

Lamoille Valley Crisis Response for an Unexpected Student Death

Lamoille North Supervisory Union

June 2004

If you need to use this protocol just remember the most important thing is that nothing will really help you plan for this event, but how you manage the next few days will make a tremendous difference in the lives of the students and staff in your school. You have great leadership skills, competent staff in your schools and great partners in Lamoille Valley who will be with you every step of the way. This protocol for response will help guide your journey over the next few days.

People to call and corresponding numbers

People listed below should be called in the order listed.

1. Individual receiving the initial information will contact the head administrator for the school the child attended immediately.
2. The building administrator will contact the police (school's School Resource Office could be contacted to delegate this task) to obtain the official public report of the incident and plan a schedule for contact over the next few days. The administrator will also secure the assistance of the police as needed on the school site to support students and staff.
 - a. Lamoille County Sheriff's Department 888-3502, 24 hour number
 - b. Your School's Resource Officer's emergency contact number _____
or _____
 - c. Your local police department phone number _____
3. Building administrator will contact the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Student Support Services. At this point decisions will be made on which individual will take the responsibility to make all necessary phone calls that follow. Additionally, inform the Director of Student Support Services if the student attended an alternative school so they can contact the school on your behalf.
 - a. Supervisory Union Office emergency contact number 888-3142, ext. 0
 - b. Superintendent home phone number, Terry Bailey, 888-9356
 - c. Director of Student Support Services home phone number, Sue Cano, 888-6748
4. Building administrator will contact staff that provided services to the student or their siblings and building level crisis team members. Establish the meeting time for the first crisis response planning team meeting. See #1 in section titled "First Crisis Team Meeting" below for additional info to share with individuals you call.

List your building's Crisis Team members and phone numbers here:

5. Lamoille County Crisis Services. Request crisis workers for your school team and give them the time to report to your school. Tell them the name of the student.
 - a. Daytime hours 8:00 to 4:30, 888-4914
 - b. All other times call 888-4231 and ask for the mental health worker on duty
6. Jim McDonald, Director, Lamoille County Mental Health. Request mental health case manager support for your crisis team. Give him the name of the student so they can inform their staff who worked with the child/family and appropriately select the correct staff to support your school.
 - a. Daytime hours 8:00 to 4:30, 888 4914
 - b. Home phone 888-1950
7. Dave Connor, Director, Lamoille Family Center. Give him the name of the student so they can inform their staff who worked with the child/family and appropriately select the correct staff to support your school.

- a. Daytime hours 8:00 to 4:30, 888-5229
- b. Home phone 223-5426
- 8. Assign the responsibility of contacting interagency partners who were providing services to the student or the student's siblings to the guidance counselor, 504/sped case manager or the Director of Student Support Services.
- 9. If the student was an adolescent the Director of Student Support Services will contact Floyd Nease from Laraway School so they can prepare to support youth enrolled in their program.
- 10. Contact the superintendents of your neighboring Supervisory Unions in Lamoille Valley if the death was a suicide and if the student was an adolescent so they can prepare to support students in their schools.

First Crisis Team meeting:

- 1. Meeting will take place at _____
- 2. Meeting will begin at 7:15 am if the death occurred after the prior school day concluded.
- 3. Meeting will begin ASAP at a time you pick if death occurred during the school day.
- 4. Assemble the crisis team members to do the following:
 - a. Make a list of students who need to be supported based on their relationship to the student or issues they are dealing with personally that will be brought to the forefront for them based on this event.
 - b. Make a list of staff who will need to be supported
 - c. Confirm and share with crisis team the official police communication on the event
 - d. Identify sites in the school to staff to send students to who want/need to talk
 - e. Develop a written statement for all staff and a plan to get it to them quickly, include what they can say to students about the death and item (e) above
 - f. If it is before a school day starts make a plan to be at entrances to the school to talk to and identify students in crisis
 - g. Identify who will go to the classroom spaces for the first hour of school where the student would have been present
 - h. Establish a time and location for the team to reconvene in about an hour to share info and plan next steps
 - i. Principal instructs staff to compile the attendance data ASAP so absence info is ready for the 2nd Crisis Team Meeting

Second Crisis Team meeting

At this time you will need all team members to report on the "As Is" condition for students and staff and develop stage two of your support for students.

- 1. Each crisis team member reports out on students targeted for intervention and any new info about the event learned through discussions with students.
- 2. Contact the police for verification on any new information on the event.
- 3. Finalize the plan for staffing the areas of the building where students congregate or planned drop in centers for students who want to talk. Determine who will secure writing and drawing materials to have available for the students to use to process their grief. Consider if snacks are also needed in these locations, as some students may not have eaten properly prior to seeing you at these sites.
- 4. Review the list of absences to determine if any students at risk for safety need to have someone phone or visit them at home. Interagency partners who service kids can be asked to help with this activity.
- 5. Plan for a crisis response team member to follow the student's schedule for the day to monitor the support needs of fellow classmates. Be prepared for youth who express unexpected emotions related to this event. Some youth may not be sad or feeling remorse, some youth may be happy the student has passed. The feeling of happiness could occur for a variety of reasons based on the deceased student's perceived health and life circumstances prior to their death.
- 6. Get out to the sites and plan to meet again in one hour to debrief and plan next steps.

All subsequent Crisis Team meetings:

Continue to use the sequential steps listed above in this document to review the safety and well being of staff, students in school and students who may not have attended school.

1. Discuss and plan how the school will respond to the wake and funeral for the youth
2. Plan how youth who want to attend get the information on the details of these events in #1 above

The Lead Administrator/s Additional Duties:

Staff from your school who participated as members of your crisis response team and yourselves will need to be supported so that you too can process and deal with your grief. You will have spent the hours and days before this point thinking not of yourselves, but of others who needed help. Dave Connor, Director, Lamoille Family Center and staff from Lamoille County Mental Health are available to help your crisis team process this event. Make a plan to use their services for your Crisis Response Team and yourself.



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