

WHEN THERE IS A LOSS AT SCHOOL: FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to a Death in the School Community

The death of a student, staff member, or family member connected to the school community can have a profound impact on everyone. A coordinated and compassionate response is crucial for supporting those grieving and fostering healing. This guide offers resources and best practices for navigating this difficult time.

Immediate Steps:

1. Verify and Gather Information: Confirm the facts surrounding the death. Be mindful of privacy concerns and family wishes regarding the release of information. Designate a point of contact for accurate information dissemination.

2. Activate Your Crisis Response Team: Reach out to Northwell's postvention team to help assess the needs and implement a crisis plan or coordinate a response based on the specific situation.

3. Notify the School Community: Craft a sensitive and age-appropriate message for students, staff, and parents. Acknowledge the loss, offer support, and provide information about available resources.

4. Provide Grief Support: Offer counseling and support services to students and staff. Create designated safe spaces where individuals can express their emotions and receive individual or group counseling. Consider partnering with community mental health professionals to supplement school resources.

Communicating with Students and Staff:

•**Be honest and direct:** Use clear language appropriate for different age groups. Avoid euphemisms and address questions openly and patiently

•**Validate feelings:** Acknowledge the range of emotions individuals may experience and normalize grief reactions

•**Emphasize support:** Reassure students and staff that they are not alone and that help is available

•**Maintain routines:** While providing flexibility, strive to maintain a sense of normalcy and structure within the school day

•**Monitor social media:** Address rumors and misinformation promptly. Share accurate updates and resources through school communication channels.



Physician Partners

MORE INFORMATION

Pediatric Behavioral Health Emergency Service

Cohen's Emergency Room, Ground Floor
718-470-3768 or Dial 911

Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care

269-01 76th Avenue, New Hyde Park
718-470-3148

Pediatric Behavioral Health Rockville Centre

100 Merrick Road, Rockville Centre
516-927-1630

Pediatric Behavioral Health Mineola

156 First Street, Mineola
516-321-5770

Pediatric Behavioral Health Commack

2171 Jericho Tpke, Commack
631-775-3280

WHEN THERE IS A LOSS AT SCHOOL: RESOURCES

For Teens

[Taking Care of You](#)

[Talking About Suicide with Friends and Peers](#)

For School Staff

- [Schools Personnel Traumatic Grief](#)
- [Supporting Trauma Informed Schools to Keep Students in the Classroom](#)
- [Trauma Informed Schools K-12 Systems Framework](#)
- [Workplace loss](#)
- [Loss in schools](#)
- [About PFA | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(nctsn.org\) & PFA Field Guide](#)
- [About SPR | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(nctsn.org\) & SPR Field Guide](#)
- [After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools 2nd Edition \(sprc.org\)](#)
- [Death of Student or Staff - National Center for School Safety \(nc2s.org\)](#)

For Parents/Caregivers

- [Talking to Your Child About a Suicide Death: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS](#)

For Parents/Caregivers of students in special education

- [Caregivers: Helping Teens with Traumatic Grief](#)
- [Understanding Trauma Responses in Children with IDD and When to Seek Help](#)
- [Trauma and Children with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities: Taking Care of Yourself and Your Family](#)

For Everyone

[Age Related Reactions to Traumatic Events](#)

[Psychological First Aid & Skills for Psychological Recovery](#)

BOOKS



Something Very Sad Happened



Remembering Ethan



Samantha James Missing Smile

APPS



PFA



Grief Refuge



Nelson's Journey

General Websites

- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(NCTSN\)](#): Provides resources on traumatic grief, age-related reactions, and supporting children and adolescents through loss.
- [The Dougy Center](#): Offers support and resources for grieving children and families, including information for educators.
- [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#): A national collaborative focused on providing grief support in schools.
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(AFSP\) \(if applicable\)](#): Offers resources for schools after a suicide death, including toolkits and guidelines for postvention.
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(SPRC\) \(if applicable\)](#): Provides resources and best practices for suicide prevention and postvention in schools and communities.
- [The National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#): Offers support and resources for individuals and families affected by mental illness, including grief support programs.
- * [The Jed Foundation](#) - supporting teens and young adults social and emotional health, suicide prevention.

* **Local Mental Health Providers**: Connect with community mental health agencies, therapists, and counselors who specialize in grief and trauma.