

**Missouri Comprehensive Guidance  
and Counseling Program:  
Responsive Services**

**School-Wide Crisis Management Plan  
Guide**

**A Professional School Counselor's Guide to  
School-Wide Crisis Management**

Developed by Missouri Professional School Counselors and Counselor Educators  
with support from the  
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# A Professional School Counselor's Guide to School-Wide Crisis Management

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## FOREWORD

School personnel realized the need to plan for crisis. The Southwest Missouri School Counselor Association and Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA) created the *MSCA Crisis Plan* to provide direction for Professional School Counselors (PSCs) as they led crisis response teams in the 1980's and 1990's. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, targeted school violence has become a necessary focus of school crisis management plans. Now school personnel must prepare for the possibility of not only the death of a student and locally occurring natural disasters but also incidents such as student-perpetrated school violence, the threat of a violent intruder, and public health issues. In addition, the 9-11-2001 terrorist attacks on the United States have broadened the scope of crisis management plans. Threats to our national, state, and community security present the need for preparedness on a much broader scale and require the cooperation and collaboration of all public and governmental agencies.

Preparedness has taken on new meaning; planning for crisis management has become much more complex. Schools must plan differently than they have in the past. It is vital to include PSCs, with their expert knowledge about human development, problem solving, and crisis intervention, in this process.

To respond to the emerging needs, federal and state agencies have collaborated providing services such as the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The new Missouri Safe Schools Initiative will ensure that school emergency plans are in compliance with NIMS. Two of the most promising school safety efforts are under the auspices of the Missouri Office of Homeland Security. Awareness of these initiatives will add to the PSC's knowledge base and enhance contributions to district crisis management efforts.

**The Missouri Safe Schools Initiative** The Missouri Office of Homeland Security and the Governor's Homeland Security Advisory Council formed the Homeland Security Safe Schools Working Group which is comprised of representatives from state- and education-related professional organizations such as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), law enforcement and crisis, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), and the Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA). The Safe Schools Working Group was created to "[ensure] Missouri has a seamless, consistent approach to school safety...." (Missouri Department of Public Safety, 2006)

**The Emergency Response Information Portal (ERIP)** Free to all schools, ERIP is an electronic planning tool designed to facilitate a seamless approach to school safety. Through an initiative of DHSS and the Missouri School Board Association (MSBA), a modified version of the tool is already in use to address school safety issues. Via ERIP, all schools in the state are able to upload school information in a standardized format. School personnel, fire, police, public health departments, and other responders to an incident at a school can then access the school's ERIP. With appropriate clearance, responders will have access to school crisis plans and floor plans through a secure internet connection, local hard drives, and portable devices.

PSCs must adopt a broad view of crises that includes awareness of school health hazards, bio-hazards, and terrorism threats. In addition, they must learn and use the language of NIMS and ERIP. They must also be vigilant about the legal implications surrounding crisis management. **Nevertheless, the primary role of the PSC remains the same—protecting the physical and psychological safety of students and staff in an emergency.** This guide will put the PSC's role in the cycle of crisis management planning into perspective.

To gain the greatest benefit from this Guide, the Professional School Counselor should do the following before creating his/her School-Wide Crisis Management Plan:

- **Conceptualize** the differences among incidents that are the result of “targeted student violence” (e.g. school shootings), individual traumatic events/tragedies (e.g. fatal automobile accidents) and disasters both natural and man-made (e.g. tornados or chemical leaks). [A Professional School Counselor Thinking Guide \(Appendix A\)](#) is included to help you focus on what your school and community need and want to know.
- **Beware** of information overload. There is an abundance of available free resources. It is easy to get sidetracked by all of the information. It will be necessary to filter information through the context of your school and community needs.

- **Familiarize yourself with the following resources:**

Missouri School Counselor Crisis Manual

[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)

[Practical Information of Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities:](#)

<http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>

[Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates](#) .

[http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi\\_guide.pdf](http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_guide.pdf)

[Threat Assessment at School: A Primer for Educators](#)

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/threatassess.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/threatassess.pdf)

[Threat Assessment: An Essential Component of a Comprehensive Safe School Program](#)

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/nassp\\_threat.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/nassp_threat.pdf)

[Preventing School Violence: A Plan for Safe and Engaging Schools](#)

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/Student%20Counseling%20Violence%20Prevention.pdf>

[US Department of Education: Emergency Planning.](#)

<http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/index.html>

## SCHOOL-WIDE CRISIS MANAGEMENT USING THIS GUIDE

### Overview

While a school district's crisis system emphasizes the safety of school facilities and overall security measures, the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP) and PSCs offer systematic and sequential opportunities to improve the climate and culture of the school. The information contained within the pages of this guide emphasizes the PSC's role in crisis management and complements the school district's crisis plan the Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA) Crisis Manual ([http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)) and the MCGCP (<http://www.missouricareereducation.org/project/guidemanual>). The guide is designed to provide information and support for the PSC's unique role. It will also help the PSC be proactive and involved in providing support for students and staff.

This guide includes a written document and a PowerPoint slide presentation. It is intended to supplement, not replace, the district's crisis planning document and The Missouri School Counselor Association (MSCA) Crisis Manual. **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) materials are provided as resources that can be modified to meet local needs.**

### The Relationship of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP), Responsive Services, and Crisis-Management:

- ▶ **The Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP):** The MCGCP program components are: Guidance Curriculum, Individual Planning, Responsive Services, and System Support. The MCGCP framework guides all program activities and follows the premise that competency in the content areas (Personal/Social Development, Academic Development, and Career Development) strengthens student achievement and, ultimately, life success. The Guidance Curriculum component provides the opportunity for all students to gain knowledge and skill in these areas. For those students who have difficulty attaining knowledge and skills via Guidance curriculum or who are experiencing life situations that are interfering with their achievement, implementing intervention strategies within the MCGCP Responsive Services component is the next step.
  - **The Responsive Services Component:** This component of MCGCP provides direction for responding to individual needs within the school community. Those needs include student situations as well as school, community, state, and/or national crisis/ situations. A targeted, individualized response may be implemented or a well-planned team response may be required. PSCs may work with students individually (e.g. death of a pet) or in small groups (e.g. divorce of parents). In a situation affecting all or most of the students, PSCs work with students in large groups or as a part of the district's crisis-plan (e.g. a tornado, a school shooting or the kidnapping of a student). In other situations, it may also be necessary for an individual student to be referred to outside counseling
    - **Crisis Management:** PSCs (and others in the field of education) became deeply involved in "Crisis Planning" during the late 1970's and 1980's. The primary focus of crisis plans (including the *MSCA Crisis Plan* ([http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf))) was on incidents that occurred off-campus and/or outside of school hours (e.g., student suicide, accidents, and/or death of students, close family members or school staff). The plan gave school personnel assistance in responding to crisis. In the 1990's, targeted school violence became more prevalent. The Missouri Legislature responded with legislation that required all schools to have a "Discipline Plan" to address consequences for perpetrators of school violence with subsequent amendments to address reporting acts of violence and bullying within the schools. After 9-11-2001, crisis management planning became a national priority.

## Overview of Important Concepts related to Crisis Management

A common vocabulary is the foundation for effective communication during all phases of the Crisis/ Management Cycle (USDOE, 2003). Throughout this guide, “Crisis Management” refers to the process that involves mitigation/prevention, preparation/readiness, response, and recovery. The term indicates a relationship to both the [Missouri School Counselor Association Crisis Plan \(http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf\)](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf) and federal and state crisis mandates and resources. When appropriate, this guide uses specific terms related to crisis management defined by the National Incident Management System (<https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>) and used by Federal/State Crisis Agencies (FEMA/SEMA). Familiarity with the NIMS vocabulary will help PSCs use the crisis language common to public safety entities. It is important to understand that other terms may be used by certain agencies.

The PSC must understand the cycle of crisis-management. The following is adapted from *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities* (USDOE, 2007).

- ▶ Mitigation/Prevention: Identifying and reducing or eliminating risk to life and property.
- ▶ Preparation/Readiness: Planning for the worst-case scenario, training the plan, and exercising the plan.
- ▶ Response: Taking action during a crisis/.
- ▶ Recovery: Restoring the learning and teaching environment after an incident.
- ▶ Simulation/Drill: Practicing the plan – actual simulations or table-top scenarios (crisis situations presented on paper; teams respond orally and in writing)
- ▶ Cycle: Returning to mitigation/prevention. Recovery may seem like an end, but it is also the beginning. The cycle continues with the loop back to the first step. Each drill and/or actual incident should be evaluated. Ways to update and strengthen the crisis/ management plan should be identified.

The following are examples of the types of events to consider during each phase of the cycle.

- ▶ Examples of Local School or Community Crisis:
  - Off-Campus (Bus Crashes; Student, Faculty, or Staff Death; Homicide/Suicide; Accidents)
  - On-Campus (Targeted Student Violence, Bomb Threats, School Intruders, Acts of Violence/Crime, Medical Emergencies/Public Health Issues, Hazardous Materials)
- ▶ Examples of State/National/Global Crisis:
  - Natural Disasters
  - Terrorism
  - Military Deployment
  - Acts of Violence
  - Death of a Public Figure

Each of these crises may require a response by school personnel. It is important to develop clear plans of action that provide standardized and consistent procedures for crisis/ response. Standardization of responses requires action during the mitigation/prevention and preparation/readiness phases so that the response and recovery phases go as smoothly as possible. [The Crisis Management Contact Plan \(Appendix B\)](#) will help in the development of a local standardized response. The worksheet will require current contact information.

The following are terms that are generally standardized across emergencies within a community:

- ▶ **Incident Commander (NIMS):** The most capable adult leader at the scene of the incident. Ideally, the incident commander has been identified during the emergency planning phase prior to the incident, but in extreme situations it may be the most capable adult at the scene.
- ▶ **Faculty Liaison:** Individual designated to communicate with faculty, (e.g., initiating the phone tree to inform faculty of a crisis/ and maintaining on-going communication with faculty)
- ▶ **Responders' Roles:** Responsibilities/tasks of each responder, (e.g., professional school counselors, teachers, custodians, emergency personnel)
- ▶ **Public Information Officer:** One person/office designated to communicate with the media
- ▶ **Internal and External Communication Procedures:** Communication with parents, students and staff as well as emergency responders, especially during and after an incident
- ▶ **Command Post (NIMS):** Incident commanders are in charge of command posts.

### **Mandates for School Crisis Plans**

Districts are required to establish crisis plans as the result of increasing violence in the schools, the threat of terrorist attacks on our nation, and state and federal legislation.

- ▶ **Local School Board Policy**

The process of readiness includes assurances that local policy complies with federal legislation, Missouri Statutes, and State Board of Education Rules. Missouri is a "local control" state; therefore, the state identifies areas that must be included in policy but does not prescribe the local implementation of mandates. The [Missouri School Board Association \(MSBA\)](http://www.msbanet.org/) [http://www.msbanet.org/] provides guidelines for local boards of education.

- ▶ **Federal Legislation**

The primary focus of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is student achievement. A critical aspect of achievement is a safe learning environment, which accentuates the need for a crisis management plan.

- ▶ **Missouri Safe Schools Act**

The Missouri Safe Schools Act required all districts to implement a discipline policy. Subsequent legislative mandates include reporting of violent acts, anti-bullying policies, and disciplinary consequences for perpetrators of violent acts.

- ▶ **Local/Community Policies**

All community entities (e.g., fire protection, law enforcement, public health departments) have crisis management plans. These entities are supported by the State Crisis Agency (SEMA) with direction from the Federal Crisis Agency (FEMA). The following websites provide access to information and materials prepared by these agencies in order to assist local communities:

- <http://www.ready.gov/>
- <http://www.fema.gov/>
- <http://sema.dps.mo.gov/>
- <http://dps.mo.gov/dir/programs/ohs>
- <http://www.schoolsprepared.org/>

### **The Role of Professional School Counselors (PSCs)**

- ▶ **Stay Informed:** The wealth of information and the importance of collaborative planning and leadership require the PSC to become familiar with the materials and services of local, state and national government entities. The PSC should access and become familiar with the school district's policies and procedures regarding response to discipline and crises.

- ▶ **Get Involved:** The PSC's knowledge about students' emotional development and wellness along with skills related to facilitation of groups and problem solving makes them essential members of the crisis team.
  
- ▶ **Follow Legislative Action:** Each legislative session brings new laws and/or amendments to existing laws. It is necessary to be aware of legislative changes as they may have practical and legal implications for school counselors and the district's crisis management plan. The MCGCP addresses concerns cited in many education-related and community action bills (e.g., the requirement for a violence prevention curriculum and an anti-bullying policy). Membership in the [Missouri School Counselor Association \(MSCA\)](http://www.moschoolcounselor.org/) [http://www.moschoolcounselor.org/] and the [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\)](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/) [http://www.schoolcounselor.org/] provide access to information about legislative changes and their effect on the practice of professional school counseling.

## CRISIS-MANAGEMENT DEVELOPING A LOCAL DISTRICT PLAN

### THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR (PSC)

All Missouri school districts should have a crisis management plan which reflects the National Incident Management System (NIMS) categories and vocabulary. An effective and comprehensive crisis management plan provides guidelines so that everyone will know what to do before, during, and after any crisis. The following sections of this guide provide an overview of each of the phases in the cycle of crisis management and the PSC's role in each phase. The PSC has the knowledge and skills to make a viable contribution in the writing of a local plan; this document provides direction for the role of the PSC during each of the phases.

PSCs have a responsibility to facilitate school safety. Part of this responsibility is to ensure the preparedness of everyone within the school system in the event of an emergency. In all crises, PSCs have a legal and ethical responsibility to report any student, staff member or parent who threatens to do harm to himself/herself and/or others (See

[Ethical Standards for School Counselors - American School Counselor Association](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/EthicalStandards2010.pdf)  
[\[http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/EthicalStandards2010.pdf\]](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/EthicalStandards2010.pdf).

PSCs have a role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of crisis plans. The ultimate goal of the plan is the physical and psychological safety of all involved. Sub-goals are as follows:

- **Mitigation/Prevention** through services and educational programs.
- **Preparation/Readiness** for students, staff, parents, and emergency personnel
- **Response** which includes internal and external communication procedures
- **Recovery** both physical and emotional

These sub-goals are addressed through the four phases of the cycle as described in the following section. A crisis management plan must be operational if these goals are to be achieved. The role of the PSC should be designated within the plan and should focus more on student needs than damage control.

### MITIGATION/PREVENTION

PSCs must help plan for the management of crises. The identification of risks and hazards that must be mitigated (e.g. school violence) leads to prevention strategies (e.g. anti-bullying programs). Mitigation and prevention are often overlooked in written crisis management plans. The goal of mitigation is to decrease the need for response. As some crises cannot be prevented, it is necessary to monitor the climate and culture of the school to ensure a safe environment. Mitigating crises is also important from a legal standpoint. If a school, district, or state does not take all necessary actions in good faith to create safe schools, it could be vulnerable to a suit for negligence (FEMA, 2002).

#### Mitigation/Prevention: Culture and Climate of the School

The word "mitigation" is a standard crisis management term, which means "assessing and addressing the safety and integrity of *facilities...security...and the culture and climate* of schools through policy and curricula..." (USDOE, 2007). School culture and climate are the PSC's area of expertise and should be the primary focus. During the mitigation/prevention phase, areas of concern are identified, and preventive measures are developed. The full implementation of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program is vital to the mitigation/prevention phase. The proactive and preventative nature of the program helps to create a safe culture and climate in the school and minimizes the need for threat assessment. Threat assessment is a term used by the FBI and Homeland Security to assess the threat to the public from various hazards—there is increased use of the term during discussions of mitigation/prevention in relation to the culture and climate of the schools. Assessing the climate and culture of the school is not limited to mitigating

“threat”—it can strengthen the effectiveness of the school for all students, thus, enhancing achievement for all students. The [PSC Thinking Guide \(Appendix A\)](#) can be used to identify vulnerabilities/risk factors in relation to the school climate and culture.

The following resources will be helpful to PSCs in developing local school culture and climate mitigation and prevention efforts:

The Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program Manual (MCGCP)  
<http://missouricareereducation.org/curr/cmd/guidanceplacementG/MCGCP.html>

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) website ([www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org)) “Members Only” area provides links to resources to help PSCs with all aspects of crisis/ planning.

Threat Assessment at School: A Primer for Educators  
[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/threatassess.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/threatassess.pdf)

University of Virginia Curry School of Education Youth Violence Project  
<http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu/home.html>

The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective (O’Toole, 2000)  
<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/school-shooter>

## Mitigation/Prevention: The Role of the Professional School Counselor (PSC)

- ▶ **Participate as an Active Member of the Crisis Management Team:** If the PSC is not already a member of the team, the team chairperson should be advised of the following benefits of having a PSC on the team:
  - The MCGCP can contribute to the safe climate and culture of a school
  - A PSC’s knowledge and expertise includes human development, problem solving, crisis management, and working with community agencies.
  - PSCs work with all students, staff, and parents.
  - The MCGCP is a way to implement prevention and intervention strategies—the [Grade Level Standards](#) [[http://www.missouricareereducation.org/doc/guidegle/GLS\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.missouricareereducation.org/doc/guidegle/GLS_Guidance.pdf)] address anti-bullying, character development, violence prevention, etc.
- ▶ **Know the District/School Safety Coordinator(s) and their Specified Role(s):** Each district has a Safety Coordinator who oversees the district and/or school crisis management system.
- ▶ **Conduct a Study of the School Climate:** PSCs need to work with school administrators to conduct a systematic mitigation/prevention assessment of the school climate. A checklist may be a part of the district’s crisis system; if not, one could be developed. [The Mitigation/Prevention Assessment \(Appendix C\)](#) serves as a resource.
- ▶ **Analyze the Results of the Study:** The facts of the study should be reviewed to determine areas of potential risk. (e.g., 2 in 20 students reported there were no adults at school who cared about them.)
- ▶ **Take Preventive Action:** Once areas of risk are known, it is essential to develop a plan to address the need.
- ▶ **Implement Procedures for Assessing Individual Students:** A second tier of mitigation/prevention is the identification of individual students who may have the potential for committing an act of violence.

Not every student identified as a potential risk will actually carry out an act of violence. However, school personnel must be vigilant and take seriously reports of concern about individual students or groups of students (O'Toole, 2000).

As a member of the crisis management team, a PSC may use the following assessment resource: *Threat Assessment In Schools: A Guide To Managing Threatening Situations And To Creating Safe School Climates* [http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi\\_guide.pdf](http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_guide.pdf) provides detailed information about threat assessment procedures with individuals. The topics include:

- Types of Threats (Direct, Indirect, Veiled, or Conditional)
- Levels of Threat Risk (Low, Medium, or High)
- Threat Inquiry vs. Threat Investigation
- The FBI's Four-Pronged Assessment Approach
  - Personality Traits and Behavior
  - Family Dynamics
  - School Dynamics
  - Social Dynamics
- 11 Key Questions to Ask the Individual

## PREPARATION/READINESS

### Before The Crisis

Best practices recommend that all school districts have a crisis-management plan. Planning allows crisis management teams to develop procedures more objectively and thoroughly. Inclusion of various stakeholders from the school (building and district levels) and community is important in the development of the crisis-management plan (i.e. PSCs, administrators, nurses, teachers, custodians, parent organization representatives, medical and rescue personnel, and law enforcement).

**School Board Policies:** School board policies are the guiding factor for decisions that are made during an incident. For that reason, it is important that the board of education adopts policies pertaining to every aspect of the crisis-management cycle. These policies must be available to the public and included in the district's board of education policy manual and the crisis-management plan, which have been approved by the board. Policies should address issues such as memorials, liability, and confidentiality. The following are some considerations of such policies that relate to the PSC's role:

- ▶ **Memorials:** If the situation involves a death, a course of action should be considered for memorials. What is done for one must be done for all. This policy should address temporary and permanent memorials. In considering temporary displays, such as locker decoration or banners, the policy should address the kinds of displays, how long they will be displayed, and where displays will be permitted. In considering permanent memorials the types, size, and location of memorials should be addressed. (See [http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/memorials\\_general.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/memorials_general.aspx) for suggestions.)
- ▶ **Liability:** Liability will be a factor in determining a policy that will address the use of emergency response teams from outside the district and/or individuals who are not employees of the district.
- ▶ **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality/anonymity for students who report concerns as well as for students whose behavior is reported as a concern, should be addressed in the policy.

(This is not an exhaustive list. The team needs to consider local district needs and develop policies to address them. Any action(s) taken during an incident may be scrutinized after the incident. The [Missouri School Counselor Association \(MSCA\) Crisis Plan](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf) [http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)

The [Crisis Management Team Checklist: Before a Crisis \(Appendix D\)](#) serves as a template to review and assess the preparation/readiness phase of the district's crisis-management plan. It will not address every type of crisis; this checklist can be modified to suit the school or district's needs.

## **Preparation/Readiness: The Role of the Professional School Counselor (PSC)**

The role of the PSC in the Preparation/Readiness phase is to be vigilant regarding the safety of all students and to facilitate positive school climate and culture. Concern for the safety of others is developed over time via a school culture that encourages respect for self and others. PSCs must advocate for prevention at the same time preparation/readiness plans are being made. Specific actions the PSC might take are as follows:

- ▶ Participate as an active member of the crisis team using professional skills and knowledge.
- ▶ As classroom guidance lessons are implemented, listen to the concerns of the students and teachers regarding school safety. What do they need to feel prepared and safe?
- ▶ Help plan and conduct meaningful staff training. Districts are required by law to conduct staff training; however, too often the training becomes “Here’s our Crisis Management Plan. We’ve made a few changes so make sure you look it over.” Utilizing local law enforcement and other emergency personnel to conduct simulations of crises are used with success.
- ▶ Develop small group counseling and/or lesson plans for use immediately after a crisis occurs.
- ▶ Understand your own needs and limitations. Do not be afraid to ask for help.

## **RESPONSE**

### **During The Crisis**

The planning that has been completed with the district’s crisis management team to develop a thorough Crisis Plan will benefit all stakeholders when faced with any type of crisis. All staff members and emergency responders have a set of pre-established guidelines that include preparations, activities, and suggested resources and staffing. This will provide the confidence and security in knowing that the district is organized and well prepared and will provide the PSC with the confidence to follow through calmly, objectively and wisely. The [Crisis Management Team Checklist: During a Crisis \(Appendix E\)](#) will guide team members through a crisis. Again, this is a template; it will not address every type of crisis. Adjust it according to the district’s needs. Make copies for each crisis management team member.

## **RECOVERY**

### **After The Crisis**

Reflection is an important component of a crisis/ plan. The [PSC Thinking Guide \(Appendix A\)](#) can help focus thoughts on the individuals in the school community. The [Crisis Team Checklist: After the Crisis \(Appendix F\)](#) provides a checklist to use following the occurrence of a crisis/. This checklist is a template; it may not be applicable to every situation. It can be adjusted to fit the district’s needs.

An important step in a strong crisis/ management plan is evaluation. Following a crisis/ in the school or district, the team should come together to debrief and review the process that was put into place. If the crisis/ is particularly traumatic for the school and/or community, the crisis management team may need to reconvene before the anniversary of the event to consider whether or not activities or preparations need to be put into place.

Being part of a crisis management team is a serious responsibility that, in those times of crisis, will include tremendous stress. It is essential to take care of each other during those times. Care must be taken to ensure that everyone is all right at the end of the crisis, and recognize the importance and contributions of each member.

### **Recovery: The Role of the Professional School Counselor (PSC)**

- ▶ Participate on the crisis team. Help debrief the incident from a personal and professional perspective.
- ▶ Compliment the effectiveness of all involved.
- ▶ If targeted student violence was the precipitating event, advocate for an objective review of current prevention strategies.
- ▶ Learn from the experiences of all involved in the response.
- ▶ Consider writing an article so that others may learn from the experience.

## **SCHOOL-WIDE CRISIS MANAGEMENT REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

[References](#)

[Bibliotherapy Resources](#)

[Websites](#)

[Games](#)

[Print Resources](#)

[Other Resources](#)

## REFERENCES

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## BIBLIOTHERAPY RESOURCES

(Following are some suggested titles; this list is not all-inclusive.)

Book: A Terrible Thing Happened  
Author(s): Holmes, Margaret  
Publisher: (2002) Magination Press,  
Level: Elementary

Book: The Fall of Freddie the Leaf  
Author(s): Buscaqlia, Leo  
Publisher: (1982) Slack Incorporated  
Level: Elementary

Book: Blue Day Book  
Author(s): Greive, Bradley Trevor  
Publisher: (2004) Andrews McMeel Publishing  
Level: Secondary

Book: The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers  
and Their Friends  
Author(s): Fitzgerald, Helen  
Publisher: (2000) Fireside  
Level: Grades 6-12

Book: Blue Day Book for Kids: A Lesson in  
Cheering Yourself Up  
Author(s): Greive, Bradley Trevor  
Publisher: (March 1, 2005) Andrews McMeel  
Publishing  
Level: Elementary

Book: The Tenth Good Thing About Barney  
Author(s): Judith Viorst  
Publisher: (September 30, 1987) Aladdin  
Level: Elementary

Book: Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens:  
100 Practical Ideas  
Author(s): Wolfelt, Alan  
Publisher: (2001) Companion Press  
Level: Grades 7-12

Book: When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to  
Understanding Death  
Author(s): Krasny Brown, Laurie & Brown, Marc  
Publisher: (1996) Little Brown  
Level: Elementary

Book: I Remember Miss Perry  
Author(s): Brisson, Pat  
Publisher: (2006) Dial Books  
Level: Grades K-3

Book: When Someone Very Special Dies:  
Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief  
Author(s): Marge Heegaard  
Publisher: (1998) Woodland Press (1988)  
Level: Elementary

Book: Lifetimes  
Author(s): Mellonie, Bryan  
Publisher: (1983) Bantam  
Level: Grades 1-5

Book: When Something Terrible Happens:  
Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief  
Author(s): Heegaard, Marge  
Publisher: (1992) Woodland Press  
Level: Elementary

Book: Poppy's Chair  
Author(s): Hesse, Karen & Life, Kay  
Publisher: (1993) Simon & Schuster  
Level: Elementary

Book: Sad Isn't Bad: A Good-Grief Guidebook  
for Kids Dealing with Loss (Self-Help Book  
for Kids)  
Author(s): Mundy, Michaelene  
Publisher: (1998) Abbey Press  
Level: Elementary

Book: Grief is Like a Snowflake  
Author: Julie Cook  
Publisher: National Center for Youth Issues (2011)  
Level: Elementary

## WEBSITES

(The following links were updated as of January, 2014)

The following websites offer an abundance of free materials to support professional school counselors (PSCs) and other educators in their mutual quest for a safe learning environment for all students. Included on some of the websites are lesson plans and materials to use with students.

### Missouri Websites

Missouri Crisis Agency: Includes Safe Schools Initiatives and information about emergency planning for schools (See ERIP below) <http://sema.dps.mo.gov>

Missouri Center for Career Education: The website for Missouri Comprehensive Guidance materials and resources. The resource library lends books/materials to professional school counselors. Check it often!  
<http://resources.mcce.org/>

Missouri School Counselor Association Crisis Plan  
[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)

### Federal Government Websites

Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.hhs.gov>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services: <http://samhsa.gov/> (Resources for professional school counselors and other professionals who work in the area of mental health)

Disaster Preparedness: <http://www.ready.gov/>

Federal Crisis Agency (FEMA). <http://www.fema.gov/> (Contains an information resource library)

Pandemic Flu: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/> (Contains checklists to assist local agencies in developing or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic)

### Other Websites

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: <http://www.aacap.org/> (Contains *Understanding Childhood Mental Illnesses, When a Pet Dies, Children and Grief, Children and Divorce*)

American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org> (Introduces students to volunteerism and service via the Red Cross Youth Services; by participating, they will gain a broader sense of community and get to know some of the adults who are working to keep them safe! The Red Cross publishes a number of valuable materials.)

American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/> (Contains *Grief at School: Addressing the Needs of Grieving Students, When Grief Visits a School: Organizing a Successful Response, School-Based Crisis Intervention: Preparing All Personnel to Assist*)

Anti-Defamation League. <http://www.adl.org/> (Contains *Empowering the Children in the Aftermath of Hate, A Guide for Educators and Parents, Activities for the Classroom Pre-K-12*)

APA Help Center. <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/> Managing Traumatic Stress: Tips for Recovering from Natural Disasters

APA Online. <http://www.apa.org/> (A Forum Discussion Guide for APA Members Talking with Youth about Traumatic Events)

CHADS Coalition. <http://CHADSCoalition.org> (Promotes awareness to prevent depression and suicide and provides educational information)

Crisis Management Institute. <http://www.cmionline.org/> (Offers guides for teachers, staff, parents and children to deal with trauma or grief related to current events)

Dougy Center. <http://www.dougy.org/> (The Dougy Center is a safe place for children, teens, young adults and families to grieve. This site offers grief support materials for all ages on their website.)

Guarding Kids. [www.guardingkids.com](http://www.guardingkids.com) (Supports Dr. Russell Sabella's work on educating children, parents, educators, and other stake holders about the responsible use of technology.)

Guidance Channel: [www.guidancechannel.com](http://www.guidancechannel.com) (Contains crisis resources and articles on topics such as *Helping Children Cope in Unsettling Times; Tips for School Personnel*)

Knowledge Empowers. [www.ready.gov/kids/educators](http://www.ready.gov/kids/educators) (Provides supplemental curriculum for emergency situations.)

Megan Meyer Foundation. <http://meganmeyerfoundation.org> (Brings awareness, provides education, and promotes positive change to children, parents, and education in response to the ongoing bullying and cyber bullying.)

Mental Health in Schools Training and Technical Center: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> UCLA Schools Mental Health Project. Center for Mental Health in Schools.

National Association of School Psychologists <http://www.nasponline.org> Resources for working with children and parents.

1. National Organization for Victim Assistance. [www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org) (Contains *Help for Victims and Friends of Victims, Victim Information Resources, How to Get Help After a Victimization, Domestic Violence Information, Crime Victims with Disabilities*)

Rachel's Challenge. [www.rachelschallenge.org](http://www.rachelschallenge.org) (Provides empowering programs/strategies that equip students and adults to combat bullying and create a culture of kindness and compassion.)

Solace House. <http://www.kansascityhospice.org/GriefSupport-SolaceHouse/Index.htm> A center for grieving children and their families

The Child Advocate. <http://childadvocate.net/disaster.htm> (Contains *Tips after a disaster on: Child Interview, Dealing with Children's Reactions, Trauma Intervention, Pain and Fear Management, Calming the Injured Child; Booklet for parents and professionals on Helping Children Cope After A Disaster* from the Penn State Hershey Medical Center and the College of Medicine)

University of Illinois Extension Disaster Resources. <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/disaster/staffguide.cfm> (Contains *Emotional Reactions to Disaster, Helping Families in Distress, Helping Children Cope with a Disaster, Referring a Person for Help*)

## **GAMES**

Crisis Intervention Game (1996, Childsworld/Childsplay) Ages 6-12

Healing Games (2003, Childsworld/Childsplay) Ages 6-12

## **PRINT RESOURCES**

Brooks, B. & Siegel, P. (1996). *The scared child: Helping kids overcome traumatic events*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Brock, S. E., Lewis, S. & Sandoval, J. (2001). *School crisis, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Conoley, J.C. & Goldstein, A. P. (2004). *School violence intervention: A practical handbook*. New York: The Guilford Press.

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[http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/16/2b/d1.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/2b/d1.pdf) Training Manual
- Klicker, R. L. (1999). *Student dies, a school mourns: Dealing with death and loss in the school community*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Lindholm, A.B., Schurrman, D.L. & Hoff, J.S. (2001). *After a suicide: A workbook for grieving kids*. The Dougy Center: Western Graphics & Data.
- Lindholm, A.B., Schurrman, D.L. & Hoff, J.S. (2002). *After a murder: A workbook for grieving kids*. The Dougy Center: Western Graphics & Data.
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[http://www.moschoolcounselor.org/fileadmin/msca/home/Publications\\_\\_\\_Resources/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://www.moschoolcounselor.org/fileadmin/msca/home/Publications___Resources/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf). (available through MSCA).
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- Silverman, J. (1999). *Help me say goodbye: Activities for helping kids cope when a special person dies*. Minneapolis: Fairview Press.
- Stevenson, R. G. (Ed.) (1994). *What will we do? Preparing a school community to cope with crisis*. (Death, Value, and Meaning Series). Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.

## OTHER RESOURCES

- ▶ Local Community Mental Health Services
- ▶ Local Funeral Homes
- ▶ Local Religious Communities
- ▶ Local Red Cross

### NOTE:

The bibliography, websites, games and resources listed above are suggested only. Their inclusion in this document does not indicate endorsement from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or from the Missouri School Counselor Association. There are many outstanding resources available to school professionals and to the public. PSCs are encouraged to search for those resources that serve their needs.

## **SCHOOL-WIDE CRISIS MANAGEMENT APPENDICES**

[Appendix A: Professional School Counselor Thinking Guide](#)

[Appendix B: Crisis Management Plan Worksheet](#)

[Appendix C: Mitigation/Prevention Assessment](#)

[Appendix D: Crisis Management Team Checklist: Before a Crisis](#)

[Appendix E: Crisis Management Team Checklist: During a Crisis](#)

[Appendix F: Crisis Management Team Checklist: After a Crisis](#)

[Appendix G: Tips for Professional School Counselors: Processing Strategies for Crisis](#)

[Appendix H: Tips for Professional School Counselors and Educators: Strategies for Working With  
Students](#)

[Appendix I: Tips for Parents of Students Who Are Experiencing Crisis](#)

[Appendix J: Tips for Teachers: Handling Crisis Situations](#)

[Appendix K: Children's Bereavement Responses: Developmental Stages](#)

## Appendix A PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR THINKING GUIDE

This thinking guide is an informal means to identify perceptions, student perceptions, parent perceptions, faculty perceptions, and administrative perceptions of vulnerabilities/needs in relation to the mitigation/prevention, readiness/preparation, response, recovery phases of Crisis-Management Cycle. Responses will help guide thinking through and sorting out the information that is available.

Crisis Phase	Self	Students	Parents	Faculty/Staff	Administrators
<b>Mitigation/Prevention</b>					
Definition					
What do I need/want to know to "feel safe"					
What I can do					
What help do I need?					
<b>Readiness/Preparation</b>					
Definition					
What do I need/want to know to "feel safe"					
What I can do					
What help do I need?					
<b>Response</b>					
Definition					
What do I need/want to know to "feel safe"					
What I can do					
What help do I need?					
<b>Recovery</b>					
Definition					
What do I need/want to know to "feel safe"					
What I can do					
What help do I need?					

**Appendix B  
CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONTACT PLAN**

Adapted from MSCA Crisis Plan

[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)

This plan may be used BEFORE a-crisis occurs, DURING a crisis as guide AND AFTER as an emergency or crisis has occurred. Some items will be decided upon before a-crisis and will always remain the same, while others will vary with the situation. ▽

Keep minutes of meetings. Utilize sign-in sheets. Follow board-approved plan before, during and after and document ALL actions.

As a team, collect email addresses, mobile phone numbers, and any other pertinent contact information to your district from the following personnel:

- Principal
- Emergency Coordinator
- Alternate Emergency Coordinator
- All District Professional School Counselors
- Crisis Management Team Members
- School Resource Officers
- Local Police Department

Create a phone tree of ALL school personnel and have easily accessible.

**CRISIS PLAN FOR \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL Phone \_\_\_\_\_**

**PRINCIPAL \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (School) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_**

**EMERGENCY COORDINATOR \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (School) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_**

**ALTERNATE COORDINATOR \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (School) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_**

**CRISIS CONTACT INFORMATION**

_____ School:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Website:
_____ Principal Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
_____ Emergency Coordinator Name:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
_____ Alternate Coordinator: Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone:
_____ Professional School Counselor(s)—list information for each PSC				
Counselor 1 Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Counselor 2 Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Counselor 3 Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Team Members (list information for each team member)

Team Member 1 Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Team Member 2 Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Team Member 3 Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
Home:	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone

**PHONE TREE: INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR EACH PERSON**

\_\_\_\_\_ Principal Calls: A1 (Faculty Liaison)

\_\_\_\_\_ A1 CALLS B1, B2, B3  
 \_\_\_\_\_ B1 CALLS C1, C2, C3  
 \_\_\_\_\_ B2 CALLS C4, C5, C6  
 \_\_\_\_\_ B3 CALLS C7, C8, C9  
 \_\_\_\_\_ C1 CALLS D1, D2, D3  
 \_\_\_\_\_ C2 CALLS D4, D5, D6  
 \_\_\_\_\_ C3 CALLS D7, D8, D9  
 \_\_\_\_\_ C4 CALLS D10, D11, D12

**MEDIA INFORMATION**

For your district, determine what your role is regarding the media.

You may need to compile the phone numbers and other pertinent contact information for the following media sources:

- District Media Liaison
- Local Radio Stations
- Local Television Stations
- Local Newspapers

_____ District Media Liaison Name	Phone #	:	e-mail	Cell Phone
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\_\_\_\_\_ Information Meeting for Media: Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Local Media: (List contact information for each media outlet):

Phone # :

Radio Stations:

1.

Television stations

1.

Newspapers

1.

**FACILITIES SAFETY AND SECURITY**

\_\_\_\_\_ Include the location of Evacuation Shelter(s) (Consider students/faculty/staff with limited mobility as well as those who may have limited vision, hearing, or speech.)

On-Site Location	Off-Site Location, Address, Phone Number
Route # 1	Route # 1
Route # 2	Route # 2

### BUILDING SECURITY

\_\_\_\_\_ Designate people to monitor entrances to building and hallways.

Entrances:

Entrance Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrance Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitor \_\_\_\_\_

Hallways:

Hall Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Hall Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitor \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMUNICATION

\_\_\_\_\_ Plan for notifying faculty.

\_\_\_\_\_ Principal and/or Crisis Coordinator

1. Notifies faculty liaison of incident and time/place for faculty meeting

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

(Faculty Liaison activates phone tree)

2. Prepares/Sends memo to each faculty member regarding the facts of the incident

During School Day:

Person designated to notify faculty \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # : e-mail Cell Phone

Outside of School Day:

Person designated to notify faculty \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # : e-mail Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_ Plan for notifying students (Teachers will be informed prior to students whenever possible)

Teachers tell students in their classes about the Crisis/Critical Incident (script and student responsibilities provided).

Who writes/provides script?

Announcement made over the intercom with follow-up by teachers in each class.

Who announces?

When?

\_\_\_\_\_ Plan for informing parents—Communication includes consideration of those who are not fluent in the English language (both non-English speakers and English speakers who are non-readers)

Letter Home: Who will write the letter? \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Meeting

Date/Time/Location \_\_\_\_\_

How and by whom will parents be notified of meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Arrangements for group counseling

Location/Room # Person Responsible for Group :

### **Follow-Up Activities**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Team Members Evaluation (i.e. Crisis Team Evaluation in the Missouri School Counselor's Crisis Plan—[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf))
- \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Team Members complete Individual & Group Counseling (i.e. Group Counseling Summary in the Missouri School Counselor's Crisis Plan—[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf))

### **Summary**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Plan Team Members complete Activities Summary (i.e. Activities Summary in the Missouri School Counselor's Crisis Plan—[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf))

**Appendix C**  
**CRISIS MANAGEMENT**  
**MITIGATION/PREVENTION ASSESSMENT**

What is in place?/What is working?/What needs to be modified/changed/added?

Review annually.

ELEMENTS	YES	NO	COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>The following are included in the Crisis Plan</b>			
<b>Threat Assessment Policies</b>			
Written school board-approved school climate/culture assessment policy included with other policies related to school safety (e.g., safety of facilities and security)			
Threat Assessment Procedures for Individual Situation/Whole School Situations; Assessment Procedures: Who/When/How?			
Are protocols for assessment of individual/situational risk available and used?			
Are there suicide risk assessments in place? Are school personnel adequately trained?			
Mitigation/Prevention Threat Assessment Team: Selection Criteria? Role?			
Whole staff crisis—threat assessment training policies/procedures			
<b>School Culture and Climate</b>			
Procedure and protocols for assessing the school culture and climate are operational. What factors are assessed? How often? How and by whom?			
Dropouts/disengaged students included as participants in surveys/focus groups and other means for soliciting student opinion about school culture and climate?			
ALL students trust the communication process, (i.e., does each student believe that he or she will be taken seriously/be able to retain anonymity (if desired) when expressing concern about a peer's potential threat to others?)			
Is the Anti-Bullying Policy operational? Does it include cyber-bullying?			
Is there a bullying prevention program in place? Is it effective?			
Is the MCGCP curriculum effective in promoting a safe school environment?			
Supportive interventions are available for all students and especially for those who may be at risk for committing acts of violence? (Do they feel safe?)			
<b>Communication: Internal/External</b>			
Community agencies are partners with school			
Parents are aware of policies/procedures for threat assessment involving individual students (potential for violence) and whole school situations (anti-bullying policy)?			
Students are knowledgeable about reporting their concerns regarding other students?			
Multiple and accessible communication methods are operational?			
Language consistent with the National Incident Management System ( <a href="https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system">https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system</a> )?			

**Appendix D**

**CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM CHECKLIST: BEFORE A CRISIS**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Review the MSCA Crisis Plan  
[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Review the district crisis management plan for the following:
  - The name and contact information for the coordinator of the management plan as well as the district safety coordinator (if not the same as the crisis management coordinator)
  - The names and contact information along the chain of command are listed and current.
  - Crisis management plan team members and responsibilities are designated.
  - School board policies and regulations include a policy about memorializing students who die –by homicide, natural causes, or suicide. Memorials are the same for all students.  
([http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/memorials\\_general.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/memorials_general.aspx) provides policy suggestions and considerations.)
  - Plans for notifying faculty of crisis are in place and include immediate faculty notification of emergencies occurring during school hours as well as outside of school hours. The plan clearly identifies who notifies whom (e.g., a phone tree).
  - Faculty handouts on how to handle a crisis-([Appendix E](#) and [Appendix G](#) are sample handouts).
  - Community resources and the services they provide are accurate and current.
  - Media liaison(s) are designated; media contact information is included for use by media liaison(s).
  - Floor plans and the location of utility shut-off access
  - Plan for building evacuation and security; including the monitoring of entrances to the building.
  - Plan for notifying students a crisis-has occurred or is in progress.
  - Plan for communication with parents includes multiple means (and languages) of communication (including electronic), printed and electronic parent handouts on how to handle crisis are available in a pre-designated place (See [Appendix F](#) for a sample).
  - Arrangements for interventions with individual perpetrator(s) are in place.
  - Arrangements for group counseling are in place.
  - Debriefing plans are in place.
  - Plans are in place for written evaluation of the effectiveness of the crisis management plan after the event.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ A crisis management plan notebook containing information and handouts is available for all school personnel for quick access.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Posted in every room of the building is a “Standard Emergency Operations Guide” which is a simplified and abbreviated emergency action plan to remind staff and students of actions to take if they must remain in the classroom or if they are to go to another “safe place”.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Every teacher has an “emergency tote” which may include items such as:
  - A current class roster;
  - Emergency contact information for each child
  - Sign-in sheets
  - Signals to be used to notify emergency responders about injuries in classroom (e.g. red, yellow, blue pipe cleaners or construction paper)
  - Laminated emergency reference sheets (color-coded paper)
  - Laminated “How to Use Contents of Emergency Tote” (color-coded)
  - Flashlight (with batteries stored outside flashlight)
  - Radio
  - Post-It Notes
  - Pen
  - Band-Aids/First Aid Kit
  - Other materials such as books, paper, crayons, pencils
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Staff training is a part of the crisis management plan; training includes “table-top simulations” and/or actual simulations of crisis situations; the PSC can provide information regarding communicating with students during/after a crisis.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis simulations are conducted frequently, both announced and unannounced.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ The effectiveness of the response to each crisis simulation is evaluated.

**Appendix E**

**CRISIS-MANAGEMENT TEAM CHECKLIST: DURING A CRISIS**

The school personnel responsible for each step/action will be identified in the Crisis Plan Handbook; it may or may not be the PSC's responsibility.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Get factual information about the crisis. If the crisis involves a student or staff death, find out what facts the family wishes to have shared.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ If it is a building crisis, the principal notifies the district office. If it is a district crisis, get instructions from the district office.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Call the Crisis Management Team together. Decide which personnel from other buildings and the community should be contacted for assistance.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The Crisis Management Team reviews roles and responsibilities.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Develop an official statement for use with the phone tree.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Implement the phone tree; the official statement should be read during each call.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for a faculty meeting to take place before the day begins, if possible. Distribute [Tips for Professional School Counselors: Processing Strategies for Crisis \(Appendix G\)](#)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for procedures and space for students to access counseling. Gather materials to comfort students (e.g., water, tissues, paper, pens, markers, stress balls).
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for extra supervision in hallways and bathrooms for comfort and safety.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange a location for staff to receive necessary attention. Make sure a member of the Crisis Management Team (a PSC is preferable) is assigned to the staff room.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for relief of staff as needed (e.g., Is there someone in place who can relieve the staff member from duty? Is a substitute needed?).
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Consider what food would be necessary for the various groups (e.g., Will the cafeteria be open? Can a parent organization provide food for faculty?).
13. \_\_\_\_\_ The Crisis Management Plan coordinator, with the assistance of the media spokesperson, should write, or designate a person to write, a letter to parents with facts about the incident. The letter should include any arrangements associated with the incident, as well as how the school/district will handle those arrangements as they pertain to students/staff. Students should take those letters home the first day of the crisis.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ If coverage/supervision of classrooms is needed for staff/students to attend services, those arrangements should be made according to district policy/procedure.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Implement the Crisis Management Plan.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for a faculty meeting at the end of the day to debrief. Remind faculty of the Employee Assistance Program and/or other services that may be available.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Management Team meets to debrief and to plan next steps.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Before the Crisis Management Team dismisses, check on the emotional stability of the team members.

**Appendix F  
CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM CHECKLIST: AFTER A CRISIS**

The Crisis Management Plan will designate the individual(s) responsible for each action; it may or may not be the PSC's responsibility.

1. \_\_\_\_ Reconvene the Crisis Management Plan team.
2. \_\_\_\_ Review successes and difficulties in implementing the plan.
3. \_\_\_\_ Review effectiveness of the plan.
4. \_\_\_\_ Make necessary changes in the plan.
5. \_\_\_\_ Discuss ways to show appreciation to those who provided assistance during the crisis.
6. \_\_\_\_ Return to the mitigation/prevention phase.
  - Identify preventive strategies that have been successful.
  - Identify additional preventive strategies that need to be implemented. (This is a vital step if the emergency was targeted student violence—what was absent in the school life of the perpetrator?)
7. \_\_\_\_ Present changes to pertinent stakeholders (e.g., faculty and parent groups).
8. \_\_\_\_ Conduct new simulations implementing changes, if necessary. (Be sensitive to emotions allowing enough time to pass between the crisis and the simulation.)
9. \_\_\_\_ Crisis Management Team should reconvene as the anniversary of the event draws closer to discuss possible reactions and appropriate responses.

**Appendix G**

**TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS:  
PROCESSING STRATEGIES FOR CRISIS**

**Communication:**

- It is the family's right to decide what information is to be shared with the school community. Only that information and those details should be shared. This can be especially challenging when the family is hesitant or reluctant to share much in the way of information. Rumors may run rampant. As the professionals in the school, it is your moral, ethical and legal duty to stick to the information that the family allows you to share.
- Other people in the community, or even in the school, may come forward with alleged specific details of the event. However, in those cases, or even if you think you know more specific details, without the consent of the family, you are to only report what has been approved by the family. Preparing a script, based upon the released information from the family, is a good tool for school professionals to use/rely on at times of Crisis/Critical Incident. It is important to stress to all school professionals that they are to adhere to what is provided within the script.

**Individual Counseling Ideas:**

- Have paper and note cards available in the counseling office for students to write notes to the family
- Have developmentally appropriate resources, such as books and/or handouts, available in the counseling office
- Have sign-in sheets in areas where students will be during a crisis.
- Have a method to keep track of students needing follow-up care.

**Small Group Counseling Ideas:**

- Have paper and note cards in the counseling office for students to write notes to the family
- Have developmentally appropriate resources, such as books and/or handouts, available in the counseling office.
- Initiate a support-type group for those demonstrating a need for special assistance
- Refer to the MCCE Small Group Counseling Curriculum:  
<http://www.missouricareereducation.org/project/smallgroup>

**Classroom Ideas:**

- In the case of a death of a student, the professional school counselor and/or administrator should follow the deceased student's school schedule. In each class, acknowledge the empty chair and allow students time to reflect and share.
- In the case of a death of a faculty member, have a professional school counselor and/or administrator stationed in the individual's classroom. In each class session, acknowledge the loss of the faculty member and allow students time to reflect and share.
- Whether the death involves a student or a faculty member, it is always best to leave the belongings and desk of the deceased in place. Family should be contacted with regard to disposition, and time of disposition, of personal belongings in desks, lockers, and/or classrooms. Allow the students to have input in how the remaining items might be used or removed.
- When individuals who are directly involved in the crisis return to school, it is best to maintain as normal a routine as possible. Students should be reminded that the professional school counselor is available as needed.
- In some cases, it may be necessary to brief classmates on appropriate ways to respond to the individual returning to the school setting. In the lower grades, it may be advisable to coach students on what is/is not appropriate to ask/say to the individual returning. For the upper grade levels, students may benefit from suggestions on appropriate communications with the returning individual.

**Appendix H**

**TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND EDUCATORS:  
STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS**

1. Before meeting with students, review [Children's Bereavement Responses at Different Developmental Stages \(Appendix K\)](#).
2. When communicating the crisis information to students:
  - Read the printed statement approved by the family verbatim.
  - Beware of social media stream. Information being shared may be ambiguous.
  - Do not share or validate any other information other than what the family approves! Decide the time the statement will be read. In most cases, it is best if the statement is read in individual classrooms, rather than over a public address system. (See the script on page 17 of the MSCA Crisis Plan, [http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf))
3. While meeting with students:
  - Listen - Don't interrupt: he/she needs to be heard.
  - Accept feelings Validate feelings for this student, even though their feelings may not be the same as yours.
  - Empathize - Let the child know that you recognize his/her feelings.
  - Reassure – The student is not responsible for what happened.
  - Accept – The student may not want to talk about the incident right away. Let him/her know you are willing to listen whenever he/she wants or needs to talk about it.
4. Be flexible of disruptions to normal routines.
5. Maintain as much of a sense of routine as possible.
6. Provide additional support as needed, such as individual or group counseling.
7. The above is a brief list of strategies for working with students during a Crisis/Critical Incident. Please reference the attachments, MSCA Crisis Plan [http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf), and other resources for additional individual and group strategies.

**Appendix I**

**TIPS FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING CRISIS**

**MSCA Crisis Plan**

[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)

1. Keep your child informed and updated, keeping in mind the developmental and cognitive level of the child. Children need to feel involved and as in control as much as possible.
2. Watch for signs of distress. Loss of appetite, aggression, acting out, being withdrawn, sleeping disorders, and other behavior changes can indicate problems.
3. Send your child to school if possible. The stability and routine of a familiar situation will help young people feel more secure.
4. Remember that everyone reacts to stress and/or grief in different ways. There is no one-way to act in a crisis situation.
5. Allow children the opportunity to express feelings. It is important to validate these feelings.
6. A good diet and plenty of exercise are important for children who are under stress. Encourage your child to eat well and get plenty of exercise.
7. Be honest about your own concerns, but stress your and your child's ability to cope with the situation.
8. Respect a child's need to grieve.
9. Provide somewhere private and quiet for your child to go.
10. Be available and listen to your child.
11. Remember to take care of yourself.
12. Obtain outside help if necessary.

**Appendix J**  
**TIPS FOR TEACHERS: HANDLING CRISIS SITUATIONS**  
MSCA Crisis Plan

[http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA\\_Crisis\\_Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://moschoolcounselor.org/files/2014/07/MSCA_Crisis_Manual_2012.pdf)

1. Be honest. Prior to talking with students, gather information and collaborate with administration and family regarding appropriate information to share with students.
2. Give as much information as the students need to know. Cognitive and emotional development will determine how much and in what manner to share.
3. Allow time for students to express feelings, thoughts, and to ask questions. The amount of time will vary with the situation, age groups, and individual group concerns.
4. Look for signs of distress in individual students use your school's process to refer students who are of concern. It might be in small groups or individual counseling, but be sure concerned students get attention.
5. Allow time for a break or recess after discussing and sharing. In cases of a continuing crisis, remember to allow times for breaks.
6. Listen to your students' feelings.
7. Remember that everyone experiences and reacts to grief and crisis in a different way. There is no one-way to act.
8. Some students may express various religious beliefs about the death. Remind students that this is a time to honor the deceased and not a time to pass judgment. If a student seems to have a need to discuss a specific religious belief, encourage them to talk with a parent, family member, or member of the clergy.
9. In case of death, discuss ways to express sympathy with the class. This is often a first time experience for young people, and ways to express sympathy and the funeral process can be confusing. Death and crisis are a part of living, and this can be a valuable learning experience.
10. In case of the death of a classmate or teacher, it's best if the desk can be left empty to help students acknowledge the death. The same is true for a student's locker. Sometimes students are more angry if they are not given time to grieve. Removing the contents of a desk and/or locker should be left to the family. This should be arranged by the school's administrator.
11. Keep students informed. If it is an ongoing situation, let your class know any relevant information as soon as you receive it, even if it means interrupting the class occasionally.
12. In the case of the student's death, remove their name from your roster to prevent accidentally calling out their name during upcoming roll calls by you or a substitute.

**Appendix K**  
**CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT RESPONSES: DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES**  
 (Adapted from McKissock, 2004)

Age	Concept of death	Grief response	Signs of distress	Suggestions
Birth-2	-Death as separation and/or abandonment	-Sense rather than understand person is gone	-Difficulty toileting, sleeping -Clinginess -Temper tantrums -Crying	-Simple, honest explanation of death with familiar examples -Physical comfort -Consistent routine
2-4	-Death as abandonment, sleep, temporary, reversible, contagious	-Intense, brief response -Present oriented -React to changes in routine and care -Ask repeated questions -Anxious about basic needs being met	-Regression (lapses in toilet training, returning to security blanket or old toys) -Anxiety at bedtime -Fear abandonment -Seek physical contact -Irritable, tantrums	-Simple, honest explanation of death with frequent repetition -Physical comfort -Consistent routine -Reassurance that death not contagious, will be taken care of -Allow some regression
4-7	-Death still seen as temporary, reversible	-Feel responsible for death due to magical thinking, i.e. "I was mad at her and wished she'd die. I made it happen." -Repetitive questioning: How? Why? -May act as though nothing happened -Feel distressed and confused	-Overt signs of grief such as sadness, anger -Feelings of abandonment and rejection -Changes in eating and sleeping -Nightmares -Violent play -Behavioral problems -Attempt to take on role of person who died	-Simple, honest explanation of death, avoid euphemisms, e.g. sleep, gone away, lost -Check to see if understand explanation -Expect repeated questions -Opportunities to express feelings, learn coping strategies -Reassurance they're not responsible for the death
7-11	-May still see death as reversible, but beginning to see it as final -Death as punishment for bad behavior, bad thoughts -Fear of bodily harm and mutilation	-May feel angry or responsible for the death -Desire for details about the death, specific questioning -Concerned with how others are responding and whether they are reacting the right way -Starting to have ability to mourn and understand mourning	-Overt grief signs e.g., sadness, anger -Physical complaints -Overactive to avoid thinking about death -Feel ashamed, different from other children -Problems in school, withdraw from friends, acting out -Concern with body -Suicidal thoughts (desire to join the deceased) -Role confusion	-Open, honest explanation of death -Answer questions -Opportunities to express range of feelings -Learn skills to cope with anger, provide physical outlets -Reassurance not responsible for the death
12-18	-Death as inevitable, universal, irreversible -Abstract thinking -Truly conceptualize death	-Depression, denial, repression -More apt to talk to people outside the family -May feel embarrassed -Place peer needs ahead of family -Traditional mourning	-Depression, anger, non-compliance -Difficulty concentrating -Withdrawal from family -Engaging in high-risk behaviors (sexual promiscuity, drug and alcohol use)	-Direct, open dialogue about the death -Encourage verbalization -Listen -Consistent limits balanced with more freedom and choices -Do not attempt to take grief away

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