Warren County School Crisis Intervention Plan

Guidelines for a Proactive Building Response to a Traumatic Event

August, 2011
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction *
2. Traumatic Event Management Checklist
3. Team Members and Contact Numbers
4. Rapid Assessment Guide
5. Scale of Response
6. Potential Intervention Needs Worksheet
7. Team Member Assignment Sheet
8. Survivor Interview
9. Safe Room Checklist
10. Safe Room Sign In & Sign Out
11. Traumatic Event Briefing Outline
12. Sample Student Announcement
13. Classroom Presentation Guide *
14. Sign In/Sign Out Sheet *
15. Toxic Effects and Their Antidotes *
16. Normal Stress Reactions *
17. Stress Management *
18. Referral Behaviors *
19. At-risk Referral List *
20. Sample Letter to Parents
21. Mid-day Rapid Assessment Guide
22. End of Day One: Staff Meeting Agenda
23. Team Response Evaluation Form
24. Crisis Response Team Debriefing Guide
25. Student Re-entry Plan

* These may be included in a teacher packet.
Traumatic Event Crisis Intervention Plan

A traumatic event can be described as a sudden, unexpected event that has an emotional impact sufficient to overwhelm the usual effective coping skills of students and/or staff, and that causes significant psychological stress in usually healthy persons.

Crisis intervention is emotional first-aid, not therapy. The goals of intervention are to:

- Clarify and stabilize the situation.
- Mobilize resources.
- Return to normalization of routine for as many as possible, as soon as possible.
- Restore adaptive functioning.
- Facilitate healing and access to on-going help for those in need.

Assumptions about the needs of our students and staff following a traumatic event:

- To effectively process a student’s grief, he/she will need a safe and secure environment.
- Coming to grips with one’s own vulnerability and mortality often heightens the need to belong.
- A controlled and predictable environment facilitates the healing process.
- Each person must be free to choose how they wish to deal with their emotional needs.
Traumatic Event Management Check Sheet

Incident __________________________________________________

Date:___________________

Establish Awareness of Incident

___ 1. Principal has been contacted regarding incident.
___ 2. Superintendant contacted.
___ 3. Team notified and time set for Team meeting.
___ 4. Team leader or designee attempts to contact family (survivor interview).
___ 5. Staff notified by team members. Staff notified of time of Traumatic Event Briefing for all staff.

Develop Plan

___1. Team meets, completes rapid assessment guide, and determines scale of response.
___2. Locations identified and specific duties assigned.
___3. Identify required outside support. Contact.
___4. Plan and conduct Traumatic Event Briefing. Have extra Teacher packets available.
___5. Prepare student announcement (if appropriate).

Implement Plan

___1. Dispatch team members to designated locations.
___2. Make student announcement (if appropriate).
___3. Implement other services outlined in the plan, based on scale of response (Safe Room, classroom presentations, small group discussions, one-on-one interventions.)
___4. Mid-day team meeting to monitor and adjust plan, and to set agenda for end-of-day meeting.

Bring About Closure

___1. Conduct end-of-day staff meeting.
___2. Distribute staff assessment.
___3. Develop Day Two Plan with Team Members. Include plan for follow-up for any at-risk students.
___4. Team members debrief.
Team Members and Contact Numbers

2011-2012
Traumatic Event Rapid Assessment Guide

Date: ________________________

Team Member Completing Form: _____________________________________________

Incident:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

1. How many people, and who, can we expect to be impacted?

2. How much disruption, and what kind, should be anticipated?

3. What additional information is required and how might it be obtained?

4. What resources are required for the initial response? Is this an incident our Team can handle in house? If not, how much outside support will be required? (see page 6)

5. How critical/traumatic is this incident? (Rate scale of response, page 5)
Traumatic Event Scale of Response

Level 1:
Situation confined to an individual or small group.

Level 2:
Class or grade level effected.

Level 3:
Multiple grade levels and potentially entire building impacted.

Level 4:
Multiple buildings and sizable portion of district impacted.

Level 5:
Catastrophic incident with widespread and profound impact on entire school community.
Targeting potential intervention needs:

Large Group Briefing (When, where, who):

Classroom Presentations (Which classes, who):

Safe Room (When, where, who):

Small Group Discussions (Which groups, when, where):

Individual Support (When, where, who):
Traumatic Event Team Members Assignment Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administration and Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Express Concern:** We heard about what happened and wanted you to know how concerned we are. We can’t even begin to imagine how hard this must be for you.

2. **Ask how the school can be of assistance:** We want to help you however we can. Is there anything that we can do at this time? Do you have family and/or friends close by to support you?

3. **Clarify facts:** Here is what we have heard (very briefly share available details). Is this accurate? Is there anything else that we should know?

4. **Share school response:** Our building crisis response team will meet to develop a plan for our school. Of course, we will carefully secure any personal items.

5. **Obtain funeral and/or memorial service details (if possible):** Please let us know about the funeral arrangements. Is there anything that we should know at this time?

6. **Reiterate concern and availability to be of assistance:** Again, we are so sad about what has happened. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to help you.
Safe Room Checklist

___ 1. Pads of paper
___ 2. Various colors of construction paper
___ 3. Crayons/Markers
___ 4. Pens/Pencils
___ 5. Water
___ 6. Envelopes
___ 7. Plain white paper
___ 8. Blank cards
___ 9. Scissors/glue
___ 10. Access to large paper, for murals, etc.

Other options, if available:

Snacks

Books on ways to handle death or other personal crisis

Magazines for collages
## Safe Room
### Sign In & Sign Out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Coming From</th>
<th>Sign In Time</th>
<th>Sign Out Time</th>
<th>Returning To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of a traumatic event briefing is to consult with and inform staff, allow for psychological decompression, and offer suggestions for stress management. The following five steps should be included:

1. **Assemble staff** prior to the start of the school day (if at all possible). Thank everyone for attending.

2. **Provide facts regarding the traumatic event.** State to the best of your knowledge factual information that is available.

3. **Highlight and normalize common reactions.** Call attention to typical cognitive, physical, behavioral and emotional symptoms.

4. **Outline the building intervention plan and priorities.** Review Teacher Crisis Pack materials and have extra copies available. Introduce any visitors to the building.

5. **Review importance of stress management strategies,** for themselves as well as students.
**Traumatic Event: Sample Student Announcement**

Today we received tragic (or sad) news. We learned that one of our students/staff members, (name), died (or was seriously injured) by / as the result of / due to (give basic appropriate elaboration without too much detail, confirmed facts only.)

When things like this happen, people have all different kinds of reactions, such as shock, sadness, fear and anger. Those reactions may rise and fall throughout the day, and even for days to come.

Some of us will want to have a quiet time alone and others may want time to talk with friends of adults. Some of you, who did not know (name), may be ready for teachers to return to academics sooner than others. We just need to practice patience and respect for each other.

Your (teacher/advisory teacher/first bell teacher) will spend a little time discussing this today. There are plans in place for those who need additional support.

As a reminder, we need to respect the thoughts and feelings of each other. Everyone has the freedom to choose how they will cope with this tragic event.

Please be here for one another. I know we will get through this difficult time together.
Classroom Presentation Guide

The purpose of a classroom presentation is to provide information, minimize unwanted student responses, normalize grief and trauma reactions, and suggest appropriate behavior.

Staff will be informed if/when classroom presentations should take place, depending on the scale of the crisis. If you are asked to guide a classroom discussion and would like assistance, contact a member of the crisis team. A team member or administrator will assist you.

Five steps should be included:

1. **Introduce discussion:** As some of you may already know, ________________. This is very difficult for all of us. When something like this happens, it is hard to know what to say or how to act. It is important, however, that we spend some time talking about this incident and answer any questions that you might have.

2. **Clarify the facts:** This is what we know so far: _________________. We do not know anything else. As we find out more information that you need to know, we will share it with you (may want to emphasize the importance of not starting rumors – see #4).

3. **Normalize common reactions:** What did you think and feel when you first heard about this? What are you thinking and feeling now? I am not surprised that you feel this way, or have these kind of thoughts. Sometimes I feel and think this way. These are very normal reactions. If they are really bothering you, it usually helps to talk to someone about what you are thinking and feeling.

4. **Identify appropriate behavior:** When you have felt upset in the past, what kinds of things have you done to help you feel better? What have you seen other people do to help themselves? Here are some of the things that I have seen other people do _________________. Sometimes people begin to spread rumors. This is not helpful to the family or close friends. If you hear anything different from what we have talked about, please let us know and we will check it out.

5. **Conclude discussion:** Are there any questions before we end? If at any time during the next several days you want to talk to someone, please let a teacher know. For the remainder of the bell I would like for us to _______________. (Consider modifying lesson plans depending on student response.) Inform students of building resources that are available and tell them they will be informed of new information.
# Classroom

## Sign In & Sign Out

Teacher ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Sign Out</th>
<th>Sign In</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14
Our Goal: Effectively Mitigate Potential Negative Effects of Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Effect</th>
<th>Antidote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Reassuring approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaos/Helplessness</td>
<td>Structured Coordinated Intervention Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggerated Emotions</td>
<td>Healthy thinking; Acknowledgment of normal grief reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Tension</td>
<td>Opportunity to share feelings, ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Control</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Normal Reactions to Abnormal Events

## Cognitive Symptoms
- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Memory Loss
- Difficulty performing tasks
- Trouble making decisions

## Behavioral Symptoms
- Withdrawal
- Excessive humor/laughing
- Hyperactivity
- Excessive talking
- Prolonged silence

## Physical Symptoms
- Sweating
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Upset stomach
- Shaking

## Emotional Symptoms
- Feeling numb/detached
- Guilt
- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear
Stress Management Strategies that WORK!

Take a break from your worries by doing something fun, relaxing, interesting, etc.
Examples: watch TV, draw, write in a journal, go out with friends, play with a pet

Do something physically active.
Examples: take a walk, play basketball with friends, lift weights, ride a bike

Talk with someone who will listen and try to understand how you’re feeling.
Examples: talk with close friends or family members, your youth pastor, your teacher or school counselor

Take care of your health.
Examples: get plenty of sleep, eat healthy food

Stress Management Strategies that DON’T WORK!

Strategies that increase stress
Examples: Misbehaving at school or at home, lying, destroying property.

Strategies that hurt others:
Examples: starting rumors, blaming others, fighting.

Strategies that are dangerous to your health:
Examples: Smoking, drinking, taking drugs, cutting.
Referral Behaviors

Refer students who:

Witnessed the incident or are a close friend of the victim.
Display unusually disruptive behavior.
Appear confused or disoriented.
Make threats to harm others.
Verbalize thoughts of suicide.
Cry uncontrollably.
Behave in a way that appears unusual/inappropriate at the time.
Repeatedly ask questions you cannot answer.
Are preoccupied with knowing all the details of the incident.
Indicate that they want to be with their friends or their counselor.
Know the victim yet appear detached, numb, or indifferent.
Talk about having nightmares, not being able to eat or sleep, feeling jittery, confused, unable to concentrate.
Have a history of emotional disturbance.
At-Risk Referral List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Reason for Referral</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Parent Letter

Dear (School Name) Parent or Guardian:

At approximately (note date and time) ________________________, one of our students (note what happened)_________________. The information that we have received at this time is that the student (note condition) ____________________.

Our school’s crisis response team is handling the situation in a calm and compassionate manner. Additionally, other mental health professionals from ________________ were in the building today. Please be assured that team members will continue to provide support for students and staff as long as a need exists.

We request that you continue to send your child to school. Remember that our school is the safest place for your child in an emergency and that your child’s welfare and safety is our top priority.

Finally, should you have any further concerns, please feel free to contact the school at __________. As always, we thank you for your assistance and support.

Sincerely,

Principal
Mid-Day Rapid Assessment Guide

Date ________________  Team member completing form ______________________________

Incident_______________________________________________________________________

1. At this point in time, who have been significantly impacted?

2. What actions have been taken?

3. Where are we with the Safe Room? Are we ready to close it down?

4. What are our anticipated issues this afternoon?

5. What kind of resources do we have on call if the situation changes?

6. How are our impacted staff members doing?

7. What additional information is needed for this afternoon’s meeting?

8. What rumors have been circulating around the school and how have we been dealing with this?
End of Day One

Staff Meeting Agenda

1. Review day

2. Update information.

3. Highlight and dispel rumors.


5. Outline plan for Day Two.

6. Respond to questions.

7. Present stress management tips.

8. Distribute Team Response Evaluation Form (p.23)
Team Response Evaluation Form

Date: _________________________________

1. How well did we establish awareness to all individuals who needed to know?
   ___ Poor   ___ Average   ___ Excellent
   Comments____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. How well did the crisis response team meet the needs of students?
   ___ Poor   ___ Average   ___ Excellent
   Comments____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. How well did the crisis response team meet the needs of staff?
   ___ Poor   ___ Average   ___ Excellent
   Comments____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. After today’s crisis response, do you have any suggestions for handling future crises?
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
Crisis Response Team Debriefing Guide

Debriefing the crisis team members is strongly recommended after students and staff have been released for the day. This will help to minimize negative effects, teach and reinforce skills, and help team members “practice what they preach”. Move through the questions in the order that they are presented.

1. What were your first thoughts about the incident? Of the thoughts that you had, which one surprised you the most?

2. What was the worst moment for you?

3. Was your response to this difficult moment appropriate at the time? If you felt it was not, why not? What would you do differently?

4. What did this incident make you aware of about your own personal experience, feelings and attitudes? What did it make you aware of about your own professional knowledge and skills?

5. What was the most rewarding aspect of the interventions provided?

6. What do you need to do to take care of yourself (today, tonight, over the next several weeks)?
Student Re-Entry Plan

Consider the following strategies and accommodations for a student returning to school after being impacted by a significant event:

1. Prior to student return, consider a modified classroom discussion. Suggested talking points:

   I want to take a moment to talk about (name). As we discussed, he/she has recently been through a very difficult time. (Name) will be returning on _____ and I think we should take a moment to talk about some things we can do or not do to make his/her return to school as positive as possible.

   First, like any other day at school we need to show respect for one another. In being respectful to _____, please don’t bombard ______ with questions about what had happened. If he/she wants to talk about it that will be his/her choice to do so.

   Remind yourself what it means to be a friend to someone. How do you want to be treated by others? It’s perfectly normal to want to be there for a friend in need. If you want to tell ____ that you are sorry about what happened, that’s ok. It’s ok to share with ____ that if he/she wants to talk, you’ll be there for them.

   It’s also ok if you’re not sure what to say. When something like this happens, we may feel unsure of what the right words are to say to someone. Again, this is normal. To say nothing is ok too.

   Remember, our school is a safe place to be and we want nothing more than to have everyone here feel that they are safe and that they belong. The best thing you can do is to treat _____ with respect, just as you would want to be treated.

   If you have questions, or if you see someone treating ____ in a way that you feel is inappropriate, let a staff member know so they can help.

2. On the morning of the return, consider having a brief meeting with the student, possible accompanied by their guardian. Assure them that they are an important person in the school, that their school is a safe place to be, and that support is available to them should they feel the need.

3. Students have the right to choose how they cope with the event, so they should have options. Possible accommodations might include: Checking in with the counselor, designating a time-out location, a modified schedule, calling home periodically. But keep in mind some students may prefer a normal school day with no special treatment.

4. It may be advisable to have a brief meeting at the end of day 1 to see how the day went from the student’s perspective. Depending on the student’s response, make a plan for subsequent days.