

## **Supporting Kids After a Major Event at School**

1. Try to keep routines as normal as possible.
2. Limit exposure to television, social media, and the news.
3. Be honest, share information that they are developmentally able to handle.
4. Listen and validate their fears and concerns.
5. Reassure kids that the world is a good place to be, but there are times when bad things happen.
6. Parents and adults need to first deal with and assess their own responses to crisis and stress.
7. Rebuild and reaffirm attachments and relationships.
8. If the students have something they like to do in the classroom, do it.
9. Watch for signs of stress, fear, anxiety
10. Allow students to gather in their peer groups.

Shock, anger, grief, and anxiety and delayed response to grief are all a part of witnessing, or vicariously experiencing a major event.

It is normal and should begin to be less frequent in 4-6 weeks.

Encourage putting their feelings into words by talking, journaling, art, drawing, telling stories.

11. Take a break, have another person monitor the classroom, utilize the counselors, and support staff available.
12. Stay in touch and support one another.
13. Avoid distressing assignments, videos.
14. Kids often feel the need to help or give back in some way. Encourage this healing activity.
15. Create security in your classroom. This may mean explaining how the school is providing support, security presence, resources availability.

Example:

1. More police presence
2. Extra therapeutic staff
3. Resource (therapy canines, familiar faces from the community)

16. Encourage sense of belonging, talk occurring in groups, but be a guide for appropriate, safe, and support discussion.

## **Supporting Each Other After a Major Event**

1. Fulfill basic needs: food, water, warmth, rest
2. Know your boundaries.
3. Take time-outs.
4. Connect
5. Sometimes accomplishing a small task will assist in the healing and coping.
6. Have comfort items for yourself in your classroom for you to utilize.
7. Allow yourself time. Sometimes our response is delayed emotionally after a traumatic event.
8. Be honest about how you feel to a trusted person and reach out.
9. Limit exposure to television, social media, and the news.
10. Try to keep to routines that will ensure a sense of normalcy.
11. Know your body/self

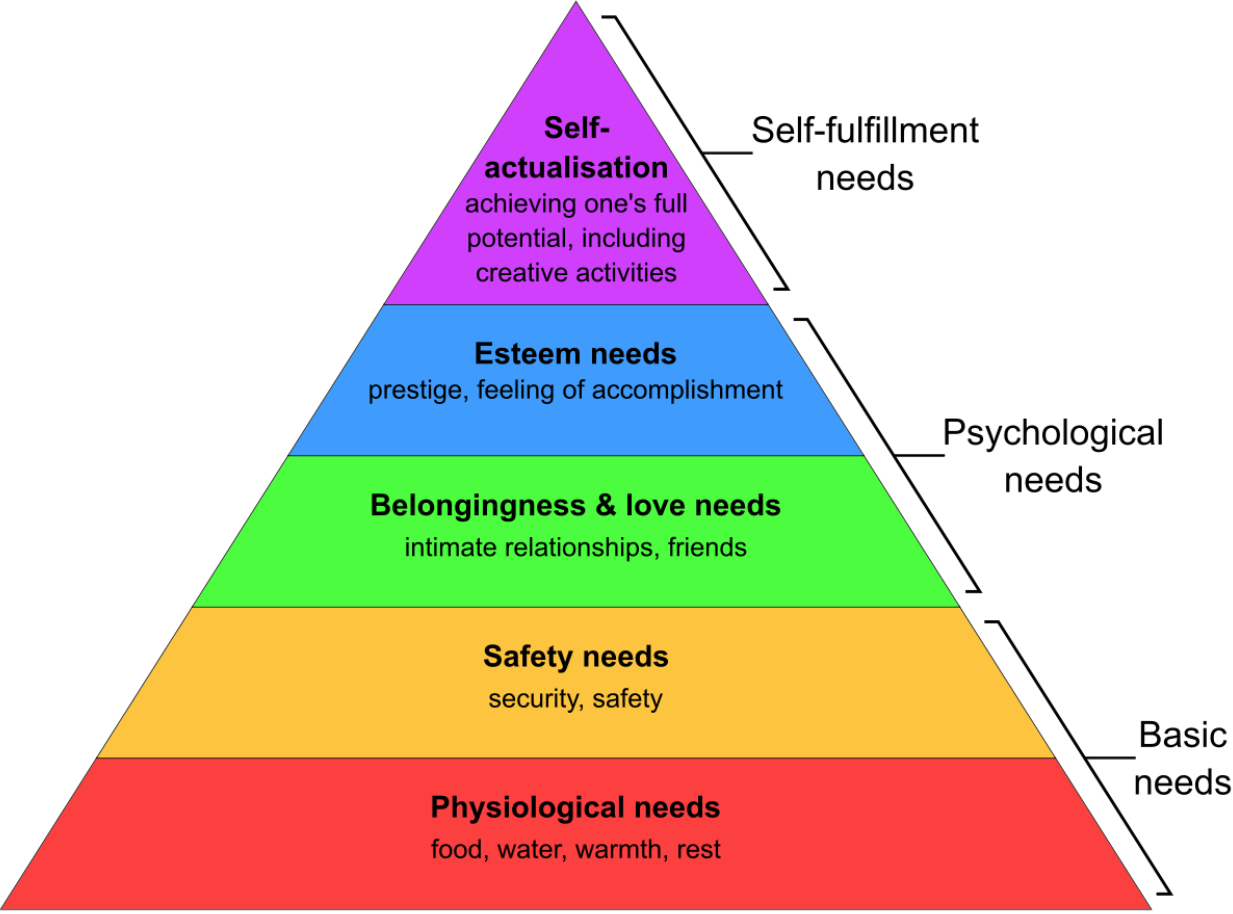
Assess

Identify

Acknowledge

Plan

Reach out



If you are concerned about someone, ask yourself the following questions:

Has your friend or family member shared or shown any of the following:

1. Talking about wanting to die, be dead, or about suicide, or are they cutting or burning themselves?
2. Feeling like things may never get better, seeming like they are in terrible emotional pain (like something is wrong deep inside but they can't make it go away), or they are struggling to deal with a big loss in their life?
3. Is your gut telling you to be worried because they have withdrawn from everyone and everything, have become more worried or on edge, seem unusually angry, or just don't seem normal to you?
4. Having thoughts of suicide or past attempts.
5. Dealing with depression, anxiety, or severe emotional distress.
6. Experiencing prejudice, discrimination, or pressure to be someone they are not.
7. Abusing drugs or alcohol.
8. Patterns of highly aggressive or illegal behaviors.
9. Having *access* to or talking about lethal means like firearms.
10. Experiencing chronic loneliness or social isolation
11. Making direct threats toward a place, another person, or themselves.
12. Bragging about access to guns or weapons.
13. Recruiting accomplices or audiences for an attack.
14. Directing expressing a threat as a plan.

*Note: Kids may experience all of these and not have suicidal thoughts... or none of these and be suicidal. These are only guidelines. If you are concerned, take ACTION!*

24/7 HELP NETWORK NORTHEAST OHIO DIAL 211 OR 330-747-2696

ALTA CARE GROUP HAS A CRISIS LINE FOR THEIR CLIENTS, (THERE IS ALWAYS A THERAPIST AVAILABLE) CALL 211 OR 330-747-2696

CRISIS TEXT LINE- TEXT *HOME* to 741741

NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE 1-800-273-8255

PFLAG TEXT *START* to 741741

THETREVORPROJECT.ORG *for LGBTQIA+* the website offers chat, text, and phone call via computer or phone

THE TREVOR PROJECT

Phone: 1-866-488-7386

Text: Text *START* to 678-678

Suicide & Crisis Line Call 988

EMERGENCIES CALL 911

If you know someone has any of the warning signs, there are things that you can do to help:

1. Ask them if they are okay and listen to them like a friend.
2. Tell them you are worried and concerned about them and that they are not alone.
3. Talk to an adult you trust about your concerns.

# **The Teacher's Role When Tragedy Occurs**

## **Acknowledge the loss**

When a tragedy involves a school community-especially when the lives of students and teachers are lost. It is likely that it will be in the classroom where the loss may be felt most. Some kids may be very uncomfortable with that awareness. However, acknowledging the loss will give your students the opportunity to express their feelings.

## **Give kids time to talk**

Though there may be a school-wide meeting or service on helping children cope, for many kids in the classroom will be the most important setting for asking questions, sharing feelings, and offering memories. Receiving comfort from adults that know them well, even from other children, than from crisis experts who are not familiar to them creates a higher level of comfortability and support. Adults listening to children is more important than knowing the perfect thing to say to them. A comfortable and safe setting where kids are allowed to be sad, upset, confused is the most valuable thing you can offer.

## **Encourage questions**

Convening in a group discussion, in whatever style is familiar to your students or kids and let them know you're sad, many others are sad, and that when a tragedy happens and we lose friends and classmates, it's important to talk about how we feel. We want to remember those friends or classmates. Invite, but not force questions, and answer them as simply as possible in a developmentally appropriate way.

## **Address safety concerns**

Some students will be worried about their own safety. Could the same thing happen to them? If it was a fire, reassure them that fires are very rare in this day and age, and remind them about safety measures like fire drills. If it was an act of violence, you can stress again, efforts by parents, teachers, school administration as to how they will be making it a safe environment. If they ask questions you can't answer, it's okay to tell them you don't know, but will find out.

## **Return to routine**

After you have given them plenty of time to formulate their questions, express their feelings, and respond to each other, it's important to go back to your regular routine. Routines model healthy resilience, but also routine is deeply comforting for children.

# I NEED HELP! BUT DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO OR WHO TO ASK!

## ASK YOURSELF:

*Did I talk to my parent/caregiver?*

*Did I talk to my school counselor?*

*Did I talk to my therapist?*

*Did I talk to my teacher?*

*Can I talk to my friend?*

*If you are still struggling with who you should talk to and are nervous, but need to talk here are some other options.*

