



Kodiak Island  
Borough School District

North Star School

# Crisis Handbook

August 2006

DRAFT MODEL

# Crisis Planning

The Kodiak Island Borough Crisis Response Plan is designed to provide a framework that can be used to prepare and guide school personnel during and following a crisis while allowing individual buildings to meet their unique crisis response needs. For purposes of this manual, a “crisis” is considered to be:

“A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school/district population and which may involve emotional trauma, serious injury, or death.” (Poudre School District, 1999) Thoughtful planning and preparation prior to a crisis will ensure that managers and school staff have the knowledge and training to implement solutions rather than searching for them.

We cannot generate a complete list of possible crisis events. History reveals over and over again that “Reality” is much more creative in creating crisis than our best efforts to predict possible emergency or crisis situation much less to create strategies to manage it. However, a thoughtful response plan based on proven principles of leadership, human nature, learned experience and problem-solving can minimize damage, nurture healing and facilitate the return to a normal daily routine. Clearly, planned building-wide crisis management may prevent events from escalating into chaos. The goals of effective crisis management in KIBSD are to:

- Increase the security of students and staff,
- Communicate with parents about the safety of their children,
- Provide guidelines to help staff prepare and respond to a crisis,
- Minimize damage and loss,
- Identify responsibilities and roles within the district as well as with supportive or collaborating agencies,
- Diminish chaos and confusion,
- Coordinate effective media relations,
- Return the school to a normal functioning level as quickly as possible, and
- Provide the necessary counseling to assist students and staff in dealing with the trauma.

The building **Crisis Response Team** is designed to help create or refine their building crisis plan for their school, to facilitate crisis training and to actively manage crisis situations when they occur. Each school, unit or facility staff is responsible for preparing a **Building Crisis Response Plan** that provides specific details on appropriate actions and responses for various crisis situations. Every staff member must be trained on the procedures covered in the Building Crisis Response Plan and have access to a copy of the Plan in the event of an emergency.

North Star Elementary School  
**“Command & Control” and Communications**  
 Flowchart

**Person Reporting Emergency**

\_\_\_\_\_, **Principal**  
 \_\_\_\_\_, **Back-Up**

**Call 911**

Police  
 Troopers  
 Fire  
 Ambulance

**Initiate Building Phone Tree**

**District Administrative Support**

1111, 1111, 1111, 1111

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Assistant Superintendent  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Director Of Curriculum  
 \_\_\_\_\_,

**North Star Crisis Response Team**

\_\_\_\_\_, School Psych.  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Teacher  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Nurse  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Parent Rep.

**Principal Back-Up**

\_\_\_\_\_ - 1111  
 \_\_\_\_\_ - 1111

**Maintenance Support**

Director of Maintenance – 1111  
 Operations Supervisor - 1111

**Duties for Back-Up Administrators**

Report to emergency site and assist Principal

**Duties for District Administrator**

Report to emergency site and assist Principal including media responsibilities

**Duties for Maintenance Administrator**

Report to emergency site, bring building plans, and assist Principal

In the Principal’s absence, \_\_\_\_\_ will be the acting principal. The first arriving administrator will relieve \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is designated as North Star’s official back-up principal



North Star School  
Crisis Plan Table of Contents

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## North Star Crisis Response Team and Duties

**Leader / Administrator:** Principal \_\_\_\_\_ - Coordinates/Directs CRT Members

**1st Alternate** (if leader is unavailable): \_\_\_\_\_

**2nd Alternate** (if both are unavailable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Counselor:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Provides counseling services as needed.

**Mental Health Rep:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Provides counseling support as requested by counselor.

**Nurse:** \_\_\_\_\_ - Provides medical response and support for grief counseling.

**Staff Representatives:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (certificated) - Staff liaison

\_\_\_\_\_ (classified) - Contact person for in-district communications and initial phone tree contact.

**Central Office Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_ - CRT advisor

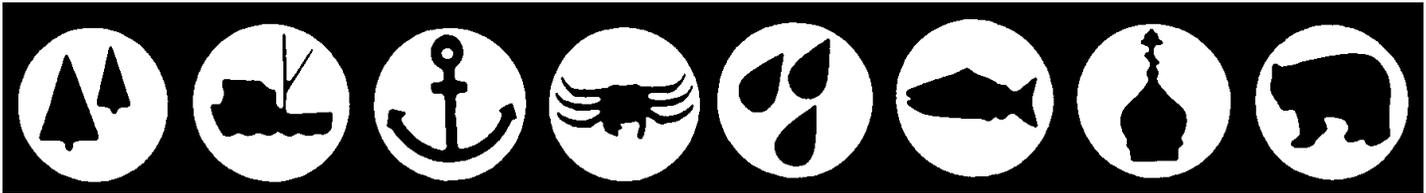
**Law Enforcement:** Responding Trooper - Relay of information to local law enforcement

**Parent Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_ to provide input from parent perspective as part of pre- and post-evaluation of crisis response.

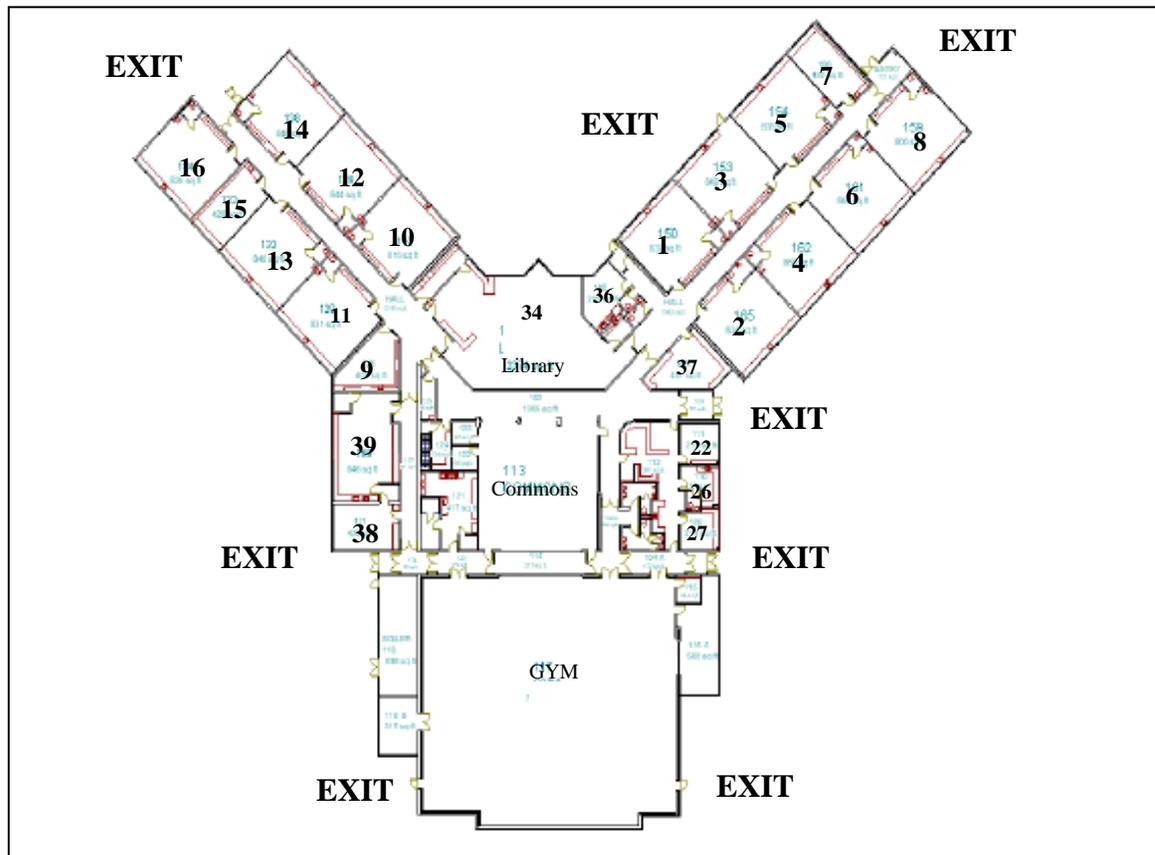
Crisis Materials located in principal's office:

- A detailed school map with evacuation routes
- Keys to all doors in the school facility
- A staff roster with phone tree
- Student roster including phone numbers for parents
- A master schedule
- 10 legal pads, 10 ball point pens, 10 magic markers, and binder labeled Crisis Plan





## North Star Elementary School Map



For room telephone numbers, add the prefix “20” to the room number. For example, the telephone number to room 17 is 2017.



## Staff Roster and Experience

	Staff Name	Work Phone	Home Phone	Cell Phone	Language	CPR	Basic First Aid	EMT	Radio
1.									
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# North Star School

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## Immediate Response Packet

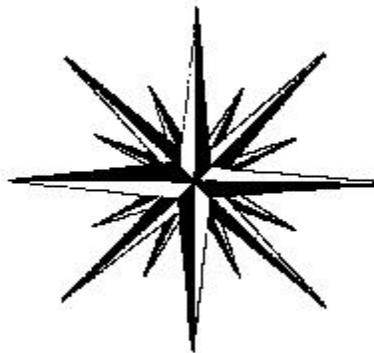
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*Respect*

*Cooperation*



*Compassion*

*Responsibility*

*Stay On Course*



## Crisis Checklist

- Verify the crisis.**
- Identify any victims.**
- Identify building security needs.**
- Notify:**
  - Central Office
  - Law Enforcement
  - Other Schools
  - Mental Health
  - Coast Guard
  - KANA
- Schedule an emergency staff meeting (if needed).**
  - Initial Crisis Team Planning Meeting:
    - Gather additional crisis info
    - Identify plan for at-risk students
    - Identify plan for at-risk staff
    - Identify need for substitutes
    - Write announcement of crisis
    - Write memo to staff
    - Obtain deceased student's schedule (if applicable) and inform CRT counselor
    - Identify and set up Safe Rooms
    - Assemble list of local resources necessary for this specific crisis
    - Identify media contact person
    - Review media policy
    - Write a parent letter
    - Schedule next CRT meeting.
- Plan and lead a staff meeting.**
- Determine a plan for follow-up needs.**
- Make initial plans for a memorial service (if applicable).**
- Plan for debriefings for staff, victims, and CRT.**
- Plan for evaluation of crisis response.**



## North Star Elementary School Team Worksheet

**Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Members Present: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Crisis response Team Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Additional Information on Crisis:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Students who may be "At Risk" and Plan:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Staff who may be "At Risk" & Plan: (If a student has died, a CRT member will attend each of that student's current classes to assist the teacher.)

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

5. Sub Needs:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Staff Meeting:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Information to Staff:

- Announcement of the crisis.
- List of debriefing room locations and Crisis Team Members.
- Grief Packet/Suicide Packet (if applicable).

- Other.

8. Announcement of Crisis:

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9. Debriefing Rooms:(location, staffed by):

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10. Other Resources:

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11. Memorial Service:

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12. Other:

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13. Next Crisis Response Team Meeting:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_



## Staff Meeting Agenda

### Agenda Items:

- ❑ Review FACTS about the incident - Do not contribute in any way to rumors or unsubstantiated information.
- ❑ Identify any staff members who are intimately involved in the crisis
- ❑ Review School Crisis Procedures.
- ❑ Review media policy so staff understands proper lines of communication.
- ❑ Distribute copies of statement to be read in class.
- ❑ Identify all CRT members and their locations.
- ❑ Keep students in class and in a regular routine.
- ❑ Review behaviors to expect from students following a crisis.
- ❑ Review ways to talk to students about their reactions to the crisis.
- ❑ Designate a CRT member to attend deceased student's classes.
- ❑ If the crisis was a suicide:

Discourage all dramatization of the death and don't say anything that might indicate that suicide is a normal way to deal with serious problems. Instead, focus upon the choices the student could have made rather than the suicide.

# North Star School

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## Crisis Letter Samples

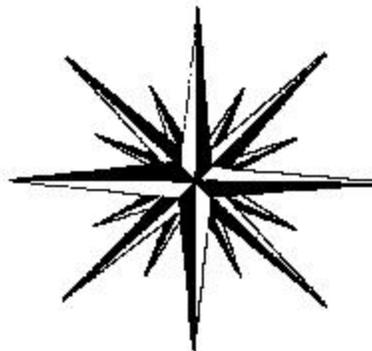
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Kodiak Island Borough School District  
722 Mill Bay Road  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

North Star School  
Sample Staff Letter

To: North Star Staff  
From: \_\_\_\_\_, Principal  
Subject: The Death of John Smith  
Date: October 1, 2006

John Smith, a student at North Star Elementary School, took his life in his home last night at around 9:00 pm. He was found by his father and was rushed by the paramedics to the hospital. Unfortunately the doctors and nurses were not able to revive him. He never regained consciousness and he died half-hour after arriving at the hospital. His death has been ruled a suicide. We do not know why John chose to kill himself. Unfortunately, he did not realize what other options were available to help him with his problems. His solution was permanent and irreversible.

(For your information only)

We are asking you to read the above statement to students in grades \_\_\_\_ and to discuss John's death with your students at the beginning of school. Some students will already be aware of his death and others will be learning about it from you. Please give the facts to your students and then allow them to ask questions and to discuss their feelings. You may see a variety of normal reactions including crying or angry outbursts.

When we get information about John's funeral, we will send out another memo. Students may be excused from classes to attend the funeral if they have written permission from a parent. A box has been placed in the office for any notes written to John's family.

Please help us identify students who may need further help in dealing with this tragic event. The Crisis Response team will be in the building throughout the day and the rest of the week. If you feel a student needs immediate help, please send him/her to the counseling office, accompanied by another student.

Today will be a very difficult day for you. You will be most helpful to your students if you take the time to discuss your own reactions and feelings about John's death with a co-worker. A Crisis Response Team member will be available throughout the day in the Staff Room.

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Kodiak Island Borough School District  
722 Mill Bay Road  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

North Star School  
Sample Parent Letter

October 1, 2006

Dear Parents,

It is with much sadness that we at North Star Elementary School report the death of Ms Jane Doe, a teacher here at North Star. We don't yet have all the information about her death, but we do know that she and her husband took an out of town guest out on their boat to do some sight seeing. The weather turned bad, they started taking on water and they called for help, but their boat went down before the Coast Guard arrived. All three of them died.

Ms Doe was a wonderful teacher and she was well loved by all who knew her. This tragic news is a shock and quite difficult for all of us to accept. We have asked for the assistance of the Crisis Response Team to help our school community deal with this loss and we will do everything we can to help your child and our staff through this difficult experience.

The funeral for Ms. Doe and her husband will be on Monday, January 8th at 2 pm at St. Mary's Church. Your child may be excused from school to attend the funeral with your written permission and we encourage you to make arrangements to accompany him/her if he/she chooses to attend. No transportation will be provided.

The staff and students have decided to receive donations in Ms. Doe's memory to purchase some new playground equipment. Please contact the school office (486-9000) for more information.

Attached you will find a handout called "Responding to Grieving Children." If, after you have read it, you still have concerns about your child's reactions to this loss, please call the school counselor (486-9000) for more assistance.

Sincerely,

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North Star Elementary School  
Principal

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# North Star School

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## Staff Information Packet

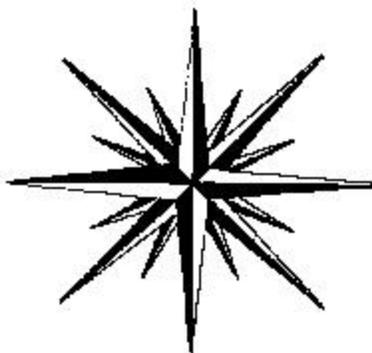
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## Managing the Classroom Immediately After the Crisis

Teachers are not expected to be counselors. However, consider the following guidelines to be used in the context of your comfort level and abilities. Remember that support staff are available as resources.

### **Normal class schedules will be adhered to with the following suggestions:**

1. Students are to remain in their classroom during the regular class period.
2. If you have a student who is upset, please call the office before sending them down to the office, counselor or nurse.
3. Please do not send unaccompanied students to the office.
4. Let students talk about the situation and do a lot of listening. Do not judge the situation and don't try to look for easy answers. Please remember the age of students when discussing a crisis.
5. Share only substantiated facts. Check all other information out with the office to minimize rumors.
6. Don't be afraid to talk about how the crisis has affected you. If, however, you feel you are not able to continue teaching, ask for help.
7. It is vital that the schedule remain as regular as possible. The lesson plans may be adjusted but the routine structure and consistency need to remain in order for the students to feel safe.



## Ways You Can Help Grieving Students

Students need 3 things following a tragedy:

### **1. They need to talk about what happened.**

Talk to students about the tragedy. Talk about the things that don't make sense and things that were frightening. Give them age appropriate information about the crisis and let them share their own theories about what has happened. You will have students who are reluctant to talk but they will still benefit from listening to others.

### **2. They need to express their feelings related to the tragedy**

In order to heal from a significant death or loss, children and adults must express their feelings related to the tragedy. Older children and adults tend to use words to do this, but younger children tend to use art and play to express their grief. Encourage young children to play games, draw, paint or write about what has happened. Don't be concerned if your young students play repeated games about death or fearful events. Play is the language children use to work through their anxiety and grief.

Older children can be encouraged to write stories, poetry or journals about their feelings, not just about information or facts related to the tragedy. For example, it is very normal to have increased or new fears following a tragedy. You could give a writing assignment related to fear and encourage students to write about the crisis.

After a tragedy, it is common for children to have extra energy that may be expressed as anger or aggression. Encourage your students to participate in activities that allow energy release. Talk about how to express anger without getting into trouble.

### **3. They need to feel safe.**

You can't give the feeling of safety to students but there are several things you can do to help. It is important to maintain a familiar routine for the students. Try not to make changes in the schedule whenever possible. It is also important to require appropriate behavior from the students. Don't change the rules or the consequences to broken rules just because a tragedy has occurred. Teach kids appropriate ways of ventilating their anger.

Often times young children will exhibit regressive behaviors after a death or tragedy. They may start sucking their thumb, wetting their pants, having bowel movements outside of the toilet, or wanting to be held like a baby. This is the child's way of returning to an age that felt safe. These behaviors will go away as the children regain the feeling of safety in their lives.



## How Children Grieve Following a Tragedy

### **Children 2-6**

Children of this age believe in magical thinking which makes it difficult for them to understand what causes death. They may think they've caused a death or a tragedy by their behavior, actions, thoughts or wishes.

They are also too young to understand that death is permanent. They may say that someone has died and then ask to invite that person to dinner several days later. They may act as if nothing has happened after a death and adults may become worried that a child of this age hasn't cried about his/her significant loss. At some point, the child will start expressing grief with behavior changes such as anger, regression (wetting the bed, sucking the thumb, etc.), irritability or clingy behavior.

If the child was part of the tragedy that happened, he/she will feel a great deal of fear and insecurity. This often gets expressed through regression (an effort to return to an age that was safer), reluctance to go to bed, nightmares and clinging to parents.

Rather than talking about their grief, children of this age express grief through art and play. They may act out the tragedy again and again or they may draw scary pictures about the event or something else that frightens them. This kind of play is helpful to them and should be encouraged.

### **Children 7-11**

School-age children have the ability to understand the permanence of loss and death. They may become preoccupied with the details of the traumatic event and want to talk about it continuously. This preoccupation can interfere with the child's concentration and school grades may decline. If someone has died in the tragedy, school-age children may worry that they, too, may die. They may become afraid of going to sleep or they may worry that every ache or pain they feel may lead to death.

Children of this age may display a wide range of emotions when they're grieving a loss. They may withdraw from their friends and normal activities or they may act out in an effort to express their anger or lack of control over the situation. They often have feelings of guilt about something they think they should have done differently.

Although children of this age are more capable of using language to express their grief, they often tend to use stories, art, music, play and aggressive behaviors to describe how they are feeling.



## Identifying At-Risk or Depressed Students

Try not to judge whether or not a student is seriously affected by the tragedy. Assume that we are all affected and that we show it in different ways. However, keep an eye on the kids most likely to have problems coping with the crisis.

### **Students who may be at-risk are those who:**

1. Experience emotional difficulties.
2. Had a close relationship with the deceased (real or imagined.)
3. Are preoccupied with death or suicide.
4. Have experienced a recent death of a loved one.
5. Have a history of drug or alcohol abuse.
6. Have a personal history of suicide attempts.
7. Might see the deceased as a role model.

Be alert for signs of depression with your students. Listen very carefully to casual conversation and report any information, rumors or concerns to the Crisis Response Team immediately. **DON'T TRY TO HANDLE IT ON YOUR OWN!**

### **Warning signs of depression include:**

1. Increased sadness, moodiness or irritability.
2. Changes in sleeping patterns (too much or too little.)
3. Changes in eating patterns (too much or too little.)
4. Withdrawal from favorite activities and relationships.
5. Expression of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
6. Alcohol or drug abuse.
7. Neglect of personal appearance.
8. Changes in school performance.
9. Personality changes - increased lethargy, anger or agitation.

### **Students at-risk for suicide may also:**

1. Have a history of suicide attempts or hurting themselves in some way.
2. Begin giving away valuable possessions.
3. Make verbal comments about death or suicide or "ending it all".



## Myths & Facts about Suicide

**Myth:** It is a myth that talking to someone about their suicidal feelings will cause them to commit suicide.

**Fact:** Asking someone about their suicidal feelings may make the person feel relieved that someone finally recognized their emotional pain.

**Myth:** It is a myth that all suicidal people want to die and there nothing that can be done about it.

**Fact:** Most suicidal people are ambivalent; that is, part of them is saying, "I want to live."

**Myth:** It is a myth that people who talk about committing suicide never actually do it.

**Fact:** When someone talks about committing suicide, he/she may be giving a warning that should not be ignored by those who hear such comments.

**Myth:** It is a myth that there is a "typical" type of person who commits suicide.

**Fact:** The potential for suicide exists in all of us. There is no "typical" suicidal personality.

**Myth:** It is a myth that suicide occurs without warning.

**Fact:** Many people, including adolescents, give warnings of their suicidal intent.

# North Star School

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## Parent Information Packet

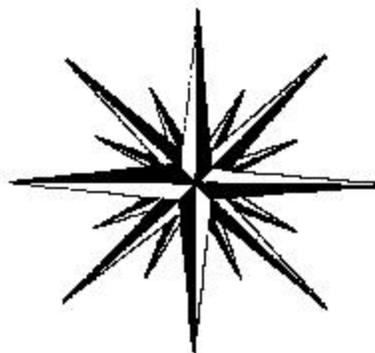
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## How Preteens & Teens Grieve Following a Tragedy

As children get to their preteen and teen years, their responses to death or tragedy become more and more like that of adults, yet they often still have a few child-like reactions. When teenagers survive a death or trauma, they feel somewhat immortal and they may become involved in risk-taking behaviors such as reckless driving or drug and alcohol use.

They may become moody or bossy in an effort to have some control in their lives when things around them seem very out of control.

Girls may increase sexual activity in an effort to receive physical comfort. Boys may seek body contact and tension relief by fighting or becoming aggressive. All preteens and teenagers may have trouble with dropping grades.

Teenagers are striving to become independent from their parents and when something traumatic happens, the world suddenly seems dangerous and unsafe, and they may feel helpless or afraid to leave home. They can be overwhelmed by emotion yet feel they are unable to discuss anything with their relatives. It can be a very confusing time for teenagers.

### **Ways to Help**

Let your kids know that the emotions they are feeling are normal. Preteens and teens may feel frightened by the intensity of their emotions after a tragedy and assuring them they are normal will relieve some anxiety. Books and literature about grief and trauma can help with this.

Be available to them. Spend time with them so they know you have an interest in what has happened to them. Ask questions about how they're feeling but don't be too pushy. Encourage them to find support from their friends and other adults.

Watch for risk-taking behaviors and set limits on inappropriate behavior.

If the tragedy has affected you as well, talk about your feelings with your children. You are your children's role model about how to cope with death and trauma and if you can be honest about your own fears while maintaining a sense of calm, they will learn to do that as well. If you feel you are not coping well with the tragedy, get some help for yourself. The more comfortable you feel with your own grief, the more you will be able to help your children.



## Things You Can Do To Help Your Grieving Child

1. After a tragedy, children need extra attention. Hug them and do activities, such as reading together on the couch, that allow you to be physically close to each other. Bedtime is the time when children often get intrusive thoughts about traumatic events and lying close to them before they go to sleep may help them feel safe enough to talk to you about their feelings.
2. It is important to talk to children about the tragedy. Talk about the things that don't make sense and the things that were frightening for them. Assure them they can talk to you about anything but be prepared for them to talk only in small segments. If they have trouble talking about their feelings, ask them what they think other children were feeling during or after the event.
3. Encourage young children to play games, draw, paint or write about what has happened. Don't be concerned if your child plays repeated games about death. Play is the language children use to work through their anxiety and grief.
4. Be prepared to accept regressive behaviors. Your child may start wetting the bed, sucking the thumb, or any number of other things. This is the child's way of going back to an age that felt safe. Regressive behaviors will go away as the child regains a sense of safety, not with scolding.
5. After a tragedy, it is common for children to have extra energy that may be expressed as anger or aggression. Encourage your child to participate in activities that allow energy release. Talk about how to express anger without getting into trouble.
6. Children want as much factual information as possible and should be allowed to discuss their own theories about what happened in order for them to begin to heal from the trauma. Listen to their theories without criticism.
7. Work with the school about academic problems.
8. Talk in hopeful terms about future events to help your child rebuild trust and faith in his/her own future and the world.
9. If the tragedy has affected you as well, talk about your feelings with your children. You are your children's role model about how to cope with death and trauma and if you can be honest about your own fears while maintaining a sense of calm, they will learn to do that as well. If you feel you are not coping well with the tragedy, get some help for yourself. The more comfortable you feel with your own grief, the more you will be able to help your children.



## How Do I Know If My Child Needs Help?

### **Normal grief reactions include:**

- Emotional: Anger, anxiety, insecurity, fears (new or increased,) lack of feelings, sadness, depression, rage, loneliness, & mood swings.
- Physical: Stomach aches, headaches, fatigue, appetite changes, sleep problems.
- Psychological: Difficulty concentrating, low self-esteem, forgetfulness, confusion, feelings of guilt, denial.
- Behavioral: Trouble in school, regression, clingy behavior, aggression, irritability, acting "too good."
- Social: Increased conflict with others, withdrawal.
- Spiritual: Questions about faith, the meaning of the tragedy, or the afterlife.

Most children experience normal grief reactions after a death or tragedy. If, however, children have had other losses or difficulties in their lives, they may require counseling in order to cope with the tragedy. If your child continues to have excessive aggression, feelings of guilt, denial, fears or warning signs of depression, talk with your school counselor or another counselor about a plan of action.

### **Warning signs of depression include:**

1. Increased sadness, moodiness or irritability.
2. Changes in sleeping patterns (too much or too little.)
3. Changes in eating patterns (too much or too little.)
4. Withdrawal from favorite activities and relationships.
5. Expression of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
6. Alcohol or drug abuse.
7. Neglect of personal appearance.
8. Changes in school performance.
9. Personality changes - increased lethargy, anger or agitation.

If your child begins giving away valuable possessions, making verbal comments about death or suicide, or has a history of suicide or hurting themselves in some way, get him/her help immediately after a tragedy.

# North Star School

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## Information For Teens

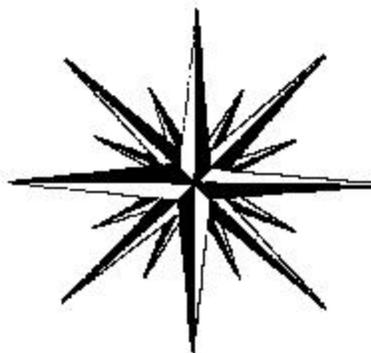
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## Is a Friend Considering Suicide?

### **You should be concerned if a friend:**

1. Suddenly changes eating and sleeping routines.
2. Starts neglecting his or her personal appearance.
3. Seems like a different person.
4. Withdraws from family, friends and routine activities.
5. Just can't seem to concentrate, or gets lower grades than usual.
6. Is bored with hobbies or favorite interests.
7. Is only able to remember negative things that happen each day.
8. Often complains about minor upsets like fatigue, headaches and stomach aches.
9. Talks about dying.
10. Is violent, impulsive or rebellious.
11. Abuses drugs or alcohol.
12. Gives away favorite possessions.

### **What you can do to help:**

1. Recognize that, as a friend, you have a higher obligation to save a life than to keep a secret, even if you promised.
2. Listen to your friend's problems.
3. Discuss the subject of suicide openly.
4. If a friend asks you to keep a secret, understand and respect your friend's need, but meanwhile explore alternatives. ("I know you don't want your mom to know, but how about. . .")
5. Get weapons or medications out of your friend's reach if you can.
6. Get help from an adult or health professional.
7. Above all, remember: **IF YOU KEEP A SECRET, YOU MAY LOSE A FRIEND.**



## Am I Normal?

The feelings that kids experience after a death or a tragedy can be very frightening or confusing. You may feel sad, scared, angry, guilty and relieved all at once. The following is a list of **NORMAL** reactions to a tragedy.

**Emotional:** Anger, anxiety, insecurity, fears (new or increased), -lack of feelings, sadness, depression, rage, loneliness, & mood swings.

**Physical:** Stomach aches, headaches, fatigue, appetite changes, sleep problems.

**Psychological:** Difficulty concentrating, low self-esteem, forgetfulness, confusion, feelings of guilt, denial.

**Behavioral:** Trouble in school, regression, clingy behavior, aggression, irritability, acting "too good."

**Social:** Increased conflict with others, withdrawal.

**Spiritual:** Questions about faith, the meaning of the tragedy, or the afterlife.

If you have had previous losses in your life or other difficulties, your reactions to the tragedy might be more severe than others. Find an adult to talk with about what has happened to you. It may be a family friend, a teacher, a counselor or a school nurse.

Preteens and teenagers often go through a period of depression after a death or a tragedy has happened. Although many of the following warning signs of depression are normal grief reactions, they may also indicate the need for help if they persist or seem too intense to tolerate.

1. Increased sadness, moodiness or irritability.
2. Changes in sleeping patterns (too much or too little.)
3. Changes in eating patterns (too much or too little.)
4. Withdrawal from favorite activities and relationships.
5. Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
6. Alcohol or drug abuse.
7. Neglect of personal appearance.
8. Changes in school performance.
9. Personality changes - increased lethargy, anger or agitation.

If you have thoughts about hurting or killing yourself, get help from an adult immediately.