

**ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON**  
**Catholic Schools**



# **Crisis Intervention Team Manual**

Guidelines for Proactive Crisis  
Response and Intervention

**2019-2020**





# **Catholic Schools Mission Statement**

**The Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Washington, rooted in Gospel Values and the teaching mission of the Catholic Church, are learning communities of faith and service dedicated to educational equity and excellence for all students.**

## **Crisis Intervention Team Mission**

**To facilitate school-based crisis intervention and outreach support to archdiocesan Catholic Schools and their surrounding communities in the aftermath of a traumatic event by providing individual and group counseling services in line with Catholic doctrine, guiding administrative tasks, and advocating for community outreach.**





# Introduction

## The Goal

**All archdiocesan Catholic Schools will have a Crisis Intervention**

**Team.** The key function of this team is to identify the types of crises that

may occur in a school and define what events would activate the archdiocesan Crisis Intervention Team. Many factors determine the extent of a crisis response such as the school's ability to handle a situation with internal resources and its experience in responding to past events.

The framework of this **Manual** is based on nationally recognized best practices in responding to crisis events within a Catholic school setting. The intention is for this Manual to provide guidelines for uniformed crisis response to a traumatic event or the aftermath of a traumatic event that may directly impact a school.

## A Crisis or Traumatic Event

Crises range in scope and intensity from incidents that directly or indirectly affect a single

student to ones that impact the entire community. Crises can happen before, during, or after school and on or off school campuses. The definition of a crisis varies with the unique needs, resources, and assets of a school and community. Staff and students may be severely affected by an incident in another city or state. The events of from Columbine High School to Sandy Hook Elementary School left the entire nation feeling vulnerable with its ability to respond to a crisis or a traumatic event (The Office of Safe & Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education).

**CRISIS or a TRAUMATIC EVENT** is a sudden, unexpected event that has an **emotional impact** sufficient to overwhelm the usual effective coping skills of a person or group of people and causes significant **psychological stress** in usually healthy persons or groups of people.

Additionally, *Webster's Dictionary* notes that **crisis** comes from the Greek word meaning **decision**.

In essence, a crisis is a situation where a school could be faced with inadequate information, not enough time, and insufficient resources, but in which school leaders must make one or many crucial decisions.

**CRISIS or a TRAUMATIC EVENT CHARACTERISTICS** are generated by traumatic stress from direct exposure to an event and require crisis intervention include:

**Experiencing** (threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence),

**Witnessing**, in person, the event(s) as it occurs,

**Learning** that an event occurred to a close family member or close friend (does not apply to exposure through media, television, or pictures). (DSM-V, 2011, p. 271)

# Crisis Intervention

## School-Based

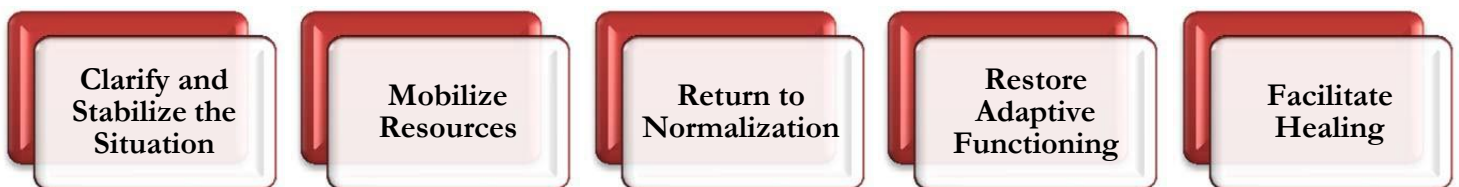
Crisis, emergency, disaster, catastrophe, tragedy, trauma -- all are words heard too frequently at schools today. Almost every school has had a major crisis; every school is likely to have one. Besides natural disasters such as earthquakes and fires, students experience violence and death related to the suicide of friends, gang activity, snipers, hostage-taking, and rape. Some students react with severe emotional responses -- fear, grief, post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). Moreover, such experiences and other events that threaten their sense of worth and well-being can produce the type of intense personal turmoil that leads students to think about hurting themselves or others.

If no effort is made to intervene, emotional reactions may interfere with a student's school and home performance, can be **imminently life threatening**, or may be the start of long-term psychosocial problems. And, when a significant portion of the student body is affected, major facets of a school's functioning are likely to be jeopardized.

As used here, the term, school-based crisis intervention, refers to a range of planned responses to be implemented during or after a crisis or traumatic event.

## Crisis Intervention

**All staff and members of a school community play an important role in crisis intervention.** Crisis intervention is emotional first-aid, not therapy. The goals of intervention are to:



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

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



# Crisis Intervention Response



# Student Threats

## Threat

In the event of any actual or perceived **THREAT OF VIOLENCE** toward self, other persons, and/or property in the school community:

**FIRST:** notify local law enforcement officials immediately (911). Follow their instructions and cooperate with any investigation they initiate;

**SECOND:** notify the Catholic Schools Office; and

**THIRD:** in consultation with the Principal, Pastor, and Catholic Schools Office, to notify parents and the broader school community.

Any threat made by a student against self or another must be reported in writing on the School Incident Report (Form 16), within 24 hours of the threat.

**THREAT OF VIOLENCE** is verbal or nonverbal declarations of intent or determination to inflict significant injury to persons, and/or damage to property with the perceived ability/intention to carry through on the intent. Threats may come in the form of verbal statements, written statements, including electronic communications, and/or other nonverbal statements, such as drawings, posters, or images.

## Self-Threats & Self-Injury

Self-threats and self-injury are an attempt to cope with a problem and not the problem itself. The key is to focus on the underlying feelings and issues rather than focusing on the behavior itself.

Here are some guidelines for addressing a student suspected of self-threatening behaviors:

- ☐ **DO Approach the Student**
- ☐ **DO Be Clear and Direct** about your awareness of self-injurious behaviors, like cutting, or about suicidal thoughts.
- ☐ **DO Be Empathic** with the student
- ☐ **DO NOT Reprimand** or send the student to the principal as a behavioral problem

**See the next page for conducting a Suicidal Assessment**

# Preliminary Assessment of Credibility of a Threat

## Inquiry of a Threat

Upon learning of a threat, the mental health counselor when working with the school leadership conducts a preliminary assessment of credibility, which is an initial assessment of a threat by a student.

This preliminary assessment of credibility allows you to **exercise reasonable discretion** based on the available facts.

The overall purpose is to determine whether the student who made the threat should be required to obtain a clinical evaluation from a third-party mental health professional about whether the student poses a risk of harm to him/herself or others.

A **Preliminary Assessment of Credibility** of a student threat is conducted for **ANY** threat of violence and is part of a the **Threat Assessment Process**

A preliminary assessment of credibility of a threat is a preliminary **INQUIRY** carried out by the principal and when appropriate a school counselor.

If the preliminary assessment establishes the credibility, then a subsequent **INVESTIGATION** is conducted only law enforcement agency, or an **EVALUATION** is performed by a third-party mental healthcare provider.

All credible threats to others will be referred to **LAW ENFORCEMENT**, with the possible exception to threats against the self.

## Conducting a Preliminary Assessment

1. **Remove the student** from class to a safe and secured supervised area
2. **Gather the Facts**
  - a. Who is the student or students making the threat?
  - b. What are possible targets (the self, other students, and/or property)?
  - c. When is the act of violence supposed to occur?
  - d. Where is the act of violence supposed to take place?
  - e. How was the threat communicated and how might the act of violence take place?
3. **Obtain Information on Student**
  - a. Background Information & Present Living Situation
  - b. Identify Behaviors and/or Motives
4. **Obtain a Written Statement from Witness(es)**

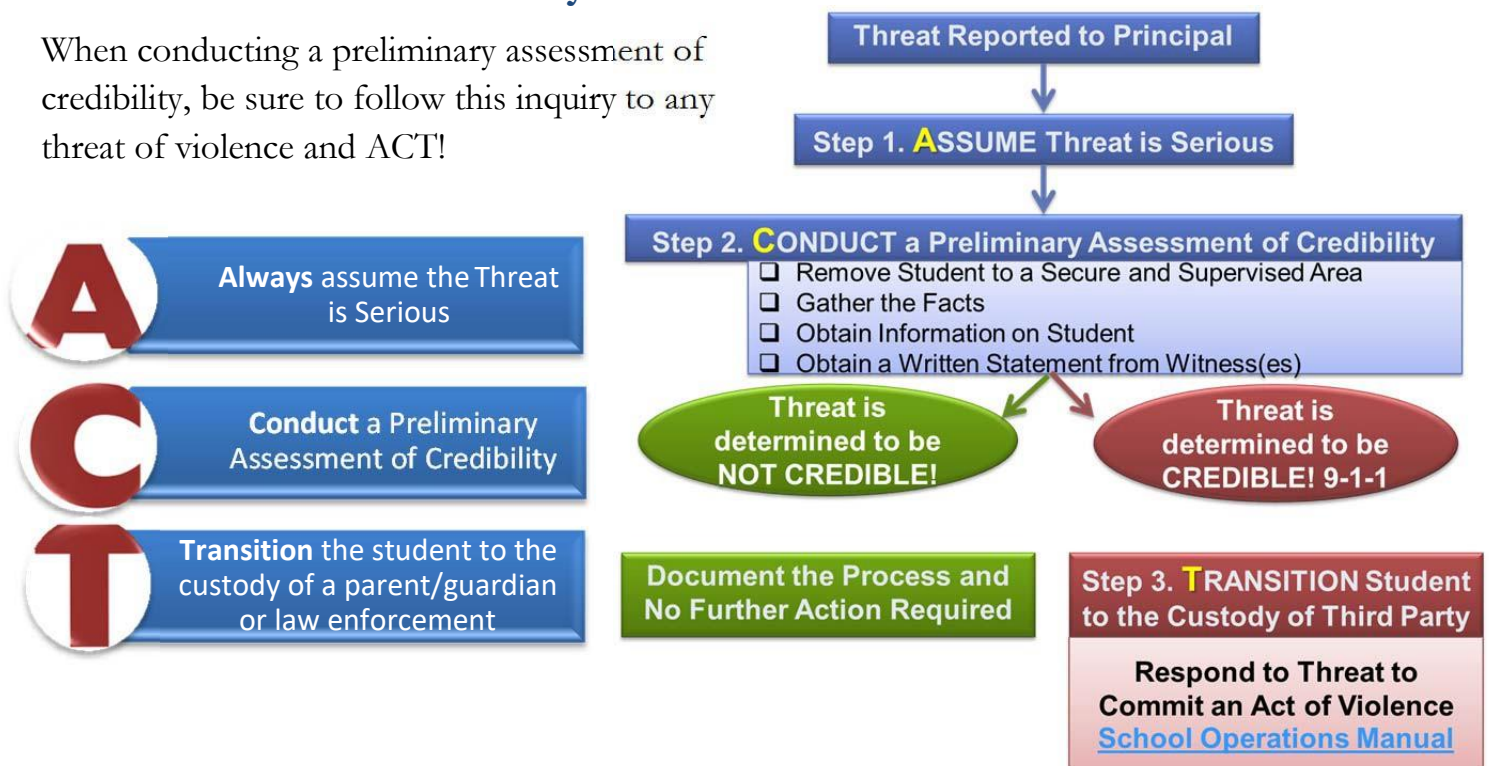
## Determining Credibility

When conducting a preliminary assessment of credibility of a threat, if **“YES”** is the answer to any of the following questions, then the threat is immediately considered to be CREDIBLE!

- ☐ Does the threat of violence express moderate or extreme aggressive behaviors?
- ☐ Are there indications of a plan, feasible process or clear intention to harm others?
- ☐ Are there indications of suicidal ideation or the student not wanting to live?
- ☐ Are there indications of a specific target or a focus of aggressive or violent ideation?
- ☐ Is there suspicion that the student has access to weapons or dangerous items?
- ☐ Are there indications of a focused or unusual interest in acts of violence, or fixation with notorious criminals, murderers, or gangs, whether the historical or fictional?
- ☐ Are there indications of a motive, goal or justification for aggressive behavior or a lethal attack?
- ☐ Are there indications of hopeless, stressful, overwhelming or desperate situations, which may either be real or perceived?
- ☐ Are there indications of a capacity or ability to plan and carry out an act of targeted violence?
- ☐ Are beliefs or ideas irrational, or a feature of a mental health disorder such as being paranoid, obsessive, a feature of a disability?
- ☐ Are parents, guardians, friends, others students, and or teachers concerned about a potential for acting out in a violent or aggressive way?

## Overview of Preliminary Assessment

When conducting a preliminary assessment of credibility, be sure to follow this inquiry to any threat of violence and ACT!



# Suicidal Assessment

## Guidelines

Assessing **SUICIDAL IDEATION** is one of the most anxiety-provoking tasks. Predicting risk is difficult, particularly since so many factors can

increase risk. It is critically important to evaluate self-harm and suicidal behaviors when a child threatens himself or herself, such as verbal or physical expression of self-threatening behaviors.

Interviewing is the best tool for determining suicidal ideation. Considering known risk factors for suicide, the following broad areas and questions are offered to guide the assessment process.

### 1. Assess suicidal thoughts and plans (Specific, concrete, detailed information is best)

- How often do you have thoughts of hurting yourself? How strong are they?
- How long ago did you first start to have these thoughts?
- Have you thought about how you would do it? When?
- Have you taken steps towards acquiring the "gun, pills," and so forth?
- Have you made any plans for your possessions or to communicate with people after your death such as a note or a will? **Extensive planning and preparation is unusual for children**

### 2. Assess strengths and coping skills

- Have you talked to anyone about your suicidal thoughts/feelings?
- Who can you turn to for help? **Name support people and get permission to contact.**
- How have you coped with serious problems and stressful situations in the past? **Look for evidence of adaptive as well as maladaptive coping strategies.**
- What would make it easier to cope now? **Brainstorm about current problems and assess cognitive style (flexible, rigid). Ask directly how you can help.**

### 3. Assess attitude about death and suicide, thoughts about the future, reasons for living

- What does it mean to you to be dead? To be alive? How would important others feel if you acted on your thoughts?
- Why not kill yourself now? What's holding you back?
- Do you think things can improve and your future will be happier?
- Are there things you want to do that you haven't done yet? What are your hopes and dreams for the future? **Assessing affect as well as content helps evaluate hopelessness.**





# Crisis Communication

## Protocol

In the event of a school incident, crisis, emergency or some other required action, please use the following chart to contact the correct person

**If any member of your school community is in immediate danger or harm, please contact 9-1-1 first.**

Abuse, Child Protection	Courtney Chase	Office (301) 853-5302	Cell (202) 255-8514
Accreditation Concerns (State or AdvancED)	Christina Mendez	Office (301) 853-4590	Cell (817) 914-2002
Discipline, Threats, or Student Behaviors	Chris Buchleitner	Office (301) 853-5353	Cell (410) 533-6071
Employee or Teacher Issues	Wendy Anderson	Office (301) 853-4588	Cell (802) 238-9811
Enrollment & Admissions Concerns	Wendi Williams	Office (301) 853-4531	Cell (301) 706-6939
Financial / Tuition Assistance Emergencies	Wendi Williams	Office (301) 853-4531	Cell (301) 706-6939
Legal Questions, Concerns, Court Orders	Kim Viti Fiorentino	Office (301) 853-4521	Cell (301) 467-6036
Marketing Issues	Wendi Williams	Office (301) 853-4531	Cell (301) 706-6939
Media Communication	Paula Grant	Office (301) 853-4516	Cell (202) 579-1537
Policies & Procedures	Kelly Branaman	Office (301) 853-4553	Cell (202) 359-4455
Preschool & Early Enrollment	Roshon Casey	Office (301) 853-4590	Cell (804) 307-5473

## GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a **potential or actual crisis** at an archdiocesan school, the following communications guidelines are as follows:

### Contact\*

1. Immediately contact the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Executive Support Team (identified in the contact phone number box below) in the Catholic Schools Office regarding the potential or actual crisis. First, contact the Catholic Schools Office. If you do not reach her/him, contact another person on the following list. For child protection issues, please refer to the [Child Protection Policy](#) for the Archdiocese of Washington.

General Emergency & School-related incidents CONTACTS		
<b>Superintendent</b> Mr. Bill Ryan Office: (301) 853-5348 Cell: (443) 864-6568 Email: <a href="mailto:ryanw@adw.org">ryanw@adw.org</a>	<b>Associate Superintendent</b> Ms. Kelly Branaman Office: (301) 853-4553 Cell: (202) 359-4455 Email: <a href="mailto:branamank@adw.org">branamank@adw.org</a>	<b>Assistant Superintendent</b> Mr. Chris Buchleitner Office: (301) 853-5353 Cell: (410) 533-6071 Email: <a href="mailto:buchleitnerc@adw.org">buchleitnerc@adw.org</a>
<b>Assistant Superintendent</b> Mrs. Wendy Anderson Office: (301) 853-4588 Cell: (802) 238-9811 Email: <a href="mailto:andersonw@adw.org">andersonw@adw.org</a>	<b>President (CCA)</b> Mr. Vincent Spadoni Office: (301) 853-5358 Cell: (301)-318-0651 Email: <a href="mailto:vincent.spadoni@catholicacademies.org">vincent.spadoni@catholicacademies.org</a>	<b>Chancellor/General Counsel</b> Mrs. Kim Viti Fiorentino Office: (301) 853-4495 Cell: (301) 467-6036 Email: <a href="mailto:fiorentinok@adw.org">fiorentinok@adw.org</a>
<b>Director Child and Youth Protection</b> Courtney Chase Office: (301) 853-5379 Cell: (202) 255-8514 Email: <a href="mailto:chasec@adw.org">chasec@adw.org</a>	<b>Secretary of Communications</b> Paula Gwynn Grant Office: (301) 853-5372 Cell: (202) 579-1537 Email: <a href="mailto:grantp@adw.org">grantp@adw.org</a>	<b>Executive Director of Real Estate</b> Ms. Michelle Shelton Office: (301) 853-4522 Cell: (301) 980-4293 Email: <a href="mailto:sheltonm@adw.org">sheltonm@adw.org</a>

2. Contact the principal and pastor.
3. Assess the situation with the appropriate member of the Executive Support Team.
4. Record the incident on the School Incident Report ([Form 16](#)). When necessary, document a timeline of events, steps taken, and subsequent steps.
5. Prior to any communications with the media or families, consult with the Office of Media and Public Relations, which will provide guidance in identifying the appropriate spokesperson and in developing appropriate communications. In consultation with communications staff, always return media calls or forward them to the Media & Public Relations Office.
6. Advise parish and school staff to refer all inquiries to the designated spokesperson. The spokesperson will respond to media and parent inquiries.
7. At a time of crisis or emergency, it is important that communications be based on these principles: inform key stakeholders as soon as possible, given the situation and available information; and ensure that all communications are succinct, accurate, empathetic, and that they reflect the positive elements of the school and actions taken.

To assist the school and parish, the Communications Office will develop a communications plan, in coordination with the Catholic Schools Office and chief administrator/pastor.

1. The communications plan will include the handling of on-site media, timeline, message development, press releases, letters to parents/guardians and the community, talking points, pulpit announcements, etc.
2. Messaging may include policies, programs, information and statistics that are a matter of record, steps being taken to address the situation, and/or expressions of concern.
3. Confidential or private matters regarding students, parents/guardians or employees may not be released, without consulting with the communications officer. Do not release photos of students, but instead defer to a child's parent.
4. Communications with parents/guardians and/or the parish community: This typically includes the mass communication system and/or a letter from the chief administrator, possibly with the pastor. These messages should be drafted in consultation with the Catholic Schools Office and involve the Communications Secretariat. Communications typically include: (1) a brief description of the situation, (2) an expression of concern, (3) steps that are being taken and (4) a close/request for prayers.

### USE MASS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM FOR COMMUNICATING WITH WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- Continually Updated Parents, Staff, and Volunteers database for contact information (phone and email) and Periodically test the mass communication system

- c. Follow-up with parents/guardians and/or media may be necessary. Monitor news coverage and the response of the community, continue consultations and information sharing between the school/parish, Catholic Schools Office and Media and Public Relations Office, and continue to keep the community informed as appropriate.

POSITION	CSO STAFF	EXT.	EMAIL
Asst. Superintendent for Catholic Identity & Accreditation	<b>Christina Mendez</b>	(301) 853-4548	mendezc@adw.org
Asst. Superintendent for Advancement & Enrollment Management	<b>Wendi Williams</b>	(301) 853-4531	williamsw@adw.org
Manager for Funding and Enrollment	<b>Sean Brown</b>	(301) 853-5356	browns@adw.org
Director of Government & Grant Programs	<b>Brian Radziwill</b>	(301) 853-5357	radziwillb@adw.org
Director for Special Education	<b>Anne Dillon</b>	(301) 853-4569	dillona@adw.org
Director for Curriculum & Instruction	<b>Vicky McCann</b>	(301) 853-4548	mccannv@adw.org
Director for Assessment & Research	<b>Jeremy McDonald</b>	(301) 853-4598	mosleylq@adw.org
Director for Educational Technology	<b>Shannon Norris</b>	(301) 853-4549	norris@adw.org
Director of Early Childhood Programs	<b>Roshon Casey</b>	(301) 853-4587	caseyr@adw.org
Assistant to the Superintendent	<b>Michelle Lawyer</b>	(301) 853-4508	lawyerm@adw.org
Admin. Assistant& Marketing Coordinator	<b>Anna Quattrone</b>	(301) 853-4597	quattronea@adw.org
Admin. Assistant to the Associate Superintendents	<b>Garfield Gardner</b>	(301) 853-5304	gardnerg@adw.org



**SCHOOL INCIDENT REPORT**

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON Catholic Schools

REPORT DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSON SUBMITTING THIS REPORT:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Direct Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

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

School Phone (main): \_\_\_\_\_ Direct: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**INCIDENT DESCRIPTION:**

Please be specific. Include a detailed timeline of events leading up to and during the incident; list who was involved; and what steps were taken in response to the incident. Please include any disciplinary actions taken and contact made with parents. If more space is required, please attach additional page(s).

**Please indicate the appropriate internal school contacts who have been notified of this incident:**

☐ Pastor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Assistant Principal Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ School Counselor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ School Nurse Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ School Admin. Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate the person within the Catholic Schools Office who has been notified:**

☐ Catholic Schools Office Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the nature of the incident, please indicate that the appropriate offices of the Archdiocese have been notified:

<input type="checkbox"/> Office of Child Protection	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Chancery /Legal	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities Management	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic Mutual	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other_____	Name:_____	Date:_____	Time:_____

**If applicable, please indicate the civil authorities contacted:** (Police, Ambulance, Fire, Child Protective Services)

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Time:\_\_\_\_\_ Person Who Made Initial Contact:\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Agency Contacted:\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Officer:\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number:\_\_\_\_\_

**Was anyone transported to the Hospital?** ☐NO ☐YES Hospital Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide name and contact info of injured party and nature of injury/illness:

**Witnesses - Student, Visitor and Staff Information:** *Please provide the following information for all student(s), visitors or staff involved or witness to the incident.*

1	Name:_____ Grade:_____ Age:_____
	Parent/Guardian Name:_____ Phone Number:_____
2	Name:_____ Grade:_____ Age:_____
	Parent/Guardian Name:_____ Phone Number:_____
3	Name:_____ Grade:_____ Age:_____
	Parent/Guardian Name:_____ Phone Number:_____
4	Name:_____ Position:_____
	Home Phone:_____ Alternate Phone:_____
5	Name:_____ Position:_____
	Home Phone:_____ Alternate Phone:_____

Completed By:\_\_\_\_\_ Position:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMIT TO: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE & CATHOLIC MUTUAL GROUP**

**EMAIL form to: [schools@adw.org](mailto:schools@adw.org) & Catholic Mutual: [DCandMDreportclaim@catholicmutual.org](mailto:DCandMDreportclaim@catholicmutual.org)**

# Crisis Management Checklist

## Establish Awareness of Incident

- ☐ Principal and Pastor has been contacted regarding potential or actual crisis
- ☐ CSO Executive Support Team contacted
- ☐ Crisis Intervention Team notified and time set for Team meeting or conference call
- ☐ Principal and/or Pastor attempts to contact family to request permission to share information
- ☐ School Staff notified of crisis and time of a Briefing Meeting

## Develop Plan

- ☐ Crisis Assessment Guide is completed to determine scale of response
- ☐ Locations identified and specific duties assigned
- ☐ Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner preparations are made by Principal for team
- ☐ Identify required outside support and contact information
- ☐ Plan and conduct Briefing Meeting, with resources and packets if necessary
- ☐ Prepare student announcement (if appropriate)

## Implement Plan

- ☐ Dispatch Crisis Intervention Team members to designated locations
- ☐ Make age-appropriate student announcements (if appropriate)
- ☐ Implement other services outlined in the plan, based on scale of response (Safe Room, classroom presentations, small group discussions, one-on-one interventions)
- ☐ Mid-day team meeting to monitor and adjust plan, and to set agenda for end-of-day (debriefing) meeting

## Bring About Closure

- ☐ Conduct end-of-day (debriefing) staff meeting
- ☐ Distribute staff assessment
- ☐ Follow-up for any at-risk students
- ☐ Crisis Intervention Team members complete evaluation



# Crisis Assessment Guide

1. Potential or Actual Incident Description:
2. How many people, and who, can we expect to be impacted?
3. How much disruption, and what kind, should be anticipated?
4. What additional information is required and how might it be obtained?
5. What resources are required for the initial response?
6. Is this an incident our school can handle in house? If not, how much support will be required from the Crisis Intervention Team?
7. How critical/traumatic is this incident? (Rate the Crisis Scale of Response – see next page)

# Crisis Scale of Response

## **LEVEL 1:**

Situation confined to an individual or small group

## **LEVEL 2:**

Class or grade level effected

## **LEVEL 3:**

Multiple grade levels and potentially entire school building impacted

## **LEVEL 4:**

Multiple buildings and sizable portion of archdiocesan impacted

## **LEVEL 5:**

Catastrophic incident with widespread and profound impact on entire archdiocesan school community

# Identifying Intervention Needs

**Staff Briefing Meeting** (When, where, who):

**Classroom Presentations** (Which classes, who):

**Safe Room** (When, where, who):

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

**Individual Support** (When, where, who):

# Questions for Those Directly Impacted

Name of Person \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Form \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Express Concern:** We heard about what happened and wanted you to know how concerned we are. We can't even begin to imagine how hard this must be for you.
  
2. **Ask how the school can be of assistance:** We want to help you however we can. Is there anything that we can do at this time? Do you have family and/or friends close by to support you?
  
3. **Clarify facts:** Here is what we have heard (very briefly share available details). Is this accurate? Is there anything else that we should know?
  
4. **Share school response:** The archdiocesan crisis intervention team will meet to develop a plan for our school. Of course, we will carefully secure any personal items.
  
5. **Obtain funeral and/or memorial service details (if possible):** Please let us know about the funeral arrangements. Is there anything that we should know at this time?
  
6. **Reiterate concern and availability to be of assistance:** Again, we are so sad about what has happened. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to help you.



# Crisis Briefing Meeting

The purpose of this crisis briefing meeting is to consult with and inform staff, allow for psychological decompression, and offer suggestions for stress management.

The following five steps should be included:

1. **Assemble staff** prior to the start of the school day (if at all possible). Thank everyone for attending.
2. **Provide facts regarding the traumatic event.** State to the best of your knowledge factual information that is available.
3. **Highlight and normalize common reactions.** Call attention to typical cognitive, physical, behavioral and emotional symptoms.
4. **Outline the building intervention plan and priorities.** Review any available materials and have extra copies available. Introduce any Crisis Intervention Team members to the building.
5. **Review importance of stress management strategies,** for themselves as well as students.



# Template Letter of Death Announcement

{SCHOOL LETTER HEAD}

{DATE}

Dear {School Name's Families or Parents},

I am deeply saddened to inform you that, {Name of Deceased}, passed away {peacefully or suddenly} on {Date} due to {Reason for Death} at {Location}. {First Name or Formal Last Name of Deceased}, {Relationship to the School}, was a wonderful part of our school and church communities.

Because of the difficult nature of this news, we encourage you to talk to your children and to pray with them. In addition to {me or School Counselor}, the Archdiocese has made grief counselors available to assist the children {today/tomorrow}. If you believe they can help assist you in any way, please feel free to contact {me or School Counselor} at {Phone Number}.

## *Use if funeral arrangements are known*

The funeral arrangements have been established and will occur {this week/next week/tomorrow}. Visitation will be held on {Date} from {Time} to {Time} at {Funeral Home or other Location}. The funeral Mass is scheduled for {Time} on {Date} at {Church Name}.

## *Use if the funeral Mass is during the school day*

If you and your child are planning to attend the Mass, please send a note in with him or her by {Date} to give to their teacher. The note should indicate what time you will be signing them out and when they will be returning to school.

## *Use if funeral arrangements are unknown*

The funeral arrangements are still being made at this time. Once they are finalized, I will share them with you.

Please join me and the entire {School Name} and Church community in praying for the {Last Name} family at this difficult time and for {First Name of Deceased}, that {s/he} is resting peacefully in God's eternal embrace.

Sincerely,

*Signature*

{Principal Name}

Principal

# Agenda for End-Of-Day (Debriefing) Meeting

Review day

Update information

Highlight and dispel rumors

Secure “at-risk” names

Outline plan for any Re-entry of a Student

Respond to Questions

Distribute Evaluation Form

# Crisis Intervention Team Evaluation Form

How well did we **establish awareness** to all individuals who needed to know?

☐ Very Well    ☐ Average    ☐ Needs Improvement    ☐ I Don't Know

How well did the Crisis Intervention Team **meet the needs of students** from your perspective?

☐ Very Well    ☐ Average    ☐ Needs Improvement    ☐ I Don't Know

How well did the Crisis Intervention Team **meet the needs of staff** from your perspective?

☐ Very Well    ☐ Average    ☐ Needs Improvement    ☐ I Don't Know

After today's crisis response, do you have **any suggestions** for handling future crises?

# Crisis Intervention Team Evaluation Form

How well did we **establish awareness** to all individuals who needed to know?

☐ Very Well    ☐ Average    ☐ Needs Improvement    ☐ I Don't Know

How well did the Crisis Intervention Team meet the needs of students from your perspective?

☐ Very Well    ☐ Average    ☐ Needs Improvement    ☐ I Don't Know

How well did the Crisis Intervention Team meet the needs of staff?

☐ Very Well    ☐ Average    ☐ Needs Improvement    ☐ I Don't Know

After today's crisis response, do you have any suggestions for handling future crises?



## Parental Notification

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_ was seen by  
(Student Name)  
\_\_\_\_\_, a member of the Archdiocesan  
(Counselor's/Social Worker's Name)

Crisis Intervention Team, on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Date)

Please take the opportunity to follow up with your child regarding his/her feelings about this issue:

\_\_\_\_\_.

Children and adults respond to experiencing, witnessing or even hearing of a traumatic incident in a variety of ways. It is important that children be given ample opportunities to ask questions and to talk about their reactions. For some students a death of someone they know may remind them of another loss in their lives. For other children it may be their first encounter with death.

Should you have difficulty approaching this issue or if you would like additional information about talking to your child about death, we have material available at school. Below are some other suggestions that parents may find useful in helping your child:

- Be a good listener. Listen carefully for any misconceptions or distortions the child may have.
- Provide physical closeness. Spend extra time putting your child to bed. Talk and offer reassurance.
- Encourage children to ask questions and to discuss, write or draw their feelings.
- Provide play and fun experiences to relieve tensions.

Please feel free to contact \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Name & Number)

if you have any questions or if would like additional information.

Thank you! \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Counselor/Social Worker Signature)

# Classroom Presentation

## 1. Begin the debriefing with a factual discussion.

Share with students the facts as you know them

Keep it simple. If necessary, dispel any rumors and provide clear accurate information.

## 2. Continue leading the discussion on how everyone is feeling.

Clarify that there are no right or wrong ways to feel about the news of a crisis.

Affirm and validate feelings.

Some may want to talk about feelings or be very active.

Others may be more sad, quiet, distracted, sleepy, anxious, or angry.

All of these reactions are normal responses to this difficult news.

## 3. Reassure the students.

Identify their supports in school (teachers, counselor, and principal) and out of school (parents, coaches).

Discuss healthy, productive ways of dealing with their reactions to the news about the crisis.

Refer students to Safe Room if very anxious/nervous, overly distracted than normal, acting depressed, any other significant change in affect.

## 4. Review and Summarize.

Brainstorm on ways to help other classmates or friends and contribute to the school community

## 5. End with Prayer and Maintain regular scheduled classes (Normalize).

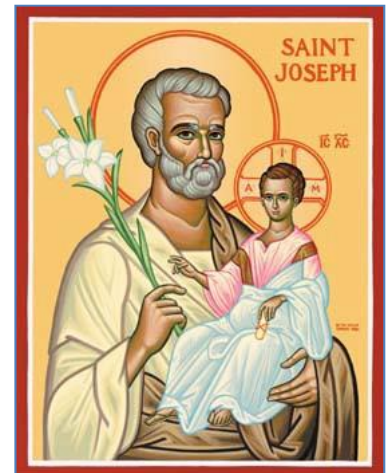
Overall, some students may want to get into planning or doing an activity to express their feelings. This activity should be encouraged, but never forced.

Any difficult or unanswered questions or further of need assistance pertaining to the classroom debriefing, refer to a crisis intervention team member or principal.

O Glorious St. Joseph, you who have power to render possible even things which are considered impossible, come to our aid in our present trouble and distress. Take this important and difficult affair under your particular protection, that it may end happily.

O dear St. Joseph, our confidence is in you. Let it not be said that we would invoke you in vain; and since you are so powerful with Jesus and Mary, show that your goodness equals your power.

Amen.



# Grief Reactions of Concern

Although grief does not follow a specified pattern, there are common stages that children and adolescents may experience with varying sequencing and intensity. The general stages of the grief process are:

**Denial** (unwillingness to discuss)

**Anger or guilt** (blaming others)

**Sorrow or depression** (loss of energy, appetite, or interest in activities)

**Bargaining** (attempts to regain control by making promises or changes in one's life)

**Acceptance or admission** (acceptance that loss is final, real, significant, and painful)

The above behaviors are expected and natural reactions to a loss. However, the following behaviors may warrant further attention:

## Preschool Level:

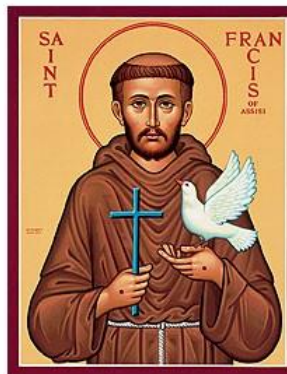
- Decreased verbalization
- Increased anxiety (e.g., clinginess, fear of separation)
- Regressive behaviors (e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking)

## Elementary School Level:

- Difficulty concentrating or inattention
- Somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomach problems)
- Sleep disturbances (e.g., nightmares, fear of the dark)
- Repeated telling and acting out of the event
- Withdrawal
- Increased irritability, disruptive behavior, or aggressive behavior
- Increased anxiety (e.g., clinging, whining)
- Depression, guilt, or anger

## Middle and High School Level:

- Emotional numbing or depression
- Avoidance or withdrawal
- Peer relationship problems
- Substance abuse or other high-risk behavior



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Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,  
Where there is injury, pardon,  
Where there is doubt, faith,  
Where there is despair, hope,  
Where there is darkness, light,  
Where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master, grant that I may  
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console,  
Not so much to be understood as to understand,  
Not so much to be loved, as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
It is in dying that we awake to eternal life.  
Amen

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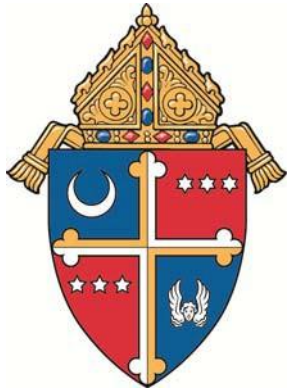
## Safe Room Checklist

- ☐ Pads of paper
- ☐ Various colors of construction paper
- ☐ Crayons/Markers
- ☐ Pens/Pencils
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Envelopes
- ☐ Plain white paper
- ☐ Blank cards
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Elmer's Glue or Paste
- ☐ Kleenex Tissues
- ☐ Access to large paper, for murals, etc.
- ☐ Other options, if available: Snacks
- ☐ Books on ways to handle death or other personal crisis
- ☐ Magazines for collages

# Sign In & Out List

Student/Staff Name	Coming From	Sign In Time	Sign Out Time	Returning To

# PARKING PERMIT



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