# Attachment 1: Postvention Action Steps

## CRISIS TEAM MEMBERS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **ROLE** | **CONTACT INFORMATION**  **(Office/Cell/Email)** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |

## ACTION STEP CHECKLIST

**Note**: The roles identified in the chart below may vary according to available resources and personnel within each school district/building.

| **Date** | **Time** | **Initials** | **Responsibility** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. The school is informed of the death   * Postvention coordinator is notified * Superintendent is notified * Building administration is notified |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Factual information is gathered  * Postvention coordinator or school official contacts Coroner or law enforcement agency to confirm the death and identity of the deceased * Postvention coordinator completes the Coroner’s/Law Enforcement Agency’s Report (see [Attachment 4](#attachment4)) |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator contacts mental health agency/other community resources for on-site support and/or consultation  * Mental health agency states what services will be provided * Superintendent approves use of mental health services * Postvention coordinator reviews district’s policy regarding outside school personnel who screen students and the need for signed consent |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Meeting is scheduled for Postvention/Crisis/SAP team and building administration  * Administrator/team designee prepares the announcement that is to be read by teachers * Administrator prepares letter to inform parents of the death, as well as the school’s postvention activities * Postvention coordinator locates deceased’s personal belongings and puts them into safekeeping for the family * Postvention coordinator removes deceased’s name from individual class rosters, school mailing lists, and automated attendance call lists * Crisis Team designates rooms for screening students * Crisis Team confirms designated media spokesperson with the Superintendent |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. If death was a suicide, Crisis Team evaluates the risk of contagion  * Postvention coordinator identifies and contacts feeder schools and/or adjacent school districts where students may be affected * Mental health consultant contacts neighboring mental health providers |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Faculty and school staff are notified of the death through phone/email chain  * Teachers are informed of faculty and staff meeting to take place as soon as possible (i.e., an early morning meeting) |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Crisis team begins to compile a list of at-risk students to be individually screened  * Friends of the deceased * Siblings of the deceased * Students with a personal or family history of mental health problems * Students with a past history of suicide attempt(s) * Students who are currently in mental health or drug and alcohol abuse treatment * Students who may be vulnerable due to concerns shared by parents and/or teachers * Classmates /teammates /fellow club members of the deceased |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 8. Postvention coordinator contacts the deceased’s family   * Conveys the school’s condolences * Asks parents/guardians about funeral arrangements * Determines how parents/guardians would like the school to participate in the funeral * Reassures parents/guardians that school will safeguard and return deceased’s personal belongings * Informs parents that the school is providing postvention activities for students and staff |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 9. Postvention coordinator and/or principal hold faculty meeting before school or as soon as possible (see [Attachment 7a](#attachment7a))   * Expresses condolences to the staff * Acknowledges the efforts of the Postvention/Crisis/SAP team * Reviews the facts of the death as known and reminds faculty and staff to only share facts * Announces funeral arrangements if known * Makes sure that interested staff members may attend the funeral * Introduces all outside professionals * Gives an overview of the postvention activities * Advises teachers to send visibly distressed students to the guidance office or designated area with a hall monitor or escort * Encourages staff to monitor students, especially those that may be grieving (e.g., journal entries, comments written in margins, off-handed comments, etc.) * Describes the school’s policy on what to do with gifts/memorials that students leave for the deceased * Distributes the announcement that is to be read to the students * Encourages any staff member who needs assistance reading the announcement to contact the postvention coordinator * Reminds staff about self-care and the importance of seeking their own support if needed (e.g., EAP) * Announces follow-up meeting to be held ideally at the end of the school day |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator contacts the funeral home (no release of information is needed)  * Reviews specific funeral arrangements and family’s wishes * Informs the funeral director that students might visit the funeral home |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Superintendent approves letter to be sent to parents (see [Attachment 8a/8b](#attachment8a))  * Letter describing the tragedy and the postvention activities is distributed to students at the end of the day and/or sent to parents |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. The schedule of the deceased is followed by a school mental health professional and/or postvention team member  * Expresses condolences * Responds to students’ questions about the death * Explains funeral arrangements and procedures if any are known * Discusses the subject of memorials * Explains that counselors are available to see students * Reviews various stress reactions and the necessity of exhibiting tolerance and understanding |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. A member of the postvention team and/or agency staff may conduct an educational support group  * Asks how each student learned about the death * Explores each student’s reaction to the death * Reviews aspects of grief * Discusses ways to deal with tragic loss * Encourages student discussion and questions * Distributes crisis resource and numbers, encouraging students to put these directly in their mobile devices * Urges students to self-refer or refer a friend if they are concerned * Emphasizes the need to contact an adult if students have concerns about suicidality * Asks for and respond to students’ questions |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator or mental health consultant coordinates individual screenings and keeps a confidential roster of all students referred and screened (Ideally all records are maintained in accordance with pre-established letter of agreement between school district and agency/community providers prior to crisis response)  * Contacts the parents/guardians of each student referred for screening * Communicates to student that interview is voluntary and review confidentiality * Makes appropriate referrals for in or out of school support * Contacts therapists of students who are in treatment if releases are signed and on file * Provides additional resources to students, as needed * Immediate follow-up with students’ parents/guardians, documenting recommendations * Follow-up for all students screened by crisis team member |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator and/or principal facilitates follow-up faculty meeting at the end of the first day, if possible (see [Attachment 7b](#attachment7b))  * Thanks faculty and staff and acknowledges their hard work * Provides updates on any new developments of the death and/or funeral arrangements * Reminds staff to refer all media inquiries to the District’s designated media spokesperson * If not already reviewed at morning faculty meeting, distribute and review the letter that goes home to parents * Encourages faculty and staff to continue to monitor students * Explains that students may have a resurgence of feelings after the funeral and in the weeks and months to come, as there is no timeframe for grieving * Emphasizes that through natural supports, staff and students will get through this difficult time and that resources are available for those needing additional support |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator holds a follow-up meeting for Postvention/Crisis team and building administration at the end of the first day  * Reviews all students who were seen (including those that were screened) * Identifies plan for the following days, especially the day after the funeral |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator or principal holds optional parent meeting, typically a week or two after the funeral  * Reviews school’s postvention activities * Discusses typical child and adolescent responses to sudden death * Identifies risk factors that may indicate a concern * Reviews symptoms of depression and suicidal behavior * Identifies national and local resources available in the community |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | 1. Postvention coordinator and/or principal holds meeting with Postvention/Crisis/SAP team and building administration (ideally within a week)  * Evaluates the postvention * Plans for anniversary dates and special events * Reviews student screenings * Emphasizes that faculty and staff need to stay alert to upcoming events or lessons that may be reminders of the tragedy (e.g., fire safety week; bicycle safety week; literature about suicide, accidents or death) * Makes recommendations for other interventions * Emphasizes the need to for self-care (e.g., fluids, rest, exercise, etc.) |

# Attachment 2: The Aftermath of Sudden Death

Grief is an emotional course with dramatic highs and lows, and no straight lines. It may have emotional, physical, and cognitive manifestations. The grief process is ongoing.

## COMMON ACUTE GRIEF/STRESS REACTIONS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SHOCK** | numbness, denial, and disbelief |
| **SADNESS** | longing, yearning, and sorrow |
| **FEAR** | inability to manage all of the feelings you are having |
| **SHAME** | embarrassed by the circumstances or the strong emotions surrounding the death |
| **ANGER** | mad at the unfairness of losing someone that you cared about, at the person who has died, and/or about the pain the death has caused |
| **GUILT** | having been unable to prevent the death or the feeling that you could have done something more |

## WAYS OF DEALING WITH SUDDEN DEATH

**Talk about Your Reactions**

It is important not to dwell on the unnecessary or gory details, but talking about what happened helps you accept that the death has occurred.

**Search for Reasons**

Remember that you may never know all the reasons. Looking at different reasons why this has occurred may help alleviate some of the uncomfortable feelings and confusion you are experiencing. Focusing on the “what ifs” and ruminating on the “only ifs” or “shoulds” may complicate the grieving process.

**Express Your Feelings**

Talk to your family and friends about your thoughts and feelings. Expressing yourself and sharing your feelings with others can help you feel less alone and normalize your reactions. How much you talk and to whom you speak may depend upon your relationship with the person and the level of trust that you have. When sharing online, keep in mind how heightened emotions can be. Consider spending time away from social media.

**Need to Be Alone as Well as with Others**

Give yourself time to think and reflect privately if you feel that is what you need. Also, there will be times when you won't want to be alone and may need to be with others. You need a balance, but it is important not to isolate yourself. Try to ask for what you need. Remember you can change your mind.

**There Are No Time Frames**

Every person is different. The time it takes for someone to feel like his or her “old self again” is different from person to person. However, most people feel better maintaining a routine, as much as possible. This would include a regular eating, sleeping, and exercise schedule.

# Attachment 3: Checklist for Schools Receiving Postvention Services from Agencies

**Advance preparations**

Ideally, these steps should be completed and/or revised prior to a postvention and at the beginning of each school year.

* Designate the district and school crisis leadership:
  + Identify the coordinator/contact person for the district and for each school.
  + Identify the spokesperson for the district/school. Provide this person with a copy of the *STAR-Center Postvention Standards Manual*, highlighting the sections on dealing with the media and memorials.
* Exchange contact information (e.g., names, home/mobile phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, office locations) between school/district and agency personnel.
* Review with district/school coordinators the *Postvention Standards Manual*, including the checklist of responsibilities.
* Conduct a review meeting with each building administrator and the teams involved in postvention activities (e.g., SAP team, crisis team, postvention team –these teams and/or team members mayoverlap). At the review meetings, complete the following:
  + Update the contact information for each member of the team. This should include name, phone numbers (work, home, cell), e-mail address, office or work location and schedule, and that person’s specific assigned duties in responding to a crisis.
  + Go over the *Postvention Standards Manual* and other school procedures related to crises.
  + Review the required and recommended templates, forms, and resources, and replace or update any materials (e.g., templates for parent letters).
  + Review and document previous losses or crises that may have an impact on the school in the coming year. These should include last school year’s tragedies or crises as well as events that took place during the summer. Make a note of anniversary dates or other sensitive dates.
* Send the agency responders the information that has been updated:
  + Accurate driving and parking directions for the school.
  + Map of the school, indicating the spaces to be used for individual and small group meetings. Show where the telephones, main office, cafeteria, and restrooms are.
  + Information regarding how informed consent from parents will be obtained if agency providers are to have contact with students.
  + Brief summary of previous crises or tragedies and those dates (this may be discussed verbally rather than put in writing).
* Prepare a template for confidential information to give to agency responders at the time of a crisis*.* Agency providers should a) sign a confidentiality statement upon receiving it, and b) return it after their work is complete. The information might include the following:
  + Contact information for all school crisis responders
  + Floor plans showing teachers’ names
  + Telephone dialing instructions
  + Copier equipment codes
  + Security codes used in communicating lockdowns, etc.
  + Other information that agency responders might need to access resources in the building, especially in the event of a large-scale crisis
  + Spaces to add the names of students thought to be at ongoing risk because of prior mental health problems, substance abuse, family dysfunction, or other psychosocial stressors (regardless of their relationship to the deceased, these students will be at elevated risk in the event of a suicide)
* If necessary, the district/school and agency coordinator should meet to review procedures and to obtain signatures on agreements regarding the procedures (e.g., consent from parents, payment, reimbursement for expenses, record keeping, confidentiality agreements). Refer to [Attachment 1](#attachment1) for a checklist of postvention activities that may be delegated to school or agency personnel.

**Actions to Take at the Time of the Crisis**

The district/school coordinator should take responsibility for seeing that these actions are completed by members of the crisis/postvention team. These actions are in addition to those listed in the Postvention Standards Manual.

* If necessary, the district/school formally invites the agency to briefly review procedures outlined in the established Letter of Agreement to determine if anything has changed, given the current crisis.
* Alert security that the agency personnel will be on campus (e.g., arrange for the agency staff to park on site).
* Draft the parent letter with information about those who will be providing services and consider having the agency coordinator review it.
* Arrange for spaces for the agency personnel to meet with students and with adults.
* Distribute copies of the completed confidential information sheet for agency personnel.

# Attachment 4: Verification of the Death

# CORONER OR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

###### **Date** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of person providing information about the death:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Sex: \_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Building:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Death:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Cause of Death (if known):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Student’s Address:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s)Names:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian(s) Address:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian(s) Phone Number(s):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Other Details:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Attachment 5: Funeral Home Information

**Funeral Home:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Funeral arrangements (e.g., time, place, private, wake, open casket, cremation):**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Family wishes:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe any cultural and/or religious differences/rituals:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Donations Request:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Capacity to accommodate student grievers:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**In case of suicide, shared** [**SPRC guidelines**](https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/COI-SP-Funeral-Directors-Guide_WEB%20Version%20FINAL.pdf) **with funeral director: yes/no**

# Attachment 6: Sample Initial Postvention Team Meeting Agenda and Timeline

The sample agenda presented below is for the first meeting of the postvention team and uses an example of a scenario of a car accident on a Saturday night involving the fatality of several high school students. Please note that the contents of the agenda would be similar for any postvention, regardless of the cause of death. However, in the event of a death by suicide, the risk of contagion must be addressed.

## Team Meeting Agenda

1. Assign someone to record information. Have a computer available to type as the decisions and plans are made.
2. Review all previously identified agency providers that will assist the district with postvention activities (refer to [Attachment 3](#attachment3)):

* Share the names and contact information of the personnel from each agency.
* Identify schedule when outside agencies will be available.
* Identify need for parental/student consent forms and confidentiality.
* Document this information and share with others working on the postvention.
* Designate someone to be the liaison from the school/district to the agencies.

1. Triage and set priorities for what needs to be decided or addressed within the following timeframes:

* 12 hours (prior to opening of school on Monday)
* 18 hours (before school is out on Monday)
* 24 hours (before school opens on Tuesday)
* 48 hours (or before funerals)
* reoccurring priorities (those things to be addressed each day this week)
* next week’s issues
* short-term issues (e.g., upcoming musical that the students were involved in, any other school-sponsored gatherings)
* longer-term issues (e.g., graduation, senior recognition dinners)

1. Identify where and when the crisis team briefings will take place. The goal is to keep everyone informed about any developments so that the plans can be modified.

* Monday AM
* Monday PM
* Tuesday AM
* Tuesday PM

## Proposed Timeline for Postvention Team

| **Task** | **When due?** | **Person(s) assigned** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Secure deceased students’ possessions in a safe place | Sunday night |  | This can be very stressful. May want more than one person assigned. Be sure to check all lockers, desks, bulletin boards, displays, etc.  Will give to families at some point in the future during a home visit. |
| Write and duplicate the letter/homeroom announcement for parents/students | Sunday night |  | See samples found in this manual.  Give to all high school students. Consider sending to all staff K-12 and all parents via mail and/or email and post on secure location of district website. |
| Get additional staff who can help on Monday-Thursday | Sunday night |  | Can use paraprofessionals as well as subs. Volunteer retired teachers? |
| Contact former teachers of deceased and injured students | Monday |  | Delegate to central office. |
| Have a plan for addressing media reps | Sunday night |  | Reporters likely to be on campus on Monday. Get a central office spokesperson, as school staff are too busy.  Identify someone to write the statements re students to be given to the press, if any. |
| Update on injured students | Monday AM;  Daily |  | Need to establish a liaison with the hospital or with the families. |
| Funeral arrangements | Monday AM |  | Need to decide rules for students/staff leaving school for funeral.  May want to ask family to consider time of funeral to allow students and teachers to attend. |
| Homeroom announcements and discussion | Monday AM |  | Need to schedule.  Need to prep teachers with script or discussion points/letter:   * brief description of the event * status of the injured students (clear with parents first; “recovering at home”) * any funeral arrangements for the deceased students * typical reactions during acute stress * where to go for help (parents as well as students) * info on consent and outside agency help * state that agencies will be providing educational session on handling traumatic stress * next steps (schedule, etc.)   Hand out letter.  Need to assign another adult to those teachers who are most affected.  Consider assigning an adult to follow the deceased students’ schedules. |
| Schedule briefing with school and central office staff | Every AM/PM as needed |  | Central office may want to be present at the Monday briefing to show support.  Monday AM briefing will review the homeroom announcements.  As weeks goes on, briefings could be by phone. |
| Identify spaces for small groups of students to meet | Sunday PM |  | If this is going to be included in the homeroom announcements, identify the spaces on Sunday. |
| Identify vulnerable groups and individuals | Monday AM |  | Musical cast  Classmates  Friends  Previously troubled students  Student with recent loss |
| Check on absent students | Monday PM |  | Attendance Office |
| Inform support staff | Monday  AM |  | * Bus drivers * Cafeteria * Offices * Security * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

# Attachment 7a: Sample Agenda for Initial Faculty Meeting

At the meeting, the postvention coordinator, with assistance from other postvention team members, may address the following:

* Identify factual information regarding the death, including name and grade (or staff assignment) of the deceased(s), and general details of the death.
* Express condolences to the staff and recognize their feelings. Acknowledge that even those not close to the deceased may elicit memories of a past loss. Remind staff of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or community-related supports, including the outside agency mental health professionals that will be on site.
* Introduce anyone from outside of the school who is assisting in the postvention activities.
* Encourage staff who may be experiencing any difficulties or who anticipate needing support in their classroom to alert one of the postvention team members so that additional supports are put in place.
* If at all possible, meet with the teachers of the deceased before the start of the school day and following the faculty meeting to assess their status for the day and the relational and physical dynamics of the classroom.
* Give an overview of the postvention activities:
* Plans for contacting the deceased’s family
* Funeral arrangements
* How the school will inform and assist other students
* The availability of counselors to talk with students individually and in groups
* Signs to look for in students who may need to be seen/referred
* Procedures for referring students for individual screening and assistance
* The letter that will be sent to parents of the student body
* Share postvention plans for feeder schools and adjacent school districts
* Explain the faculty’s responsibility to announce the death during homeroom. If any faculty member does not feel comfortable announcing the death in the classroom or answering students’ questions, they can inform the principal so other postvention team members can make the announcement or offer support.
* Distribute the typed announcement and supplemental handouts (refer to [Attachment 2](#attachment2) and [Attachment 11](#attachment11)). Stress that there is no one way for staff or students to react or grieve. Internal and external conflicts are common. Acknowledge that previous losses may resurface. Encourage students to be more tolerant of themselves and each other in the days and weeks ahead.
* Postpone any testing and offer students the choice to see a member of postvention team, work independently, or go on with class with modified expectations. Students who are absent may require additional teacher support to catch up. Additionally, teachers should review any concerns regarding curriculum content or upcoming projects with the postvention coordinator (e.g., unit on death and dying in literature, writing one’s epitaph).
* Emphasize confidentiality when addressing the media, parents, and community members.
* Announce follow-up meetings and the availability for staff to consult with postvention team members as needed regarding the impact of the postvention on school activities (e.g., after-school activities).
* Review funeral arrangements and procedures for students and staff to attend.
* Share wishes of the family regarding donations. Remind staff to let students know there will be a basket in the main office or other public but supervised location to collect condolences.
* Remind staff of the school’s memorial policy. Any items found in the building will be gathered to share with the family.
* Review handouts on grief and/or stress reactions, as well as strategies to cope (refer to Attachment 2 and Attachment 10).
* Allow as much time as possible for faculty to review the information you are sharing and to address questions and concerns.
* Meet with the teachers of the deceased one on one or in a small group to address their reactions, concerns, and physical/emotional dynamics of their classrooms.
* Thank the faculty in advance for their assistance, patience, and cooperation. Remind them that as a school community you will get through this difficult time.

During this initial meeting, refer to the following attachments as needed: [Attachment 2: Aftermath of Sudden Death](#attachment2); [Attachment 9: Guidelines in Talking with Students](#attachment9); [Attachment 10: Commonly Asked Questions](#attachment10); [Attachment 11: Sample Announcement;](#attachment11) [Attachment 12a: Common Symptoms after a Critical Incident;](#attachment12a) and [Attachment 12b: What You Can Do to Cope.](#attachment12b)

Attachments 12a and 12b, along with [Attachment 8a or 8b](#attachment8a), the letters home, could also be distributed at either this meeting or the end of the day faculty meeting.

# Attachment 7b: Sample Agenda for Follow-Up Faculty Meeting

At the meeting, the postvention coordinator, with assistance from other postvention team members, may address the following points. This meeting should be held at the end of the first day of the postvention, if possible.

* Thank staff again for all of their efforts.
* Update any previously shared information regarding funeral arrangements and the family’s wishes and review procedures for students and staff wishing to attend the funeral.
* Readdress any rumors.
* Provide an overview of students’ reactions throughout the day. Mental health professionals may give general impressions based on small groups and/or screenings.
* Remind staff of what to look for with regard to student reactions and observable behaviors of concern in the days and weeks to come. Stress that students most heavily impacted may have long-term difficulty when learning new information due to concentration difficulties.
* Emphasize the importance of their role in observing, referring, and encouraging students and parents to seek appropriate support.
* Reiterate recommendations regarding social media use and the district’s memorial policy.
* Review resources for staff available currently and in the weeks to come, such as Employee Assistance Program.
* Review the importance of self-care.
* Offer to meet with staff 1:1 following the meeting, especially those teachers of the deceased to see how they are coping and to share any concerns regarding students or to address other issues.
* Remind staff of the power of resiliency and the support within the school community moving forward, remembering *“Life isn’t the way it’s supposed to be. Life is the way it is. It’s how we cope that makes the difference”* (Anonymous).

During this follow-up meeting, the team may want to review the following attachments that may have already been distributed at the initial meeting: [Attachments 2](#attachment2), [8a/8b](#attachment8a), [9](#attachment9), [10](#attachment10), [11](#attachment11), [12a/12b](#attachment12a).

# Attachment 8a: SAMPLE LETTER FOR PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN

\*Be mindful of previous postvention letters that may have been sent home to avoid having the letter look like a carbon copy with only a name change.

Dear Parents and Guardians:

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of a member of our school community, **(add the name of the student or staff member, if you have confirmation),** who died on **(add date)**.

A sudden loss like this can have an effect on students. For that reason, we hope that you will listen to your child, as well as discuss with them their feelings and reactions to this tragedy. Sudden death is always painful to understand, and your child may experience signs of stress. These may include one or more of the following:

* Sleep difficulties (e.g., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, sleeping too much)
* Changes in appetite
* Inability to concentrate
* Absentmindedness
* Irritability
* Isolation
* Withdrawing from usual activities and friends
* Increased aggression or acting out
* Regressive behavior (e.g., thumb-sucking)
* Guilt
* Separation anxiety
* Fearfulness and worries
* Sensitivity to change in routine
* Use of alcohol or other drugs
* Risk-taking behaviors (e.g., riding a bike carelessly, use of firearms, “dares” to participate in dangerous behavior)
* Thoughts about death or dying

**(Use the following paragraph if you suspect that students are at risk for suicide.)** We are especially concerned about risk-taking behaviors and strongly recommend that you remove any guns from homes where there are young people experiencing grief and related stress. Similarly, remove from your child’s access to any medications, drugs, or alcohol. Young people may be overwhelmed by their feelings and not use good judgment, especially if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Your child may resist these restrictions, but safety is our first concern.

Counselors from**(add the name of the agency**) will be available at the school for several days to talk with students who are experiencing stress. If you have concerns about your child, please call **(add the name, title, and telephone number of the appropriate school contact.) (Add any additional information regarding parents’ consent for their child to be seen by agency personnel, according to your school/district policy.)**

If your child was **(a friend of the youth who has died/close to the staff member who died)**, we urge you to call the school for additional support. After school hours, you may call **(add the name, title, and telephone number of the after-hours school contact for parents who cannot call during regular school hours)**. If you want your child to be excused for the funeral, we request that you send us a written excuse. Students should not return to school after the funeral service. We encourage you to accompany your child to the funeral home and services.

On behalf of **(school/district name)**, I have extended our sincere condolences to the family of **(name of student or staff person, or refer to them as “the student” or “the staff member”)** on this sad occasion. We will continue to inform you of the school's steps in supporting students and their families. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or information that you would like to share.

Sincerely,

**(Principal of the school or other school official)**

# Attachment 8b: SAMPLE LETTER FOR PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS

\*Be mindful of previous postvention letters that may have been sent home to avoid having the letter look like a carbon copy with only a name change.

Dear Parents and Guardians:

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of a member of our school community, **(add the name of the student or staff member, if you have confirmation),** who died on **(add date)**.

A sudden loss like this can have an effect on students. For that reason, we hope that you will listen to your son or daughter as well as discuss their feelings and reactions to this tragedy. Sudden death is always painful to understand, and your adolescent may experience signs of stress. These may include the following:

* Sleep difficulties or changes in sleep
* Inability to concentrate
* Absentmindedness
* Irritability
* Isolation
* Withdrawing from usual activities and friends
* Increased aggression
* Guilt
* Fearfulness and worries
* Use of alcohol or other drugs
* Risk-taking behaviors (e.g., riding a bike carelessly, use of firearms, “dares” to participate in dangerous behavior)
* Thoughts about death or dying

**(Use the following paragraph if you suspect that students are at risk for suicide.)** We are especially concerned about risk-taking behaviors and strongly recommend that you remove any guns from homes where there are young people experiencing grief and related stress. Similarly, remove from your adolescent’s access any medications, drugs, or alcohol. Young people may be overwhelmed by their feelings and not use good judgment, especially if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Your adolescent may resist these restrictions, but safety is our first concern.

Counselors from (add the name of the agency) will be available at the school for several days to talk with students who are experiencing stress. If you have concerns about your son or daughter, please call (add the name, title, and telephone number of the appropriate school contact.) (Add any additional information regarding parents’ consent for their adolescent to be seen by agency personnel, according to your school/district policy.)

If your son or daughter was **(a friend of the youth who has died/close to the staff member who died)**, we urge you to call the school for additional support. After school hours, you may call **(add the name, title, and telephone number of the after-hours school contact for parents who cannot call during regular school hours)**. If you want your adolescent to be excused for the funeral, we request that you send us a written excuse. Students should not return to school after the funeral service. We encourage you to accompany your adolescent to the funeral home and services.

On behalf of **(school/district name)**, I have extended our sincere condolences to the family of **(name of student or staff person, or refer to them as “the student” or “the staff member”)** on this sad occasion. We will continue to inform you of the school's steps in supporting students and their families. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or information that you would like to share.

Sincerely,

**(Principal of the school or other school official)**

# Attachment 9: Guidelines for Talking with Students in the Aftermath of a Sudden Death

**Note to staff:** Make sure you take care of yourself! Be aware of your own stress reactions. Younger students will likely follow the reactions of the adults around them. As soon as possible, allow private time for your own reactions so you can be composed for your students. You may feel there isn’t much you can say or do. Yet, coming to school and experiencing the tragedy with your students shows that you care and that individuals supporting one another can survive a tragedy.

The following guidelines may be useful in facilitating a conversation with students about the loss and may be considered based on the staff member’s role and comfort level:

* Explain that it is normal to feel emotions such as shock, fear, sadness, guilt, or anger. Encourage students to talk about these feelings with parents, friends, and counselors. Identify additional natural supports such as extended family, clergy, coaches, and youth leaders.
* Let students know that there is no "right way" to feel after a tragedy. Remind them that people deal with grief differently, and they need to be patient and tolerant with each other.
* Do not expect students to resolve their grief after talking with someone about it. Grief is a process, and students need to work through that process in order to reconcile themselves with their loss.
* Do not try to cheer students up. They need to experience the grief process, even though it is often painful. You may want to offer your condolences to students.
* Help to clarify facts about the death. Correct errors and rumors.
* If the death was ruled a suicide by the coroner, follow the guidelines offered in this handbook. Stress that no one is to blame for the suicide. No one caused the deceased to take his or her own life. The deceased’s decision-making ability may have been impaired.
* Do not glamorize a suicide in any way. In discussing it, focus on recoveryof the survivors and alternative methods of dealing with problems. Avoid focusing on the manner of death, or idealizing or blaming the deceased. Shift focus to how students are coping and concerns they have for themselves or peers.
* Encourage students to describe their memories of better times with the deceased.

* Talk candidly with students about what they can expect at the funeral home and funeral service and how they should dress and conduct themselves. Emphasize that the family’s wishes should be respected.
* Rehearse possible condolence messages to the family. This may be a new experience for most students, and they may not know what to say.
* Emphasize that help is available to all students, not just those students who were friends or family members (or students of a teacher who has died). Make sure students know where to go to get help for themselves or for a friend who they are concerned about, especially if they think their friend may be depressed or suicidal.

# Attachment 10: Common Questions about Sudden Death: What to Expect

**Reactions to Sudden Death: What to Expect**

Sudden death is always painful to understand, and you may experience signs of normal bereavement and stress. These may include the following:

* difficulty sleeping
* changes in appetite
* inability to concentrate
* absentmindedness
* irritability
* isolation
* withdrawing from normal activities and friends
* guilt
* fearfulness and worries
* anger and resentment
* physical symptoms
* use of alcohol or other drugs\*
* thoughts about death or dying\*

**\*Although common, these signs may become worrisome and potentially harmful, indicating the need for further professional support.**

Because you have experienced a **traumatic**loss, you may notice that you are responding in these ways, too:

avoidance of any reminders of the event

* a feeling that this is not real, disbelief, numbness
* thoughts about the accident that interfere with your activities and your concentration

**What Can You Do?**

It is really important that you take care of yourself during this stressful time. Try to eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of water so that you do not become dehydrated. Don’t use drugs or alcohol. Try to follow a regular schedule for sleep or rest when you can. Talk about your feelings and reactions with friends and family members you can trust. Try not to focus too much on the “what if” and the “why” questions. Protect yourself from any additional stresses that you can avoid.

You will probably start to feel better within a few weeks. If you do not start to feel better, talk to your parents or to an adult at school. If one of your friends does or says something that worries you, please tell an adult. Getting help for a friend could be the most important conversation you ever have.

**Some Questions You May Have…**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What do I say to the deceased’s family?** | A simple “I’m sorry” is alright. If you can add something about what the person meant to you, or what you liked about the person, that might be helpful. If you are at a loss for words, then just express your sympathy and wait until later to have a longer conversation. |
| **I feel like I’m “losing it.”**  **What’s the matter with me?** | A sense of disorientation, disbelief, forgetfulness, or being in a “daze” is common for individuals who are experiencing a sudden loss. You may feel like you are on an emotional roller coaster, or that you cannot regain control of your thoughts and feelings. This is a normal reaction to a sudden, highly stressful event. As time passes, you should begin to feel more in control of your thoughts, memory, and feelings. |
| **What if I don’t have these**  **reactions? Is something**  **wrong with me?** | People respond to death and sudden loss differently. These reactions are only an example of how you might feel. You may feel differently from day to day. You may experience one reaction and never experience another. Accept your feelings and reactions as they come. Talk them over with someone you trust. Avoid those who tend to pass judgment on your feelings. Remember: There is no single “right” timetable or process for grief and recovery. |
| **I keep thinking about other losses and sadness. They aren’t even connected to this. Why am I doing this?** | This may be a normal reaction. New losses often remind us of past sadness. The present tragedy may stir feelings you have experienced before, or it may elicit new feelings. What is important is that you are able to recognize and talk about these losses. It may help to think about your strengths and how you have coped with other tragedies in a healthy way. |

# Attachment 11: Sample Announcement of Death

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEATH**

On **(date)**, a student from our school, **(name the deceased)**, died tragically **(insert cause of death, if confirmed)**. We are all saddened by this loss. A sudden loss like this can cause many strong feelings. It is good to talk to someone about these feelings. We recommend that you speak to your parents or other trusted adults about this and share your reactions. It is important to let your parents or other trusted adults know how you feel. **Note: If the cause of death has not been confirmed, inform students that this is all the information we have at this time.**

In other schools where this has happened, students have also found it helpful to speak to a school counselor **(or other mental health professional)**. The school is sensitive to this need and has arranged to have additional counselors from **(name of agency)** available to talk with you **(time and place)**in addition to **(whatever your students know your in-school supports as).** Arrangements to see a counselor can be made at the **(school counseling office or other location).**

# Attachment 12a – Common Symptoms After a Critical Incident

After experiencing a traumatic event, it is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience a wide range of emotional or physical reactions. These responses may appear immediately after the event, or sometime later. They may last for a few days, a few weeks, or even longer. **Don’t worry** -- these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. It is important to understand that like the flu, your reactions will run their course and you will feel better in time. The following are some of the most common symptoms:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Emotional** | **Behavioral** |
| * Fear * Anxiety * Depression, sadness, grief * Feeling hopeless or helplessness * Feeling numb * Irritability * Inappropriate emotional response * Anger * Guilt, survivor guilt * Denial * Agitation * Feeling overwhelmed | * Social withdrawal/silence * Hyper-alert to environment * Suspiciousness * Emotional outbursts, loss of control * Changes from typical behavioral * Avoiding thoughts, feelings or situations related to the event * Changes in communication * Change in sexual function * Increased consumption of alcohol or other chemicals * Loss or increase of appetite * Inability to rest |
| **Cognitive (Thoughts)** | **Physical** |
| * Confusion * Difficulty concentrating and making decisions * Memory problems * Shortened attention span * Overly critical * Preoccupation with the event * Flashbacks * Hyper-vigilance * Overly sensitive | * Easily startled/jittery * Fatigue * Changes in appetite * Sleep disturbances and nightmares * Headaches * Grinding teeth * Feeling uncoordinated * Nausea/Diarrhea * Shallow breathing * Twitches/Tremors * Chills/Sweating |

Adapted from Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Resource Center.

# Attachment 12b: What You Can Do for Yourself

**When you’ve experienced a trauma, it can be a shock to your whole system. The following are some ideas to help you cope with any physical or emotional symptoms you may be experiencing.**

* Eat well-balanced and regular meals, even if you don’t feel like it.
* Get plenty of rest.
* Exercise regularly. It can help work off some physical symptoms, leaving you feeling calmer and better able to relax. If you are feeling lethargic it can help energize you and clear your mind.
* Avoid caffeine, especially if you are having trouble sleeping.
* Avoid the use of drugs or alcohol, including prescription and over the counter medications to numb the pain. It will only complicate or delay your recovery.
* Structure your time and set priorities. Maintain your basic normal routine, but give yourself permission to skip the extras for a while.
* Don’t make any major life changes or decisions.
* Do make as many small daily decisions as possible to reassert your sense of control.
* Don’t try to avoid or deny reoccurring thoughts or feelings about the incident. They are normal and will decrease over time.
* Give yourself permission to feel rotten and to share your feelings with others.
* Do things that you enjoy. Take mini-breaks: go out to dinner, take 10 minutes alone, watch a movie.
* Talk with people you trust: your family, friends, co-workers. Don’t be afraid to reach out. People do care.
* Don’t be afraid to set limits with others when you don’t feel like talking. You don’t have to discuss the incident or your feelings when you don’t want to.
* Don’t label yourself as “crazy.” Remind yourself you are having normal reactions.
* Write down your thoughts and feelings. his can be especially helpful if you are having trouble sleeping or when you wake from a troubling dream.
* Ask for help if you need it. If you are having trouble coping on your own, help is available from many sources:

1. Professional assistance from a counselor may sometimes be necessary. This does not imply weakness or craziness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful to handle by yourself.
2. In the workplace you may be able to get assistance from your co-workers, the human resources department, or company EAP.
3. Church, friends, family, and other community resources can be valuable sources of support.

Adapted from Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Resource Center.

# Attachment 13: 10 TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

What are some tips that can help you learn to be resilient? As you use these tips, keep in mind that each person’s journey along the road to resilience will be different. What works for you may not work for your friends.

1. **Get Together.** Talk with your friends and, yes, even with your parents. Understand that your parents may have more life experience than you do, even if it seems they never were your age. They may be afraid for you if you're going through really tough times and it may be harder for them to talk about it than it is for you! Don't be afraid to express your opinion, even if your parent or friend takes the opposite view. Ask questions and listen to the answers. Get connected to your community, whether it's as part of a church group or a high school group.
2. **Cut Yourself Some Slack.** When something bad happens in your life, the stresses of whatever you're going through may heighten daily stresses. Your emotions might already be all over the map because of hormones and physical changes. The uncertainty during a tragedy or trauma can make these shifts seem more extreme. Be prepared for this and go a little easy on yourself, and on your friends.
3. **Create a Hassle-Free Zone.** Make your room or apartment a "hassle-free zone"—not that you keep everyone out, but home should be a haven free from stress and anxieties. But understand that your parents and siblings may have their own stresses if something serious has just happened in your life and may want to spend a little more time than usual with you.
4. **Stick to the Program.** Spending time in high school or on a college campus means more choices, so let home be your constant. During a time of major stress, map out a routine and stick to it. You may be doing all kinds of new things, but don't forget the routines that give you comfort, whether it's the things you do before class, going out to lunch, or have a nightly phone call with a friend.
5. **Take Care of Yourself.** Be sure to take of yourself—physically, mentally and spiritually. And get sleep! If you don't, you may be more grouchy and nervous at a time when you have to stay sharp. There's a lot going on, and it's going to be tough to face if you're falling asleep on your feet.
6. **Take Control.** Even in the midst of tragedy, you can move toward goals one small step at a time. During a really hard time, just getting out of bed and going to school may be all you can handle, but even accomplishing that can help. Bad times make us feel out of control; grab some of that control back by taking decisive action.
7. **Express Yourself.** Tragedy can bring up a bunch of conflicting emotions, but sometimes, it's just too hard to talk to someone about what you're feeling. If talking isn't working, do something else to capture your emotions like start a journal or create art.
8. **Help Somebody.** Nothing gets your mind off your own problems like solving someone else's. Try volunteering in your community or at your school, cleaning up around the house or apartment, or helping a friend with his or her homework.
9. **Put Things in Perspective.** The very thing that has you stressed out may be all anyone is talking about now. Eventually, things change and bad times end. If you're worried about whether you've got what it takes to get through this, think back on a time when you faced up to your fears, whether it was asking someone on a date or applying for a job. Learn some relaxation techniques, whether it's thinking of a particular song in times of stress or just taking a deep breath to calm down. Think about the important things that have stayed the same, even while the outside world is changing. When you talk about bad times, make sure you talk about good times as well.
10. **Turn It Off.** You want to stay informed—you may even have homework that requires you to watch the news. But sometimes, the news, with its focus on the sensational, can add to the feeling that nothing is going right. Try to limit the amount of news you take in, whether it's from television, newspapers or magazines, or the Internet. Watching a news report once informs you; watching it over and over again just adds to the stress and contributes no new knowledge.

You can learn resilience. But just because you learn resilience doesn't mean you won't feel stressed or anxious. You might have times when you aren't happy - and that's okay. Resilience is a journey, and each person will take his or her own time along the way. You may benefit from some of the resilience tips above, while some of your friends may benefit from others. The skills of resilience you learn during really bad times will be useful even after the bad times end, and they are good skills to have every day. Resilience can help you be one of the people who've "got bounce."

Adapted from Alvord, Gurwitch, Martin, & Palomares (Updated May 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/bounce.aspx>

# Attachment 14: OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE FOR THE ONE-TIME STRUCTURED EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

**Objectives:**

* Students will identify common grief and stress reactions following a sudden death, including suicide.
* Students will discuss ways to cope with grief and stress reactions following a sudden death.
* Participants will identify a trusted adult to turn to when in crisis and describe the importance of seeking help for themselves and their peers.

## Group Leader’s Outline:

At the start, pass a sheet around for students to write their names and provide parent/guardian contact information.

1. **Introduce yourself and tell them what you are going to do**:

“One of the sad parts of my job is going out and talking to young people about their feelings after someone they know has been seriously injured (or) has died” (whichever is appropriate).

1. **Discuss the limits of confidentiality**:

“What is said in the room stays in the room unless there is any mention of hurting oneself, hurting others, or abuse” (can be physical, sexual, or substance).

1. **Offer condolences**:

“I am really sorry to hear about the serious injury (or) death of your friend, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Such an occurrence can bring up lots of feelings, and we're going to talk about some of those feelings.”

1. **Allow students to express their feelings**:

Have students go around the room each to introduce themselves and tell their name, how they felt when they heard about the event that resulted in 's injury or death.

1. **As students report feelings, you may respond in the following ways**:

* Reinforce the legitimacy of their feelings under the circumstances
* Clarify the feeling that they are vocalizing
* Ask, “Did you feel anything else?”
* Normalize reactions by responding, "Lots of people feel , and it is okay to feel . It makes sense if you feel that way.”

1. **Once students have expressed their feelings, summarize the various feelings shared.**

* Explain that those feelings are all normal feelings in the aftermath of a death. Further highlight the common grief reactions below, and explain to students that while these symptoms may be “normal,” that they should tell an adult if they are not improving, especially after a couple of weeks.
* With older students, pass out [Attachment 2: The Aftermath of Sudden Death](#attachment2) and review the reactions listed.
* With younger students, review common grief reactions and common questions, [Attachment 10: Common Questions about Sudden Death – What to Expect](#attachment10))
* If suicide is the cause of death, review risk factors for suicide including depression, alcohol and other drug use, and access to firearms as risk factors (see the [NIMH Teen Depression Handout](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teen-depression/teendepression-508_150205.pdf))

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Common Grief Reactions | |
| Shock | A feeling of being stunned.  The reality of your friend's accident/trauma/death hasn't "sunk in" yet. It feels as though nothing has happened.  "Going through the motions."  A feeling that your body is doing all the things it's supposed to and going everywhere it's supposed to, but your mind isn't with your body.  It may last several hours, days or several weeks.  It is the body's way of "cushioning" the blow, so you don't deal with a whole flood of emotions all at once. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sadness | Feeling upset.  Feeling sorry for your friend that this happened to him/her.  Also includes loneliness, or missing your friend.  Feeling sad because you won't be able to share the good times and life experiences with your friend any more.  Many people express feelings of sadness by crying. It is okay for any individual to cry. Crying is a much needed release when you're grieving. People often feel better after crying. However, crying is not a measure of how much you cared about someone. Some people do not ever cry and that is okay, too. |
| Fear | Afraid that things will never be right again.  Young people/all people are often afraid to leave their friends alone because they are worried that something might happen to them.  Some students have nightmares and are afraid to sleep by themselves.  Students may want to sleep with their mom or dad for a while, or sleep with a light on.  These fears and behaviors are normal as long as they don't go on indefinitely. |
| Shame | Some people feel embarrassed because they have so many emotions after a loss. They often feel they don't have any control over their emotions. For example, a song on the radio may remind them of the friend and can bring on an unexpected flood of tears.  It is normal to experience a lot of strong (intense) emotions in the aftermath of a friend's death. This isn't anything to be ashamed of. It is helpful, though, to be supportive of your friends during their emotional times. |
| Anger | Angry that your friend was traumatized or has died.  Angry with God or "the world" because it's not fair.  You may not even realize you are angry but feel irritable and cranky, get in fights with friends, and find that you have a short temper or “short fuse” all of a sudden.  It is okay to be angry. If you are angry, it is understandable, but we don’t want anyone to complicate the situation by getting into fights or other types of trouble because of their anger (for example, fistfights or “slamming” others via social media with threats or slanderous comments). Even though you may be grieving, you are still responsible for your actions. |
| Guilt | The feeling that if you had done something differently, your friend would not have been in the situation and would not have gotten traumatized (or) killed.  Second guessing yourself “If only….” or “we were supposed to get \_\_\_\_\_\_ together.”  Some people think about the last time they talked with their friend and feel badly about what was said. They wish they had said something different.This is a common response.Try not to dwell on it too much. I'm sure if you had known it was the last time you would talk to your friend, you would have said many things differently. We never know, though, when our conversation with someone will be the last. |
| Other symptoms of grief | sleep disturbances, including nightmares  eating disturbances  fatigue  difficulty concentrating  irritability  not getting any or as much pleasure from things  not doing things you like to do |

1. **Discuss the various ways in which students may cope with the traumatic event, accident, or death.**

* Describe the coping strategies and information below and explain to students how these may support their ability to cope in a healthy manner.
* Encourage students to brainstorm a trusted adult at home or school. If they have difficulty with this, provide assistance and/or speak with them one-on-one afterwards.
* Provide students with the opportunity to share a pleasant memory of happier times.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Talk about what happened | Talking about the trauma and the results can help you to accept the reality of the traumatic incident/event.  Talk about the fact that your friend is gone and that you will miss him/her. This helps you accept the fact that your friend has died.  It doesn't help to dwell on any unnecessary details of the death -- this can sometimes make things worse. |
| Express your feelings | When you're feeling angry, sad, guilty, etc., talk about it with someone. Talking about your feelings help you feel less alone and prevent your feelings from getting all bottled up inside.  You can talk about your feelings with your parents, friends, teachers and/or counselors. All are good resources.  Identify a trusted adult at home or at school.  It also helps to talk about memories of your friend. |
| Need to be alone as well as with others | Sometimes you may want to be alone and think privately about your friend. This is normal and can be very helpful.  Other times, you may not want to be alone at all. You may need to be around your friends or family for support. This is also helpful.  If you find that you're spending all of your time alone or all of your time with people around, you may need extra help in dealing with your friend's death. Make sure you tell your parent or teacher how you're doing, so that they can help you if necessary. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| There are no timeframes | Everyone is different in how long it takes them to start feeling better. Some people will start feeling better and return to their normal routines in a couple weeks, and others not for a couple months.  There is no right or wrong length of time to grieve.  It is important to be very patient with each other. You may be having a good day while your friend feels very sad. A couple days later, you may feel badly, while your friend feels fine. Try to be supportive of each other and understand that you may feel differently at different times.  Let your parents and family members know how you are feeling.  If you are having a lot of difficulty sleeping, eating, concentrating, etc., and it doesn't improve after a couple weeks, tell your parent or teacher so they can help you. |

1. **Provide information about the funeral service and condolence messages.**

* It is helpful to talk candidly with students about what they can expect at the funeral home and funeral service.
* Encourage students to go with their parents or guardians to the funeral and funeral home.
* Students often feel that they must stay at the funeral home the entire length of the viewing. Explain that they are not expected to remain the entire time. They are generally expected to pay their respects and then go.
* Consider rehearsing possible condolence messages to the family. This may be a new experience for most students, and they don't know what to say. Ask students for their thoughts. If no response, you might offer comments that other students have made without mentioning specific names or personal details. Some suggestions are as follows:

“I'm really sorry that 's gone. I'm going to miss him/her.”

" was a really good friend to me. I'll miss him/her.”

" taught me how to play basketball. S/he was a good friend.”

1. **Address any rumors and other student questions:**

* Rumors often circulate in the aftermath of a student's traumatic event/accident/death. This may be due to the heightened emotions around a tragedy, the amount of misinformation, and the need for individuals to have answers to lower their own anxiety and/or feed their own curiosity.
* Emphasize the importance of being respectful in discussing the tragedy because each person may have a different relationship with the deceased. They may also experience the tragedy in a different way and may have their own history of losses.
* If there is an on-going investigation, give any pertinent public information in such a way as to inform but to avoid further stimulating rumors. State when the police arrived on the scene, and that interviews are ongoing to gather information. These investigations and the trial oftentimes take months or longer.
* Work to create a safe space for everyone to feel and express themselves and to provide additional support for those in need. Ask the following:

“Have you heard any rumors that you would like to have clarified?”

“Do you have any questions about anything we discussed?”

1. **Provide students with resources.**

* Remind students of the power of resiliency and making meaning out of tragedy (see [Attachment 13: 10 Tips to Build Resilience](#attachment13))
* Encourage students to utilize their natural supports (e.g., parents/family, faith leaders, coaches, extracurricular activity sponsors)
* Reemphasize the importance of seeking adult consultation when worried about a friend or themselves.
* Remind all students again of local and national crisis numbers, like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988/988lifeline.org), Crisis Text Line (Text PA to 741-741), and TrevorLifeline (1-866-488-7386).

1. **Conclude the group.**

* Again, offer condolences.
* Remind students that there are many caring people for them to talk to (e.g., parents, teachers, counselors).
* Encourage students to support and take care of each other during this difficult time, and to be more tolerant of themselves and each other in the days and weeks ahead:

“There is a wide range of normal feelings you might experience when someone you were close to dies.”

“Grief is normal and it is important to be kind to others as well as to yourself.”

You might conclude with, “I can see from so many of you here that you cared for your friend, and I am sorry that I did not have the opportunity to meet him/her.”

Co-leaders should meet following the group meeting to write a brief narrative with names and phone numbers to include in the school or agency’s file. Any students or issues of concern should be shared with the postvention team coordinator, and students that may be in need of individualized screening and/or supports should be identified.

# Attachment 15: Sample Screening Form

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**STUDENT SCREENING FORM FOR TRAGIC DEATH**

**School**: **District**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name**: **Grade/Age**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Referred by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Contact Information**

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Home #:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Work #:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Home #:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Work #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship** (circle all that apply) **Exposure to Death** (circle all that apply)

1. Boyfriend/girlfriend 1. Witness

2. Close friend 2. Found deceased

3. Friend 3. Funeral attendance

4. Acquaintance 4. Heard about

5. Neighbor 5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Outcome**

(Complete after interview)

**School staff to monitor Ed/support group**

**Re-screen**

**Referred for evaluation: yes/no Referred to:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date when recommendation should take place: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Parent Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Screened by** (signature): *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Screener’s school/agency**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Note which of the following were completed:**

Help Card/Crisis Cards Safety Plan Parents informed to remove weapons

or store ammunition separately and dispose of unnecessary medications and secure/lock other medications

**Screening Items**

**Describe the individual’s general reaction to the incident:**

**AFFECTIVE SYMPTOMS:**

\*Indicate whether symptoms were present before and/or after incident.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Before the incident** | **After the incident** | **Symptom** |
|  |  | depressed mood |
|  |  | irritability |
|  |  | angry mood |
|  |  | excessive guilt |
|  |  | hopelessness |
|  |  | anhedonia |
|  |  | sleep disturbances |
|  |  | appetite disturbance |
|  |  | fatigue |
|  |  | poor concentration |
|  |  | psychomotor retardation |
|  |  | psychomotor agitation |
|  |  | other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE**

\*Describe frequency, quantity, and concerns about use.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Before the incident** | **After the incident** | **Drug or Alcohol Use** |
|  |  |  |

**Conduct or discipline problems:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Before the incident** | **After the incident** | **Conduct Problems** |
|  |  | violation of school rules |
|  |  | running away |
|  |  | suspensions |
|  |  | stealing |
|  |  | fighting |
|  |  | referral to law enforcement |
|  |  | other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**School problems:** (describe)

**Other stressors/losses:** (describe)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Before** | **After** | **PTSD Symptoms** | **Before** | **After** | **Anxiety Symptoms** |
|  |  | Recurrent thoughts of the incident |  |  | Excessive anxiety and worry (difficult to control) |
|  |  | Recurrent dreams of the incident |  |  | Restlessness or feeling keyed-up, or on edge |
|  |  | Fear of recurrence |  |  | Being easily fatigued |
|  |  | Psychological distress at reminder of incident |  |  | Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank |
|  |  | Physical response to reminder of event |  |  | Irritability |
|  |  | Exaggerated startle response |  |  | Muscle tension |
|  |  | Avoidance of the trauma including (write in): |  |  | Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless, unsatisfying sleep) |
|  |  | Thoughts, feelings of the trauma |  |  |  |
|  |  | Activities |  |  |  |
|  |  | Inability to remember event |  |  |  |
|  |  | Feelings of detachment |  |  |  |
|  |  | Inability to experience emotions |  |  |  |
|  |  | Sense of foreshortened future |  |  |  |

**Screening for suicidal and violent behaviors:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Screening Item** | **Notes/Comments** |
| Hopelessness |  |
| Present thoughts of suicide |  |
| Suicide plan |  |
| Intent to act on plan |  |
| Acts anticipating death |  |
| Available method (e.g., weapons, medication) |  |
| Has youth told anyone? |  |
| Has thoughts of revenge  If so, against whom? |  |
| Has homicidal ideation  If so, against whom? |  |
| Previous suicidal behavior  If so, what? |  |

**Has the individual been in treatment before: yes/no**

**Is the individual in treatment now: yes/no**

**If yes, indicate treatment provider name and contact information:**

**Additional information:**

# Attachment 16: CONFIDENTIAL ROSTER FOR INDIVIDUAL SCREENINGS

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S) OF SCREENERS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

| **STUDENT NAME** | **AGE/**  **GRADE** | **REASON REFERRED** | **SCREENED BY:** | **RECOMMENDATION** | **PARENT CONTACT (Date/Response)** | **FOLLOW-UP DATE**  **(Add comments)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**\*Note: Another document may be used to track longer-term follow-up with students.**

# Attachment 17: Sample Letter with Recommendations from Screening

School Letterhead

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian **(insert name)**,

During recent postvention services following the tragic death of one of our students, **(insert name)**, your daughter/son met with a member of our district’s crisis team **(insert name and agency, if not a school employee)**, for support and a brief screen. This team member contacted/attempted to contact you on **(insert date)**. As a follow up to this conversation, this letter outlines the recommendations along with several resource options:

\_\_\_\_ Receive an evaluation from a licensed mental health provider. If you need help in locating a provider after checking with your insurance carrier, you may call Mental Health America at **\*\*\*-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\*** or visit their [website](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/find-affiliate) to find local providers. For a list of private evaluators, please refer to your insurance carrier. If you are in need of insurance, your child may receive a free evaluation by contacting our county children’s team at **\*\*\*-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\***.

\_\_\_\_ Refer your child to the Student Assistance Program (SAP). Consent forms are enclosed. Upon signing, please return to the school SAP coordinator **(insert name and number)**.

\_\_\_\_ Follow up with your family physician.

\_\_\_\_ A copy of the safety plan developed with your child/teen and previously shared with you is attached.

\_\_\_\_ Remove any unnecessary medications and weapons from the home. At a minimum, store ammunition separately and supervise the dispensing of any medication **(ideally, this is a universal precaution that would be checked off for all families receiving this letter)**.

\_\_\_\_ Support group for **(insert topic)** (e.g., Caring Place, Good Grief Center, Visiting Nurse Association, or in-school options.) **(Attach brochures or insert numbers)**

\_\_\_\_ No further evaluation is recommended at this time. Continue to monitor your child’s reactions and consult with the school counselor/school psychologist as needed.

During this difficult time, do not hesitate to visit the district website for additional resources and/or contact your child’s school counselor/school psychologist at **\*\*\*-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\***. A member of the crisis team will follow up with you in the weeks to come. Should you require an emergency consultation regarding your child’s reactions before then, you can contact our county’s 24/7 crisis line at **\*\*\*-\*\*\*-\*\*\*\***, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988/988lifeline.org, or text PA to Crisis Text Line at 741-741.

Sincerely,

**Name of crisis team member contacting the family/school representative**

# Attachment 18: Sample Safety Plan

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SAFETY PLAN**

Start at the beginning of this plan. Go through each step until you are safe. Remember: Suicidal thoughts can be very strong. It may seem like they will last forever, but they come and go. You can get through this difficult time, and know that you are not alone. It is important to reach out for help and support as you need it. Since it can be hard to focus and think clearly when you feel suicidal, please copy this and put in places where you can easily access it.

|  |
| --- |
| **Personal Stressors/Warning Signs**   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Do the following activities to calm/comfort myself:** (this is primarily for distraction; ensure these locations and strategies are accessible and safe)  What can I do for myself? Where can I go?   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Remind myself of my reasons for living:** |
| **Call/text/contact a friend or family member:** (this is primarily for distraction, not to ask for help)   1. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Call/text/contact a trusted adult:** (these individuals should be made aware of what to do if the student shares that he/she is feeling unsafe)   1. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Call/contact a care provider (e.g., therapist, school mental health professional):** (goal is to have mental health supports inside and outside of school)   1. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Call, text, or visit my local or national crisis resources:** (make sure these numbers are also in the student’s phone)   1. Local County Crisis Name/Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988/988lifeline.org 3. Crisis Text Line: Text PA to 741-741 4. TrevorLifeline (for LGBTQ youth): 1-866-488-7386 5. Local emergency room at nearest hospital: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   \*Call 911 if transportation to the hospital is needed. |

Safety Plan Template adapted from Samra & Bilsker (2007)

Retrieved from http://www.comh.ca/publications/resources/pub\_cwst/cwst.pdf

**Student has copy of safety plan: yes/no**

\_\_\_\_\_ hard copy \_\_\_\_\_ photo/in phone \_\_\_\_\_ in app on mobile device

**Safety plan was shared with parent(s): yes/no Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Discussed with parents keeping the environment safe (e.g., removing or monitoring firearms and medication): yes/no**

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Key Considerations for the Development and Implementation of the Safety Plan:**

* The safety plan should be developed collaboratively with the student and shared with the parents/guardians to support the student’s use of the plan when needed. The family also has an important role in helping to keep the student safe by making sure the environment is safe when the student is in crisis (e.g., removing firearms/ammunition from the home, locking up medications, etc.). Be sure to note any concerns.
* The mental health professional that develops the safety plan with the student should have training and background on how to do so.
* Key contacts included in the student’s safety plan should be made aware that they may be contacted by the student when in crisis, and they should be informed of local and national crisis resources.
* It is important to identify any barriers to the steps outlined in the safety plan, revising the plan as needed. Role play may be utilized to support student’s use of the safety plan, particularly with regard to the internal/external strategies that they identified, as well as in later steps of the plan, such as how they will get to an emergency room if needed.