

Tips for Parents

To Help Your Child Deal with a Violent Incident on a School Campus

Your attitude sets the atmosphere to deal with the crisis. Be calm and reassuring. You and/or your child may:

- Be fearful to return to school
- Feel school is unsafe
- Have a different or less trustful view of students
- Experience symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (i.e. Nightmares, confusion, flashback, unprovoked anger, outbursts, sleeplessness, irritability)

In order to help your child:

- Emphasize that in spite of this occurrence schools are generally very safe places
- Awareness levels are high in San Diego; therefore, the level of safety is increased
- Prevention efforts have also been increased

At home provide a safe, supportive environment for our children.

- Allow and encourage your children to express how they feel
- Be a good listener (allow the child to do most of the talking)
- Be attentive
- Acknowledge feelings
- Remind them that we all will heal with time
- Provide supportive feedback and reassurance
- Reinforce that schools are safe

How to help your child deal with the extensive media coverage:

For Elementary Age Children

- Exclude exposure to violence and drama (i.e. dead corpses, bloody bodies, police with guns)
- Watch, along with your child, students involved in problem-solving efforts that are on T.V.(i.e. kids supporting each other, telling an adult when something is wrong)
- Emphasize students working together toward solutions
- Discuss solutions with your child

For Middle School and High School Age Youth

- Watch media coverage with them
- Ask questions such as:

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Liz Lebrón, Senior Director
(858) 292-3666

1. What are your thoughts and feelings about what you have seen?
2. Why do you think a youth did that?
3. Have you ever heard or seen another student say they were going to do something like that?
4. If you do see it, what should you do?
 - Would this work at your school? Why?
 - What other things would you suggest?
 - What would you be willing to do?

If your child talks about harassment, bullying, or being picked on, ask the following questions:

- How do you think Bullying/Harassment played a part in this?
- Have you been bullied/harassed/picked on?
- How did you feel when that happened?
- How did you handle it?
- What are ways to handle or cope* with bullying**?
- How can you help others who are bullied and harassed?

***See “Coping Skills for Youth” below.**

****Refer to “Bullying Information” on our Safe Schools Resource Links Website**

www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/student/ss/resources.html

Community Involvement/Support

**Invite your children’s friends/parents over for a small neighborhood forum
(2-4 families)**

Parents - Ask your children the following questions and listen:

- Are you fearful to return to school? Why?
- Do you feel school is unsafe? Why?
- What needs to happen to make your school safe?
- What would you be willing to do?

(If bullying and harassment comments surface, refer to bullying/harassment questions above)

Children ask your parents the following questions:

- Do you think the school is safe?
- How did you handle being picked on or harassed?
- What are some ways that I can handle it?
- Can you help me make my school safer? (What will you do?)

Suggestions that parents/students can do to help make the school safer:

- Become a volunteer as part of your school safety plan

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- Develop a school safety campaign (poster contest, poetry, etc.)
- Develop a “when not to keep the secret” campaign - emphasizing the importance of reporting all comments of potential violent acts to an adult
- Develop a school safety team with students, parents, staff
- Develop an assistance program for victims of harassment

Coping Skills for Youth:

- Journal writing
- Drawing
- Listening to music
- Prayer
- Quiet time close to nature
- Access resources in your community
- Talk to a friend/mentor/parent/clergy
- Sports, dance, walking – physical activity
- Express feelings of sadness, pain, confusion, anger, stress
- Add your own

We hope this information will assist you and your children establish a meaningful level of dialogue – expressing and addressing concerns and fears relating to the recent incident in Santana High School.

If you need additional assistance dealing with this issue, please contact your local school or your community health professional.

Community Health Professional Agencies

Agency	Phone Number
County Mental Health Crisis Line	1-800-479-3339
Psychotherapists Referral Services	(619) 296-9011
San Diego Psychological Services	(619) 291-3451
Association of Social Workers	(619) 232-9622
North County Psychological Services	(760) 752-6152
Countywide Crisis Hotline	(800) 479-3339
Youth to Youth (staffed by teens)	(888) 999-8336
Info & Referral Line (for family mental health)	(888) 843-5800
Family Advocacy & Support Services	(858) 566-5740
Frontline Crisis Services – Central County	(619) 692-8750
Access & Crisis – East County	(800) 479-3339
Frontline Crisis Services – Logan Heights	(619) 595-4400

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