

CRISIS INTERVENTION PLAN

A crisis is any incident potentially disrupting the school community involving staff, student or a community resident.

Purpose of Crisis Committee: To provide a network to disseminate information to staff, students and parents during the crisis period and to provide counseling and supportive services as needed.

Goal: Students, staff, family members and community shall use accurate information, counseling and supportive services to deal with school related crisis.

Committee Statement: School related crises will occur but the impact on people can be reduced by providing accurate information, counseling and working appropriately with the media.

Recognizing that:

- In order to have all staff able to confidently respond to student needs and emotional reactions during a crisis
- And that students will choose the person that are most comfortable approaching regardless of the individual's designation,

There will be provision for:

1. All faculty/staff to receive inservice education in crisis intervention techniques.
2. All new faculty/staff to the district shall have, as part of their initial orientation, inservice in basic crisis intervention techniques.
3. At (three year) intervals, all staff will have refresher courses in basic intervention techniques.

Process:

1. Immediate notification of building principal of any information involving student/staff/family member/community with potential effect on school community.
2. Principal notifies crisis committee members.
3. A person from crisis team will be designated to be liaison between family/community representative and shall to receive and provide accurate information regarding crisis. Media spokesperson is designated (see Appendix A). Verification of crisis form outside agencies (police, Social Services, fire, etc.) to be obtained, if necessary.
4. meeting of crisis committee to determine the following:
 - a. Review information for severity of crisis and to discuss potential effect on school community.

PAGE 2

- b. Determine what population of school will be affected by crisis. This may be entire school population or only select few. Students with previous experience with similar crisis shall be carefully monitored for reaction to this crisis.
 - c. Determine if BOCES Wide Response Plan should be implemented.
 - d. Determine appropriate faculty to be informed by telephone tree or staff meeting before or after school. Determine which students shall be informed by memo read to class by teacher or crisis committee member. This may include entire school population or only a few classes.
 - e. Develop memo to be read to classes. This memo shall include only facts related to crisis. It shall include who, what, when, where and why if known. Memo shall include where and when counseling is available and encourage students to seek staff to discuss feelings.
 - f. Identify resources needed. The following outside resources may be contacted by designated committee person for support services:
 1. Catholic Family Services 274-9245
 2. Cooperative Christian Ministries 732-4120
 3. Family and Children's Services 274-3880
 4. Rensselaer County Domestic Violence Program 1-800-942-6906
 5. Rensselaer County Mental Health 270-2800
 6. Rensselaer County Rape Crisis Center (Samaritan Hospital) 271-3257
 7. Samaritan Hospital Mental Health Center 271-3374
 8. Student Assistance Program 270-2807
 9. Suicide Prevention 463-2323
 10. Unified Services, 1249 3rd Street, Rensselaer 463-8869
 - g. Arrange counseling services. Crisis committee members or outside agency support staff shall be assigned space and time to be available for staff and students. This may include teachers' room, guidance office or other designated area.
 - h. Determine if any further action is necessary. Ex: As in death of a student – locker should be cleaned by designated staff member or family when and if desired.
5. Committee implements plan of action (see Appendix B).
 6. Evaluate plan frequently and adjust as necessary.

8/16/90

APPENDIX A

Guidelines for Dealing with Media

1. Recognizing that it is important to respect privacy and not sensationalize a tragedy, one (1) spokesperson will be designated, either the superintendent or building principal. This spokesperson may issue a brief statement for the media and answer questions which do not violate confidentiality (confer with school attorney, if needed).
2. Faculty and staff should refer questions to the designated spokesperson.
3. On school grounds, the media will not interview students.
4. No personal or academic information about a student is to be given to non-school individuals without full knowledge and prior approval by the student's parent or guardian.
5. As part of the information announced to the students (in homeroom or during class period), student s will be advised of district plans to respond to the media and of their right not to speak to reporters.

APPENDIX B

I. Day One (In School)

A. Early morning faculty and staff meeting is held with several purposes.

1. Principal reviews the known facts of the case and distributes fact sheet in order to establish a common reference base and to dispel rumors.
2. Principal introduces crisis team members, reviews special schedule for day and communicates the location of the “crisis centers.”
3. Crisis team members describe the feelings which students may be experiencing and suggest how the teachers might handle them. Time is allowed for questions and for dealing with the feelings of the staff. Some staff may be particularly upset and require additional support.
4. Guidelines are provided for helping any students who are upset and for having them escorted to one of the “crisis centers” set up on the building (guidance office, etc.). Faculty should identify “high-need” students for potential follow-up.
5. Teachers are encouraged to allow students in their classes free expression or grief. The guiding principle is to return to normal routine as soon as possible within each class and within the school.
6. The teachers are asked to dispel rumors and to provide accurate information whenever possible.

B. The principal, guidance counselors, clinical staff and/or teachers may meet with each grade, either by individual homerooms or by total grade (if possible) in order to:

1. Review the known facts and to dispel rumors.
2. Inform students and staff of the location and role of the crisis center, if provided.
3. Encourage students to express their reactions in whatever way is appropriate for them. (All responses are acceptable, from severe upset to no reaction whatsoever.)
4. Discuss possible guilt or feelings of responsibility.
5. Discuss possible fears for their own safety and that of their siblings and peers.

6. Ask students to be supportive of one another and to escort any friend who is upset to a teacher or the crisis center.
 7. Reassure students that any adult in the building is available to help.
 8. Encourage students to discuss their feelings with their parents.
- C. Telephone calls are made to parents of individual students who are particularly upset during the day. The crisis team will collaborate to determine which parents are called. The telephone contact is ideally handled by clinical staff who can explain the student's reactions to the parents and give appropriate advice as to how parents should handle their son/daughter. Some parents may be asked to pick up the student at the school.
- D. All building staff are assembled after school to:
1. Allow for the expression of feeling and mutual support. (After a full day of dealing with their own emotional responses and that of their students, the teachers are generally quite drained.)
 2. Review the events of the day.
 3. Review the characteristics of "high-need" students (those who seem especially upset or depressed or show other signs of not dealing well) and compile a list, based on staff observations, of individual student reactions during the day.

II. Follow-Up Activities

The Crisis Team shall suggest follow-up activities to the building principal and Superintendent of Schools who shall determine the most appropriate course of action. If it is further suggested that staff be reminded that there is one media contact person.

- A. Outside consultants may be called upon. At this point, it may be helpful to have "outside" professionals because they are not emotionally involved and can, therefore, provide objective support and direction. Some of the services they can provide are:
1. Recommend to parents private evaluations for "high-need" students.
 2. Speak at a general faculty meeting on the issue of adolescent suicide identification, prevention, response.
 3. Conduct evening informational meetings for all concerned community members.

- B. Guidance and clinical staff continue meeting with individual students and small groups to provide support and to further identify “high-need” students and faculty.
- C. Contact all parents of students identified as “high-need” to express concern and to suggest possible follow-up evaluation by informing parents of community and county resources available.
- D. Outside consultant and school staff may conduct an evening meeting of all concerned parents to answer questions and allay concerns.
- E. Guidance and clinical school staff continue crisis intervention, answer phone calls or anxious parents and meet with concerned staff.
- F. The principal and Superintendent of Schools will determine whether calls and letters should be sent to parents of “high-need” students reminding them to seek a private or community professional evaluation in order to insure the health and safety of the child. (Return receipt mail is suggested.)
- G. “School/Community Steering Committee” can be formed and can plan a meeting of all interested community leaders to discuss a community-wide response to the needs of the teenagers of the town.
- H. “Front-line” staff who have been dealing directly with the crisis should meet with a consultant for expression of feelings and mutual support. (This is a very necessary ingredient and may need to be an on-going process.)

Closing Comment:

An outside support consultant can help the superintendent, principal and other key coordinators to examine their own view of the situation and, at the same time, validate key responsibilities toward children, teachers, parents and/or the community as a whole.