a trained counselor to share their feelings, express their grief, and feel their mutual support.

Recovery Plan (Continued)

3. **Drafting a letter for Parents.** During the school day a letter to parents should be drafted so it can be sent home with the students. The letter should sensitively and succinctly state what has happened, how the school has responded thus far, plans the school has for the coming days, suggestions on how to support their child, names and phone numbers of community resources to call for information or help, and an announcement of the parent/community meeting.

4. **Plan for After-School Staff Meeting.** At the close of the first school day after the tragedy, a second staff meeting should be held for **all** school staff. The meeting may be led by the principal or the Crisis Team. The purpose is to review the day's events, attending to what went well and what didn't, identifying which students the staff are most worried about and how to help those students, making any needed adjustments in the recovery plan, enunciating continuing recovery plans, and allowing staff to ask questions of the school psychologist or Crisis Team.

5. **Plan for Evening Parent/Community Meeting.** The Crisis Team should plan for a parent/community meeting to be held within a day or two of the tragedy. The principal, crisis response team, and school psychologist should speak at the meeting with the school psychologist bearing the brunt of the load and emphasizing what to expect during the grieving process and how to be helpful to students and adults affected by the event.

6. **Plan for Recovery Evaluation.** For a few weeks following the tragedy, there will still be some students and perhaps staff who will be grieving deeply and need on-going support or counseling. However, most of the school will resume normal activity. During the time after the crisis, the Crisis Team needs to organize a meeting of those staff most directly involved in recovery to evaluate the recovery process. Prior to the meeting, feedback should be solicited from other people who were involved in recovery. This information can be fed into the evaluation meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to ascertain what worked well and what didn't, what modifications in the recovery plan are needed, and to thank or give feedback to those who helped the school cope with crisis.

General Guidelines for Group Processing of Critical Incidents
(Adapted from Mitchell and Everly, 2001; NOVA, 1997; and Poland and McCormick, 2000)

I. Goals

1. **Provide Information and Confront Misinformation.** Crisis events are volatile "high interest" events often triggering a plethora of rumors. An important benefit of a group processing is to correct misinformation and clarify facts.

2. **Diminish Sense of Chaos**. Crisis events often trigger insecurity and instability among groups. A well-prepared group processing of a critical incident can convey the feeling that "We are still in control... we can cope with this crisis... we are prepared to deal with the aftermath of this event."

3. **Lessen the Impact of Trauma and Accelerate Recovery**. Group processing can in some circumstances lessen the long-term impact of a traumatic event. Group processing allows individuals to experience universality (i.e., "I am not alone in this.") receive education in normal grief or post-trauma responses, and recognize availability of support (by introducing support personnel and referral resources).

4. **Assess the Need for Additional Services**. A group processing session can provide information regarding individual reactions to a traumatic event and alert mental health professionals to specific needs.

II. Facilitators

1. **Trained Personnel**. It is necessary to have an individual present who is specifically trained in crisis management and the facilitation of early psychological interventions to facilitate a group processing session.

2. **Mental Health Professionals**. School counselors, psychologists, social workers and/or clergy are often trained and available to assist with early crisis interventions such as group processing of a critical incident in school settings.

3. **Administrator, Teacher or Other Familiar Authority Figure**. A familiar authority figure should be present during school-wide or classroom processing of a critical incident. A visible and available authority figure provides reassurance and a sense of security.

General Guidelines for Group Processing of Critical Incidents
(Continued)

4. **Community Resource Personnel**. In response to a highly volatile incident or an extended impact incident, schools may seek outside community resource personnel (crisis management teams, mental health professionals, chaplains, etc.) to assist in facilitating processing sessions. Use a team approach.

III. Timelines

1. **Initial Debriefing**. Typically, group processing of a critical incident is offered as soon as possible after a crisis event. Because in educational settings an immediate meeting is not always possible (due to school schedule, closures, etc.) effort should be made to offer a processing session early on the first day of returning to school.

2. **Follow-up Processing Sessions**. Follow-up group processing is often held within days, weeks, and even months of a critical event. Typically, the specific event, type or modality of debriefing, and/or particular population determines timelines for follow-up sessions.

3. **Length of a Processing Session**. The amount of time a group processing session will last depends on several factors including the type of event and particular population.

Group Processing Procedures

I. Sample Group Processing Format

The following is an example of a group processing format. It is recommended as a guide for trained personnel working in a school environment, not as a procedure to be implemented by untrained personnel. For specific group processing or critical incident debriefing guidelines and/or training resources, consult your school psychologist or the see the web resources listed on page 39 of this guide.

1. **Invite Student**. Students should be invited to attend a processing meeting in order to discuss the specific event. Offer an appropriate (not punitive) alternative for students who choose not to attend.

2. **Introduce the Facilitators and Purpose of the Meeting**. A familiar authority figure should introduce the group facilitators and the topic of discussion and again, assure students that attendance is voluntary.

3. **Describe the Facts of the Incident**. The facilitator should provide accurate information regarding the critical incident. Discussion should be limited to general facts avoiding graphic descriptions, facilitator's personal experience, or emotions. Allow question and answering session to clarify events.

4. **Discuss Personal Experience**. After general facts are discussed, the facilitator may solicit personal experiences. **Individuals who have suffered trauma sometimes experience relief in the "telling" of their experience.** Additionally, others may benefit from understanding another's shared or distinct perspective. The facilitator's role is to model listening and acceptance of each individual's personal experience of the critical incident.

5**. Discuss Feelings**. As a natural byproduct of discussing the experience of a traumatic event, feelings will often surface. The discussion of feelings provides an opportunity for facilitators to demonstrate acceptance and understanding for a variety of emotional reactions thereby normalizing those reactions. Facilitators should use this time to educate participants on normal grief and/or post-trauma responses.

6. **Suggest Coping Strategies**. Facilitators should provide and recommend healthy age-appropriate avenues for coping with trauma and emotional distress. It is important that participants recognize that there are benefits from engaging in "stress-reducing" behavior (resuming normal routines, exercise, group activities, etc.) for their own physiological health and well being. Leaders may want to introduce school-specific crisis activities that will be implemented.

Group Processing Procedures (Continued)

7. **Briefly Refer to "Symptoms" of Continued Distress**. It is sometimes appropriate to alert individuals to symptoms of continued distress advising that if these symptoms should appear or persist, help is available. It is important however, to stress that chronic or profound stress symptoms are unusual reactions and to encourage participants to expect normal recovery through the stages of grief and post trauma distress.

8. **Acknowledge Resources**. Acknowledge the participants for their personal contributions and acknowledge their demonstrated desire to go forward beyond the crisis event. Again, provide reassurance that while the experience of a wide range of emotions is predictable, humans are extraordinarily resilient and eventually recover from even the most difficult of traumatic experiences.

9. **Offer Continued/More Intensive Support**. Provide readily accessible names, and/or locations of support personnel.

II. Population and Settings

1. **Voluntary Attendance**. Attending a processing session should always be voluntary. Students should be introduced to the purpose of the meeting, given an explanation of what will be discussed and why, and then invited to attend, but not required to attend.

2. **School-wide Processing**. Typically, limited to a middle or high school age population, school-wide group processing is appropriate in circumstances where the greater school community is equally impacted by the critical incident. When a certain group is particularly impacted, they should not be included in a school-wide assembly. In some situations a school-wide critical incident processing may be scheduled outside of school (if the school is damaged or classes are suspended for an extended time period). In those cases a general meeting might include parents and community members.

3. **Classroom Processing**. Not recommended. Although students will sometimes choose to discuss a critical incident with familiar teachers and classmates, few teachers have the appropriate training to process a critical incident. Additionally, students who may choose not to participate in a discussion of a traumatic event may feel compelled to participate if it occurs within their own classroom. To "not attend" may be awkward. Teachers should be instructed to limit classroom discussions to "the facts." If a classroom processing of a critical incident seems needed and appropriate, it should be co-facilitated by trained personnel and scheduled at a time when a

Group Processing Procedures (Continued)

student who prefers not to attend can comfortably be excused (i.e., during lunch, recess or library period).

4. **Select Groups**.   Sometimes a specific group is particularly impacted by a critical incident (i.e., direct witnesses of traumatic event, close friends or team mates of a victim, etc.).   Because their emotional reaction and distress levels may differ significantly from the general population, these individuals or groups of individuals should be invited to attend a separate processing session.

III. Reasons to Avoid Group Processing of a Critical Incident

1. **History of Cognitive or Socio-emotional Impairment**.   Individuals with a known mental or emotional disorder may not respond well to a group session. An individual's inappropriate response might negatively impact the entire group causing the session to be stressful and possibly, increasing the effects of the initial trauma rather than diffusing the incident.

2.   **Direct vs. Indirect Victims**.   Group processing should typically involve individuals within a close range of physical/emotional exposure to the critical incident.   Direct victims should not be grouped with witnesses and direct witnesses should not be grouped with secondary witnesses. For example, a group of students who witnessed a fatal injury during a bus accident will have different needs from those of students who later heard about the incident.

3. **Opting Out**. Attendance and discussion of a critical incident should always be voluntary. **Some individuals have a rigid psychological defense** system that allows them to cope with trauma by effectively avoiding remembrances of that event. Research indicates that **forcing these individuals to discuss or confront a traumatic event may increase the likelihood of post trauma symptoms** rather than decrease the likelihood of these symptoms. These individuals are best identified by "self-report"; when asked whether or not they would like to discuss a specific traumatic event, they will answer negatively. In a school setting it is important to invite students rather than to coerce.

Special Considerations for Death by Suicide
(Adapted from Opalewski, Robertson, 1998; Poland, McCormick, 2000)

When a student or staff member commits suicide there is sometimes a fear that others will follow the example and also attempt suicide. This fear is justified due to copycat suicides that have occurred at several schools across the United States. The Crisis Team should consider the following as it relates to death by suicide:

- Think about and develop a plan of how to respond to the death of a student or staff member before a suicide occurs. If a suicide occurs implement the plan immediately.

- Give friends (students and/or staff) who were closest to the deceased additional time and help to process the suicide. Bring them together to share what they know about the deceased and help to explain why the deceased would do such a thing. This will help relieve guilt and build a sense of support for each other. Stress that the deceased would have been better off if they had attempted to talk about and find other solutions to their problems. Encourage close friends not to make the same mistake.

- Plan presentations about general suicide information and prevention for teachers, students, and parents.

- Provide an opportunity in the classroom for students and/or teachers to discuss their feelings about suicide. Stress that their feelings are normal. It should be stressed that while guilt may be a natural feeling, that the deceased was responsible for the act, no one else.

- Be aware that it is not only friends of the deceased who may be at high risk for copycat behavior. Students or staff who have been troubled or depressed may be at higher risk. Ask staff to watch student's writings, drawings, discussions, etc. for clues of depression and/or suicidal thoughts.

- Provide information on course offerings, counseling groups, individual counseling, community resources, and other programs that teach positive problem-solving skills.

Teacher Guidelines For Talking About Death
(NEA Crisis Communications Guide, 2000)

In general when creating a statement for classroom reading and follow-up discussion related to a death:

- Use clear, honest age-appropriate information when discussing the facts of the death.

- Tell students in a quiet, direct manner, using the words "death, dead, or dying" and avoiding euphemisms.

- Model the way you express your feelings and give students permission to express their feelings.

- Tell students that it is okay to feel afraid, confused, angry or guilty. These are normal responses to loss.

- Ask if students have questions. Listen carefully and answer honestly.

- Answer only questions students ask.

- Admit when you do not know/have the answers.

- Use realistic terms with students when discussing aspects of accident, injury and loss.

- Tell students how and where they can obtain information or help.

- Identify people and phone numbers (if available) that students and parents can call if they need assistance or information.

- Encourage students to be aware of each other and direct those in need to an adult for help.

- Emphasize that each student is valued and will be supported and that no one is to blame.

- Communicate that there will be an organized way to say goodbye to the deceased and that all students who want to participate can attend.

Memorial Service Guidelines for Death by Suicide

Death by suicide versus death by other causes needs to be handled differently. The Crisis Team needs to carefully consider and understand these differences. It is very important not to glamorize suicide in any way. The following are recommendations by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS, 1998).

- Do not dismiss school or encourage funeral attendance during school hours.

- Do not dedicate a permanent memorial to the deceased.

- Do not hold a large assembly to notify the school community members of the suicide.

- Do not announce the death over the P.A. system or conduct a moment of silence.

- Avoid school sanctioned tributes, memorials, or events.

- If students or staff wish to remember the deceased in a special way they should be encouraged to do so in a quiet way that celebrates life such as collecting donations for a suicide prevention program, purchasing videos on suicide prevention and/or positive problem solving, or starting a scholarship.

- Try to maintain a hard line policy on memorializing suicide victims. If exceptions are made, do so only after very careful thought and planning. Always involve parents and/or family members when planning any kind of memorializing activities.

Memorial Service Guidelines for Non-Suicidal Death
(Source: Paine, 1999)

Returning to a normal school environment should be the main goal of the recovery process. For the unexpected death of a student or staff member, providing a memorial service can help the deceased's **peers** find closure. Including them in the planning of a memorial service is one way of aiding this type of recovery process. The following is a list of recommendations to consider when using a memorial service as part of the recovery process.

- Limit the memorial to 15 to 20 minutes for elementary students, 30 to 40 minutes for secondary.

- Involve students in the planning of the memorial, particularly those who were close to the deceased.

- Include music, particularly student performances. Also, play soothing music as people enter to set the mood and maintain calm (particularly important at the middle school level).

- Preview the service with students before hand. This is not a normal assembly, so review with students what will happen and how they should behave. Remove anyone from the service who is acting inappropriately.

- Have several brief speakers. Students can read poems or tributes that they have written.

- Involve all students as much as possible. To the extent that it is appropriate for their age, have each class make a poster or banner that they bring to the memorial and hang on the wall.

- Use symbols of life and hope. Balloons or candles can be used very effectively to promote a positive, uplifting message that acknowledges the sadness yet is hopeful for the future.

- Have all students and staff attend (unless a parent has a specific objection). It is a powerfully unifying experience for a school, and it sends a message to students that each person is important in the school and deserves to be honored.

- Provide a quiet activity for students who do not attend, or dismiss them.

- Have students return to their classrooms after the service. This allows them the opportunity to talk with one another and/or talk with a counselor. "Support" rooms work well for students experiencing more significant signs of grief.

- If death is the result of suicide, do not memorialize the suicide victim at school in any way. Avoid glorifying or sensationalizing the death to minimize the danger of suicide contagion.

Planning a Memorial Service for a School Staff Member
(Source: Holly Hasenbuhler and Lynn Mattingly)

These guidelines, written to assist administrators in responding to the death of a teacher or staff member, can also be helpful in responding to the death of a student:

- Decide on the place: chapel or other than chapel. Consider the individual's religious orientation and the degree of student involvement/attendance at the service.

- Decide on the time of the service, preferably during school hours. If individuals will be traveling some distance to attend, schedule a later time.

- Contact the family and inform them of the plans for a memorial service. Invite them to attend. Ask for their input.

- Identify close friends of the individual and include them in the planning.

- E-mail DoDEA employees informing them of the death and provide the information about the memorial service.

- The school will be responsible for the production of the printed program. Decide who will coordinate the items and order of the program.

- Meet with students who may want to take part in the memorial service.

- Determine who will play the music and what music will be included.

- Prepare a guest book for individuals to sign and make comments. Pictures or mementos may be added. The book is to be given or sent to the family.

- Identify 2-3 people to serve as ushers/greeters.

- Prepare an article for the Stars and Stripes and send it through proper channels.

- Review the program sequence with the chaplain.

- Make arrangements for a reception/gathering after the service. Identify an individual to coordinate the reception.

- Mail items (i.e., extra printed programs, items from a memorial wall, video, guest book) to the family.

Dealing With Natural Disasters

Tips for Talking to Children After a Disaster
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

- Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they are seeing on television and to ask questions.

- Don't be afraid to admit that you can't answer all their questions.

- Answer questions at a level the child can understand.

- Provide ongoing opportunities for children to talk. They will probably have more questions as time goes on.

- Use this as an opportunity to establish a family emergency plan. Feeling that there is something you can do may be very comforting to both children and adults.

- Allow children to discuss other fears and concerns about unrelated issues. This is a good opportunity to explore these issues also.

- Monitor children's television watching. Some parents may wish to limit their child's exposure to graphic or troubling scenes. To the extent possible, watch reports of the disaster with children. It is at these times that questions might arise.

- While not focusing on blame, help children understand that there are no bad emotions and that a wide range of reactions is normal. Encourage children to express their feelings to adults (including teachers and parents) who can help them understand their emotions.

- In addition to the tragic things they see, help children identify good things, such as heroic actions, families who are grateful for being reunited, and the assistance offered by people throughout the country and the world.

Dealing With Natural Disasters (Continued)

Recommendations for Helping High School Students
(Adapted from HealthyMinds.org, American Psychiatric Association)

The following recommendations can be offered to high school students for dealing with stress and/or coping with the aftermath of a natural disaster.

1. Attempt to get back to a normal routine. Try to make arrangements to get back to school. If that is not possible, try to find a set of activities that will feel useful and productive.

2. Try to get enough sleep and to maintain a proper diet. People who are exhausted and starving are more susceptible to stress, anxiety, and depression.

3. Find ways to give meaning to the situation in your life. People who volunteer and help others in the face of disasters are less prone to depression.

4. Be realistic about what you can accomplish. Don't endanger yourself. Recognize that you cannot do everything for everyone, but individuals can make a difference.

5. Get enough sleep. Some disruptions of sleep, concentration, appetite, and mood are natural responses to traumatic events. However, there is cause for concern if it becomes difficult to function. Seek help immediately if sleep becomes impossible, if thinking is severely impaired, if fear becomes crippling, if sadness is overwhelming or you have thoughts of dying or suicide.

6. Avoid using alcohol and drugs to ease the difficult feelings resulting from tragic events. These substances will give you some short term relief at the cost of longer term pain and distress. Over time, they will lead to increased feeling of depression.

7. Do what you can to continue your treatment if you have pre-existing psychiatric problems.

8. If you feel vulnerable or frightened, let someone know. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

9. Be patient. For many people, symptoms will ease with the passage of time. If things appear to be worsening, counseling and possibly some short term medication may be enough to get back on track. Sometimes people may need support for longer periods of time.

Dealing With Natural Disasters (Continued)

How Children and Adolescents React to Trauma
(National Institute of Mental Health)

Reactions to trauma may appear immediately after the traumatic event or days and even weeks later. Loss of trust in adults and fear of the event occurring again are responses seen in many children and adolescents who have been exposed to traumatic events. Other reactions vary according to age.

- **For children 5 years of age and younger**, typical reactions can include a fear of being separated form the parent, crying, whimpering, screaming, immobility and/or aimless motion, trembling, frightened facial expressions and excessive clinging. Parents may also notice children retuning to behaviors exhibited at earlier ages (these are called regressive behaviors), such as thumb-sucking, bedwetting, and fear of darkness. Children in this age bracket tend to be strongly affected by the parents' reactions to the traumatic event.

- **Children 6 to 11 years old** may show extreme withdrawal, disruptive behavior, and/or inability to pay attention. Regressive behaviors, nightmares, sleep problems, irrational fears, irritability, refusal to attend school, outbursts of anger and fighting are also common in traumatized children of this age. Also the child may complain of stomachaches or other bodily symptoms that have no medical basis. Schoolwork often suffers. Depression, anxiety, feelings of guilt and emotional numbing or "flatness" are often present as well.

- **Adolescents 12 and older** may exhibit responses similar to those of adults, including flashbacks, nightmares, emotional numbing, avoidance of any reminders of the traumatic event, depression, substance abuse, problems with peers, and antisocial behavior. Also common are withdrawal and isolation, physical complaints, suicidal thoughts, school avoidance, academic decline, sleep disturbances, and confusion. The adolescent may feel extreme guilt over his or her failure to prevent injury or loss of life, and may harbor revenge fantasies that interfere with recovery from the trauma.

Some youngsters are more vulnerable to trauma than others, for reasons scientists do not fully understand. It has been shown that the impact of a traumatic event is likely to be greatest in the child or adolescent who previously has been the victim of child abuse or some other form of trauma, or who already had a mental health problem. The youth who lacks family support could be more at risk for a poor recovery.

Glossary of Terms

Grab & Go Kit – Emergency supplies, usually kept in an easily accessible duffle bag or rolling suitcase that school administrators evacuating their office can easily transport to an Alternate Command Post. Grab-and-Go Kits include items such as student attendance records, communications equipment, and first aid supplies.

Incident Command System (ICS) – A team comprised of community officials from the police and fire department, and other school community sectors. The Incident Command System manages the planning, operations, logistics, and financial management of an occurring crisis.

Incident Response Planning (IRP) – Developing a continually updated plan to manage critical incidents and decrease the damage to property and individuals. This plan establishes an Incident Command System or structure to handle all crisis situations in the school. Incident Response Planning deals with how to respond to a critical incident.

Mitigation / Prevention – Addresses what school officials can do to eliminate or minimize risk to life and property. Used in the U.S. Department of Education's guide *Practical Information on Crisis Planning*, this activity is similar to Risk Reduction Planning.

Observables – Discrete, identifiable behaviors that could indicate a student is suffering from increasing stress and might become violent (i.e., violent writings or drawings, discipline referrals for disruptive behavior in class, sudden decrease in academic performance, involvement with the criminal justice system.

Preparedness – The process of planning for a critical incident. Usually consists of specific actions to increase the readiness of the school to cope with an incident (i.e., packaging Grab-and-Go Kits, first aid kits, flashlights, drinking water, and agreeing on roles and responsibilities during a critical incident.)

Recovery – Restoring the learning and teaching environment following a critical incident. Usually involves making counselors available to assist students with processing their grief and providing psychological debriefings for severely impacted students and staff.

Response – The actions taken to respond to a crisis. Usually refers to implementing one of the four protective actions lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover or evacuation. Also includes drills, table tops and full scale exercises that enable staff to practice their response procedures.

Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) – Developing a plan for implementing policies, programs, and physical security measures which will help safeguard the school and decrease the probability that incidents of violence will occur. Risk Reduction Planning concentrates on how to prevent a critical incident from occurring.

Glossary of Terms (Continued)

Safe School Planning – A combination of Risk Reduction Planning (minimizing the probability that a critical incident could occur) and Incident Response Planning (preparing to respond to an incident, should it occur.)

Safety refers to freedom from risks associated with the physical environment. Examples include: fire hazards, extreme weather conditions (e.g. flooding, hurricanes, tornados, tsunamis) exposed wiring, hazardous materials, unhealthy atmospheric conditions, sharp edges on playground equipment, slippery floors, un-repaired facilities (e.g. stairways, doors and windows).

School Threat Assessment Team – A pre-determined group of school staff available to advise the principal and help determine whether an emerging situation is a critical incident that requires help from outside the school. This group usually consists of the principal, assistant principal if available, counselor, custodian, and other staff members.

Security refers to freedom from threats of violence or hostile acts of aggression such as criminal acts. Examples of security threats include: bullying, assault and battery, sexual assault, terrorist acts. Components of security include cyber security, personal security, food security, mail security, and physical security.