

MVUSD

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

(CISM)

HANDBOOK



2016-2017

CISM TEAM MEMBERS

2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Last Name	First Name	Cell Phone	Ext	Role
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Lesicko	Dean	(951)775-6529	1216	CISM Liaison
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Velk	Dale	(951)378-5607	1155	Safe Schools
Quisenberry	Martin	(909)226-9736	6785	Coordinator*
Tucker	Sharon	(951)852-9805	4080	First Officer*
Davis	Mary	(951)265-2788	5021	Triage Officer*
Hacker	Melissa	(951)200-1991	2690	Counselor
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Richardson	Leilani	(949)322-2449	2723	Counselor
Owens	Cathy	(951)956-9467	6495	Counselor
Shuman	Barbara	(951)440-6010	5292	Counselor
Lewis	Teresse	(951)775-0246	2338	Counselor
Alderson	Sue	(760)420-3229	1217	Counselor
McCarthy	Lucie	(951)813-8700	6796	Counselor
Fackelman	Michelle	(951)252-3524	6492	Counselor
Dewey	Tamara	(951)217-9118	2490	Counselor
Lucas	Linda	(619)838-1939	1184	Counselor
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Armendariz	Yoanna	(951)236-3625	1046	Counselor

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GOALS OF THE MURRIETA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT CISM TEAM

1. SECURE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND STAFF.
2. IDENTIFY AND SERVE THOSE INDIVIDUALS NEEDING INTERVENTION BY MAXIMIZING THEIR POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES.
3. HELP TO BRING THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY BACK TO REGULAR DAILY ACTIVITIES.
4. FOLLOW-UP WITH STUDENTS AND STAFF AND PROVIDE REFERRALS AS NEEDED.
5. PREVENT FUTURE CRISIS INCIDENTS.

The CISM Team is a school district-based group that gives short-term CISM and services when a serious crisis event resulting in significant emotional or psychological distress to many students or staff occurs on or off campuses.

Murrieta Valley Unified School District Incident Communication Protocol & Flow Chart

Updated 6/15/2016

REPORT THESE TYPES OF INCIDENTS:

- Incidents necessitating a 911 call
- Incidents involving students or staff members who are detained or arrested by police on campus.
- Incidents that threaten, or have the potential to threaten, student and/or staff health or safety
- Death, injury or accidents involving students/staff
- Incidents that result in a 5150 (psychiatric evaluation)
- Any other incidents that involve media/news coverage or are likely to generate media/news coverage

- 1. Incident Occurs**
- 2. Site Administrator calls SRO, Murrieta Police Dispatch or 911 for emergency services as needed**
- 3. Site Administrator or their designee calls Karen Parris to report incident**
- 4. SRO Sergeant calls Karen Parris to report incident and police action taken**
 Cell: (951) 813-8796
 Office (951) 696-1600 ext. 1022
 Home (951) 677- 0603



If Site administrator or Police are unable to reach Karen Parris by phone, the next call goes to:

Safe Schools Director Dale Velk
 Office: (951) 696-1600 ext. 1155



If Dale Velk is not reached in person, site administrator and police will call:

Superintendent Pat Kelley
 Cell: (951) 813-8705
 Office: (951) 696-1600 ext. 1001

If Wayne is the first person who receives notification from Site Administrator and/or Police, Wayne will notify Karen Parris. If he is unable to reach Karen Parris, he will notify Pat Kelley

↓
 Superintendent

1. Reviews incoming report(s)
2. Consults with site administrator
3. Determines preliminary response
4. Determines if assistance to site is needed & who will provide
5. Decides whether or not to activate EOC
6. Determines plan of action
7. Notify Board Trustees

↓
 Karen Parris notifies:

1. Superintendent
2. Sgt. Bob Anderson
3. Dale Velk
4. Christine Hill
5. Senior Cabinet/Cabinet
6. Principals/Assistant Principals
7. **Dean Lesicko/CISM Team**
8. DSC Receptionist
9. Other staff as situation dictates

↓
 After initial notifications Karen Parris will:

1. Confirm facts with site administrator and police
2. Coordinate with site administrator to prepare a script for ParentLink calls
3. Post announcements on district and/or school website
4. Coordinate release of info with Police and/or Fire Dept.
5. Provide follow-up reports to administrators & staff
6. Provide talking points for staff
7. Field media inquiries

- A. The CISM Team Liaison contacts the CISM Coordinator.
- B. The CISM Liaison(s) quickly contact(s) the school site-based crisis team and school administrator in person to obtain relevant information.
- C. The CISM Liaison(s) meet(s) with the CISM Team, school site-based team, school site administrator(s), campus security, office staff, and custodial staff (as needed) to discuss relevant issues, procedures, and assignments.
- D. CISM intervention begins. The CISM Coordinator will discuss relevant issues with the school administrator(s) throughout the day. The school administrator(s) will consider all suggestions from the CISM Coordinator; however, the final decision for any procedure (such as how to release students home, whether a visit needs to be made to an off-site memorial, etc.), phone calls made, announcements, or letters home will be made by the school site administrator in charge.
- E. Mid-day CISM meeting is led by the CISM Coordinator. Whenever possible, the school site administrator must be involved in this meeting.
- F. The CISM Coordinator, and school site administrator hold an end of day general school staff meeting to discuss relevant issues.
- G. The CISM Coordinator lead an end of day meeting with the CISM. Whenever possible, the school site administrator must be involved in this meeting.
- H. The CISM officers write up an end-of-intervention report.

IN-DEPTH EXPLANATIONS OF CISM PROCEDURES

I. CISM Procedures

A. The school site-based team is comprised of the school site administrator(s), counselor, psychologist, nurse, and any other individual designated by the principal. At high schools, the team could be quite large, with all the school's counselors as members, while at intermediate and elementary schools it may be small. For crises that involve one classroom (several classrooms at the high school level) or a few students, the school-based team should be sufficient and there would be no need to call in for the CISM. The school site-based crisis team and/or the school administrator(s) should make the determination if more help is needed. If it is obvious that more help is needed (for example, hundreds of students are having severe emotional reactions), then there is no need to wait to make the referral to the CISM.

B. It is the responsibility of the CISM Liaison to determine the level of response (if any) that is needed from the CISM, and if a partial team, a whole team, or both teams should be deployed to a school site. To make this decision, the CISM Liaison will take into account:

1. How the crisis event was verified?
2. The severity of the crisis event (extent of injury, death, or safety issues).
3. The extent to which the precipitating trauma was physically or emotionally removed from the campus.

4. The number of students and staff impacted and the impact upon the community.
5. The level of school site impairment and safety.
6. The level of preparedness of the school site crisis team for that particular level of crisis.
7. The onset of the event (acute vs. long-standing).
8. Location where the CISM can park.
9. Location where the CISM can congregate.

C. Each CISM is made up of a CISM Coordinator, First Officer, Triage Officer, and Counselors. Once the CISM Liaison makes the decision to contact the CISM(s), he/she will first call the CISM Coordinator. This will be done, when possible, prior to the day of the CISM intervention (for those times that the CISM Liaison is made aware of the crisis at the end of the school day or in the evening). The CISM Coordinator will then contact the First Officer and Triage Officer. These contacts will be made at any time necessary—either during, before, or after work hours and at home or cell phones. The CISM Coordinator will explain the situation and the reason(s) a CISM needs to be deployed. He/She will then contact the counselors and ask them to report to the school, explaining to them directions, where to park, congregate, and to remind them to wear their school district badges. For contacts to the CISM Counselors made off school hours, the CISM officers will be responsible.

D. The CISM Coordinator will first contact the school-site administrator(s) and the school site-based crisis team when possible. This is done either by phone or in person (whichever is most expedient). The CISM Coordinator will:

1. Ascertain the details of the crisis event, determining if the details are likely to be official or potentially unverifiable.
2. Discuss pertinent safety issues.
3. Determine what intervention has already taken place, the remaining impact on the school, and the amount of intervention still needed.
4. Determine if the crisis incident location needs to be quarantined for clean up or law enforcement investigation. If so, the school site administrator and CISM Coordinator must determine how students should be diverted and to make provisions about how students will pick up their belongings and homework, etc.
5. Determine if students may be congregating at any off-campus sites such as accident sites or street memorials. The CISM Coordinator can assign a CISM Counselor to accompany school site administrator(s) or law enforcement to these areas to provide intervention and referrals.
6. Schedule a coordination meeting between the CISM and school site-based crisis team prior to the CISM services if possible.

E. The CISM Coordinator(s) need to meet with the CISM, school site-based crisis team, school site administrator(s), campus security, office staff, peer

counselors (if available), and custodial staff (as needed) to discuss relevant issues, procedures, and assignments.

1. When possible, a staff meeting will be arranged with (at least) the CISM, school administrator(s), and school site-based crisis team. This meeting will review names of CISM officers and their roles, known facts and rumors, and pertinent historical and community issues.
2. School District procedures and policies and legal issues will be reviewed.
 - a. Suicide Protocol is reviewed.
 - b. Students are encouraged to stay at school. Children who show an intense desire to go home are referred to the typical procedures set up at the school site for this process. They are to wait at the attendance office or other usual area for pick up. Students who wish to leave (or wish to sign themselves out, if over 18) must be referred to the Triage Officer who will assign a CISM member to assess the student for potential suicidal or homicidal behavior. Regular school district procedure will apply in these cases. Students should check-out through the attendance office.
 - c. Any safety or legal issues (threats, duty to protect) arising during or outside of sessions should be referred to the Triage Officer who will then relay this information to the school site administrator(s) and law enforcement.

- d. Any CISM staff or any school site staff who receives a media inquiry will be referred to the school site administrator(s). A CISM member may be assigned to discuss with students issues surrounding their speaking with the media.
 - e. School-wide memorials should be avoided to prevent copycat crisis incidents when appropriate.
3. Packets and materials are distributed to the CISM members. These include:
- a. Stuffed animals, tissues, paper, and writing materials to be used during CISM.
 - b. Student sign-in sheets, passes, school site map, bell schedule, staff list, phone list, and community referrals.
- F. The CISM begins services. CISM Coordinator and CISM Liaison(s) will meet with the school site administrator(s) as soon as possible to discuss how information will be given out to parents, staff, and students.
- 1. Triage Station is set.
 - a. Triage Officer discusses with the site administrator where the Triage Station is to be placed.
 - b. Triage Officer requests clerical help from the school site if needed, utilizing peer counselors if available.
 - c. Triage Officer Determines where the CISM counselors will conduct sessions.

- d. Triage Officer obtains a walkie-talkie, tables, chairs, pens, phone access, and whiteboard from the school site.
 - e. Triage Officer insures that each counselor has hall passes.
 - f. As students come in with their passes from classes, Triage Officer will determine if the student should be seen individually or in a group, writing their names on a list.
 - g. Triage Officer assigns students to counselors who will wait at the Triage Station until group size is obtained. Triage Officer will write the name of the location where they are being served next to their names.
 - h. When possible, students will be assigned to a counselor with whom they are familiar. Optimal group size is between 3-7. If more students are placed in a group, a second counselor should be assigned. Peer counselors can be assigned to these groups also to assist the CISM counselors.
 - i. The Triage Officer is responsible to track the location of CISM members on the whiteboard.
2. CISM Counselors begin direct services.
 - a. The school site crisis team will fall under the direction of the CISM officers and will become part of the CISM.
 - b. CISM Counselors will keep a roster of students they see and turn this in to the Triage Officer, provide a letter to parents

informing them that they have been seen by the CISM, and provide a pass for students to return to class.

- c. As intervention takes place, counselors will note students involved directly or indirectly with the crisis incident (friends, family, witnesses, parties in dispute, etc.), and high risk students (those with previous history of need, suicide, or victim of a previous trauma) for follow-up by the school site crisis team. Also noted will be students at other schools who may be affected. The names of these students will be given to the Triage Officer who will compile a list of students to be followed up by the school site crisis team. Another list of students who may be at different schools and who could be affected will be given to the CISM Liaison at 696-1600 extension 1064, or 323-0804 (Butch Owens), or 775-6529 (Dean Lesicko) for follow-up.
- d. CISM Counselors will call parents when appropriate for further referral or to suggest that they go home.
- e. If a CISM Counselor feels that an individual or group CISM session is not taking an appropriate course, the counselor should contact the Triage Officer who will obtain immediate assistance from the First Officer, school site administrator(s), or other CISM Counselor.

3. Victim's Classroom(s).

- a. First Officer will determine which class(es) the victim has/had and assign a CISM member to be in class all day if possible. This CISM member should be one that is familiar with the teacher and/or students if possible.
 - b. The First Officer will discuss with the teacher options for handling the victim's belongings.
4. The First Officer will consider assigning CISM Counselor(s) to rove and monitor the campus to answer student and staff questions, and to be aware of potential students in need of CISM services. Students congregating on campus will be invited to join a CISM group or return to class.
5. The Triage Officer will assign a CISM member(s) to the staff lounge at lunch time to offer information, advice, and other services as needed.
6. The CISM First Officer will collect letters, drawings, donations, etc. to give to the school site administrator for delivery to the family.
7. CISM Coordinator (s) will get the following information from site administrator(s) for follow-up:
 - a. A list of the victim's present teachers and other teachers who may have a relationship with the victim.
 - b. Other staff that may have a relationship with the victim (custodians, aides, etc).

- c. A review with the school site administrator(s) if substitutes may need to be provided for those staff members immediately affected.
8. CISM Coordinator and CISM Liaisons will suggest to site administrator(s) to give information to teachers through intercom announcement (if students are not in the classes) and memos covering the following: Summary of the facts (with news clipping if possible), notification that the CISM is present and procedures to refer to the CISM, notification of staff debriefings (planned for the end of the day), notice of where to send cards or condolences, a notice that an intercom announcement will take place for students to outline the known facts and procedure to obtain counseling assistance, and suggestion that teachers discuss reactions in their classroom with the students. Handouts will also be placed in teachers' boxes: Tips for Discussing Crisis Situations in the Classroom, Recognizing Student Risk Factors, and procedural memos.
9. The CISM Coordinator and CISM Liaison(s) will suggest to site administrator(s) to contact students on campus regarding the incident via the intercom system.
 - a. The announcement should cover known facts, a statement that the school community is all saddened by the event, and where students can go to get help from the CISM (usually through their teacher(s)).

- b. Teachers will discuss the students' reactions and help them to process the information. Teachers will tell students they may go to the CISM for assistance and issue passes to those who go. Teachers can refer liberally the first day and will need to monitor attendance on successive days to insure that only those students they believe are in need actually attend the CISM services.
- c. Teachers who wish to have help with these discussions may request help from the CISM Triage Officer.

10. CISM Coordinator and CISM Liaisons will suggest to site

administrator(s) to contact the family members of the crisis victim(s).

- a. With a CISM member and a staff member with a relationship to the family, the school administrator(s) will make a home/hospital visit to offer condolences, support, and determine the need for further services. Contacts to the family should be made only through one of these individuals so as not to overwhelm the family with calls, etc.
- b. Referrals to outside agencies, services, and therapists will be provided including (if possible) a free assessment by a private therapist in the area.
- c. Pictures, letters, and cards will be delivered.
- d. The family will be informed about the school response.

- e. The family will be given a list of referrals that they can offer to others who may be in need of services.
- f. Obtain information about students or staff that may need to be seen by the CISM.
- g. Obtain information about the crisis event.
- h. Obtain information about memorials, funerals, and what the family would like the school community to know about these arrangements.

G. Mid-day meeting is held and hosted by the CISM Officers and school site administrator(s).

- 1. The First Officer arranges for lunch to be delivered to CISM staff.
- 2. At the meeting, staff is queried regarding procedures that are working well and those in need of attention.
- 3. CISM staff is told most current information related to the crisis event.
- 4. CISM staff is encouraged to ask questions or request clarifications.
- 5. CISM staff is assessed by CISM officers for problems of coping.

H. The School site administrator(s) hold an end-of-day meeting with school staff with assistance from the CISM Coordinator. Purposes of the meeting are to:

- 1. Offer encouragement.
- 2. Ask how the staff is doing.
- 3. Ask how things went in class today.
- 4. Inquire as to any problems.

5. Asking what the staff heard from students.
 6. Brief the staff on the latest information regarding the crisis incident.
 7. Briefing the staff on the activities of the CISM and the administration of the school and district with respect to the crisis incident.
 8. Briefing the staff on the future plan(s) of the CISM and school and district administration.
 9. Asking staff for names of students/staff members the CISM may need to engage.
 10. Ask the staff what the CISM/administration could have done better.
 11. Review media issues.
 12. The staff should be given time to discuss the crisis event among themselves.
- I. The CISM Coordinator leads an end-of-day meeting with the CISM. This meeting is held, when possible, with the school administrator(s). Issues discussed at the end-of-day meeting are:
1. To assess for coping among the CISM members.
 2. Review the activities completed by the CISM.
 3. Discuss any problems that arose during the day.
 4. Create a to-do-list.
 5. Coordinate with community resources such as law enforcement, TIP, etc.
 6. Collect names of students who still need to be seen or students/staff in need of follow-up.

7. Discuss possible memorial or vigil services.
 8. Discuss the need for continued CISM support for the next day, and begin reducing the CISM support.
 9. Discuss the long-term needs and support required by the site.
- J. The CISM officers write a summary report to be given to the Director of Student Services and to the Assistant Superintendent of Education Services.

Note for School Site Administrator

Depending upon the nature of the crisis affecting your school right now, members of your staff, your administrative team, or even yourself may be seriously affected. It is normal to be stunned, shocked, or even emotionally numb. The CISM Team at your school site is not only for the students, but parents and staff as well.

Although the school site administrator has the final word on how the CISM Team will function on your school site, note that the Crisis Team officers have had extensive training in CISM and have experience handling many different crises on many different campuses. Please heed their recommendations. They may ask that you be part of debriefings, make announcements, write notes home, or visit victims' family. They may even recommend that district-level administration temporarily help you to run the campus.

When emotional upheavals occur to the school community, you may be plagued by uncertainty and hesitation. This is expected. The CISM Team is there to help you get your campus back to order. You are urged to confide in the Crisis Team officers. They are there for you.

SCHOOL SITE ADMINISTRATOR CHECKLIST

**To be used when CISM Liaison has determined that a CISM Team will be
deployed to the school site**

Check when
Complete

- _____ To the extent possible, allow for interruptions throughout the day from Crisis Intervention Team Staff.
- _____ Secure three walkie-talkies for the Crisis Team.
- _____ Secure an area inside a building to house the triage center (this place may be briefly occupied by up to 100 students at a time).
- _____ Obtain a table and two chairs for the triage center.
- _____ Obtain a portable whiteboard and pens/eraser. If no white board is available, a portable chalk board or large paper on an easel will suffice.
- _____ Secure as many inside areas as possible to be used for seeing groups or individuals. These could be offices, empty classrooms, unused library, or storage areas. If no inside room is available, secure outside areas with benches or other seating.
- _____ Allow the Crisis Team access to a copier as needed. Provide them any necessary codes.
- _____ For intermediate and high schools, inform your counselors that they will become part of the CISM Team. For extremely large responses, administrators and teachers may need to become part of the Crisis Team.
- _____ Meet with the Crisis Team coordinator, first officer, and/or triage officer as needed and consider their suggestions seriously.

CISM LIAISON CHECKLIST

To be used to determine if a CISM is needed

Check when
Complete

_____ What is the nature of the crisis event? _____

_____ How is the event verified? _____

_____ What is the number of students/staff affected and the community impact? _____

_____ What is the level of the school site impairment and safety of campus? _____

_____ If a CISM will be deployed, where can the CISM park?

_____ If a CISM will be deployed, where will the team meet?

CISM Liaison CHECKLIST

To be used once it is determined that a CISM will be deployed

Check when
Complete

_____ Name of CISM to be deployed:

_____ Names of CISM officers deployed:

_____ Names of CISM members deployed:

_____ Call CISM Coordinator.

_____ Call Media and Communications Specialist

_____ Call Director of Safe Schools and inform him/her that a CISM is being deployed.

_____ Call Deputy Superintendent and inform him/her that a CISM is
being deployed.

_____ Visit school site and offer assistance to CISM Coordinator in any way needed.

_____ Arrange for CISM lunch.

CISM TEAM COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

TO BE USED AT THE SCHOOL SITE

Initial School site meeting with CISM Liaison and school site administrator

Check when

Complete

_____ **Victim:** _____

_____ **Other involved parties:**

_____ **What happened:** _____

_____ **When did the event occur:** _____

_____ **Where did the event occur:** _____

_____ **Why did the event occur:** _____

_____ **How did the event occur:** _____

_____ **How is the event verified:** _____

_____ **Parent(s) name(s):** _____

_____ **Parent(s) Address(es):** _____

_____ **Sibling(s) name(s):** _____

_____ **Sibling(s) school(s):** _____

_____ **Sibling(s) address(es):** _____

_____ **Victim's teacher(s):** _____

_____ **Other potentially affected staff member(s):** _____

_____ **Are substitutes needed?** _____

_____ **Other potentially affected students (friends):** _____

_____ **What rumors are present?** _____

_____ **Any Safety problems to CISM/others?**

_____ **What intervention has already occurred on school site?** _____

_____ **What problems continue to impact the school?** _____

_____ **What intervention is still required?** _____

_____ **Does the site of the crisis need to be quarantined?** _____

_____ **If quarantine is needed, how will students be diverted?** _____

_____ **If quarantine is required, how will students pick up their backpacks,
homework, etc.?** _____

_____ **Are students congregating off site?** _____

_____ **If yes, should administrator and CISM counselor intervene off site?**

_____ **Where are the students congregating?** _____

CISM TEAM COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

TO BE USED AT THE SCHOOL SITE

**Initial meeting with CISM Liaison, CISM, site-based crisis team,
administrator, security, office staff, peer counselors**

Check when
Complete

- _____ **Review names of CISM officers and their roles.**
- _____ **Review facts of the crisis event (who, what, when, where, how, why).**
- _____ **Review rumors.**
- _____ **Review historical and community issues.**
- _____ **Review suicide protocol.**
- _____ **Review “Duty to Protect” rules.**
- _____ **Review policy of when/how to send students home.**
- _____ **Review media policy.**
- _____ **Distribute following material (as appropriate):**
 - _____ **Comfort toys**
 - _____ **Tissues**
 - _____ **Writing implements**
 - _____ **Paper**
 - _____ **Student sign-in sheets**
 - _____ **Passes**
 - _____ **School site map**
 - _____ **Bell schedule**

_____ **Staff list**

_____ **Community referrals**

CISM TEAM COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

TO BE USED AT THE SCHOOL SITE

Mid-morning meeting with school site administrator

Check when
complete

- _____ **Disseminate information for teachers (summarize facts related to crisis event, notification that the CISM is present and how to refer to the CISM, notice that a school-wide debriefing meeting will take place at day's end, notice of where to send condolences, notice that an announcement will be made over the intercom to students, suggest that teachers discuss the reaction in their classroom after the announcement). Decode how information will be disseminated (intercom, info in boxes, runners).**
- _____ **Provide Tips for Discussing Crisis Situations in the Classroom, and Recognizing Student Risk Factors for teachers.**
- _____ **Assist site administrator on what to say for student announcement (known facts and how students can access the CISM).**
- _____ **Assist site administrator in contacting the family of the victim.**
- _____ **Inform site administrator of mid-day CISM meeting and end of day staff meeting.**
- _____ **Inquire about rumors, up-to-date information regarding crisis incident.**
- _____ **Inquire about need for substitutes or counseling for staff members.**
- _____ **Assess for level of coping of site administrator. CISM Coordinator can offer counseling with site administrator, administrative support from the District Office.**

CISM TEAM COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

TO BE USED AT THE SCHOOL SITE

Mid-day meeting with CISM staff

Check when
Complete

- _____ **Inform CISM staff of the most current information regarding crisis event.**
- _____ **Inform CISM staff of rumors.**
- _____ **Ask CISM staff what is working and what needs to be done.**
- _____ **Encourage CISM staff to ask questions, request clarifications, and debrief.**
- _____ **Assess staff for levels of coping and counsel with or release those staff members as needed.**
- _____ **Offer encouragement and praise.**

CISM TEAM COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

TO BE USED AT THE SCHOOL SITE

End-of-day meeting with school site staff

Check when
Complete

- _____ **Approximately one hour before the end of the school day, remind the site administrator(s) to make an announcement for an end-of-day staff meeting for all school site staff.**
- _____ **Administrator should run staff meeting. Offer encouragement and counseling to administrator if needed.**
- _____ **Offer encouragement to staff.**
- _____ **Debrief the staff.**
- _____ **Ask how things went in class today.**
- _____ **Ask about any problems encountered.**
- _____ **Inquire about what the staff heard from students.**
- _____ **Brief staff on latest information related to the crisis incident.**
- _____ **Inform the staff of the activities of the CISM and the school site and district administration with respect to the crisis incident.**
- _____ **Ask staff what the CISM and administration could have done better and what they found useful from the CISM staff and administration.**
- _____ **Review media policies.**
- _____ **Ask staff for names of students and other staff members who may need follow-up.**
- _____ **Allow staff to congregate and talk to one another.**

CISM TEAM COORDINATOR CHECKLIST

TO BE USED AT THE SCHOOL SITE

End-of-day meeting with CISM staff

Check when
Complete

- _____ **About one hour prior to the end-of day meeting with CISM staff, inform site administrator that s/he is invited to attend.**
- _____ **Review activities of the CISM.**
- _____ **Discuss problems and positives.**
- _____ **Assess need to coordinate with outside agencies/private practitioners.**
- _____ **Discuss possible memorial services or vigils.**
- _____ **Discuss the need for continued CISM support at the school site.**
- _____ **Discuss the long-term needs of the site.**
- _____ **Collect a list of staff and student names for follow-up.**
- _____ **Create a “to-do” list.**
- _____ **Assess for coping among CISM members.**
- _____ **Allow for the CISM members to congregate and talk among themselves.**
- _____ **Write a summary report in collaboration with other CISM officers.**

FIRST OFFICER CHECKLIST

To be used at the school site

Check when

Complete

- _____ Bring all materials (comfort toys, writing implements, paper, tissues). Items are stored at the Student Assistance Office at the DSC.
- _____ Check in with CISM Coordinator for update of situation. If Coordinator has not arrived, assume Coordinator role until the CISM Coordinator arrives. Collaborate with CISM Coordinator for delegation of responsibilities.
- _____ Determine which class(es) the victim had and assign a counselor(s) to the class(es). Inform the Triage Officer of the location and assignment of this counselor.
- _____ With the victim's teacher(s), discuss options for handling the victim's belongings.
- _____ Assign a CISM counselor to rove and monitor the campus. Inform the triage officer of the location and assignment of this counselor.
- _____ Collaborate with CISM Coordinator, and Triage Officer in writing end report.

TRIAGE OFFICER CHECKLIST

To be used at the school site

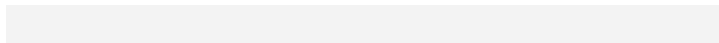
Check when
Complete

- _____ **Discuss with site administrator(s) where triage should be set up.**
- _____ **Discuss with site administrator(s) where sessions will take place.**
- _____ **Request clerical help from site if needed.**
- _____ **Obtain walkie-talkie, tables, chairs, pens, phone access, and whiteboard.**
- _____ **Obtain hall passes.**
- _____ **Set up Triage area.**
- _____ **Determine which staff members will be assigned to which room(s).**
- _____ **Assign a counselor(s) to the staff lounge.**
- _____ **Take passes from students and determine if they require individual or group assistance.**
- _____ **Take names of students and counselor to whom they are assigned.**
- _____ **Track counselor location on whiteboard.**
- _____ **Assign a counselor(s) to classroom(s) as teachers may request.**
- _____ **Collect student name rosters from counselors at end of sessions.**
- _____ **From counselors, compile lists of students involved with the incident, students of high risk, and students at other schools who may be affected.**
- _____ **Inform First Officer, CISM Coordinator, or site administrator(s) if a counselor reports that assistance is needed during a session.**
- _____ **Coordinate with CISM Coordinator and First Officer to write closing report.**
- _____ **Assign door monitor to supervise student entry/exit.**

TRIAGE OFFICER ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

To be used to track counselor room assignments

	Room	Room	Room	Room	Room	Room
Davis		Mary				
Fackelman		Michelle				
Hawkins		Ginger				
McCarthy		Lucie				
Tucker		Sharon				
Alderson		Sue				
Andrews		Marge				
Byrne		Susan				
Mobley		Karen				
Owens		Cathy				
Shuman		Barbara				



TRIAGE OFFICER STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

To be used to track students

Student Name

Assigned Group Counselor

Student Name

Assigned Individual Counselor

TRIAGE OFFICER FOLLOW-UP

To be used to list students in need of follow-up (students involved with the incident, high risk students, and students at other sites)

Triage Officer: _____

Student Name/Grade

Nature of follow-up/other information

CISM COUNSELOR CHECKLIST

To be used at the school site

Check when
Complete

- _____ Arrive at school site designated meeting area with badge on.
- _____ Receive information at morning meeting.
- _____ Obtain materials needed (comfort toys, tissues, writing utensils, paper) from
CISM
First Officer.
- _____ Wait at triage station for assignment.
- _____ Keep a roster of students seen and turn in to Triage Officer.
- _____ Keep a roster of students involved with the crisis incident, high risk students, and
students on another campus.
- _____ Call CISM Triage Officer if problems arise during sessions.

CISM COUNSELOR STUDENT ROSTER

To be used to track students seen

Counselor name: _____

Student name/Grade	Time seen	Notes
_____	_____	_____ _____ _____ _____
_____	_____	_____ _____ _____ _____
_____	_____	_____ _____ _____ _____
_____	_____	_____ _____ _____ _____
_____	_____	_____ _____ _____ _____

CISM COUNSELOR LIST FOR FOLLOW-UP

To be used for follow-up on students

Counselor name: _____

Student name/Grade

Reason follow-up is needed

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

CISM COUNSELOR SAMPLE GUIDELINE FOR CRISIS

COUNSELING

To be used in group and individual sessions

Intro: Who we are and why we're here: "I'm here because I understand you all have suffered the loss of a friend. Often, discussing the loss is a useful way of dealing with it. It helps people when they can talk about their feelings. I'd like to hear some of the reasons you're sitting in here today."

What Happened: Talk about what the facts are (rumor control is important). What was the person like? How did you know the person? What kind of stuff did you do together? I imagine this person was a normal person, having good points and bad, strengths and weaknesses.

Identify Reactions: "There are many reactions that a person can feel during these times and all are normal—sadness, anger, guilt, fear, denial, shock, insecurity, or even no reaction at all. How did you feel? What did you think when you heard? What did you do when you heard? How has this affected you?" Allow for venting, normalize and validate the reactions.

Identify Coping Strategies: "What have you done already that seems to be helping you through this? In past situations, what seems to have helped you?" Suggestions for coping activities include: being with friends and family, share positive stories and celebrate the person's life, attend a funeral, dinner, or ceremony, support others who are affected, donate, do something that

makes the world better such as a SADD activity, walk-a-thon, volunteer at a children's hospital, use community support such as a teacher, clergy, coach, talk with someone who cares about you, exercise, eat well, sleep, read a book or poetry about loss, write a creative story or poem, write cards to the family.

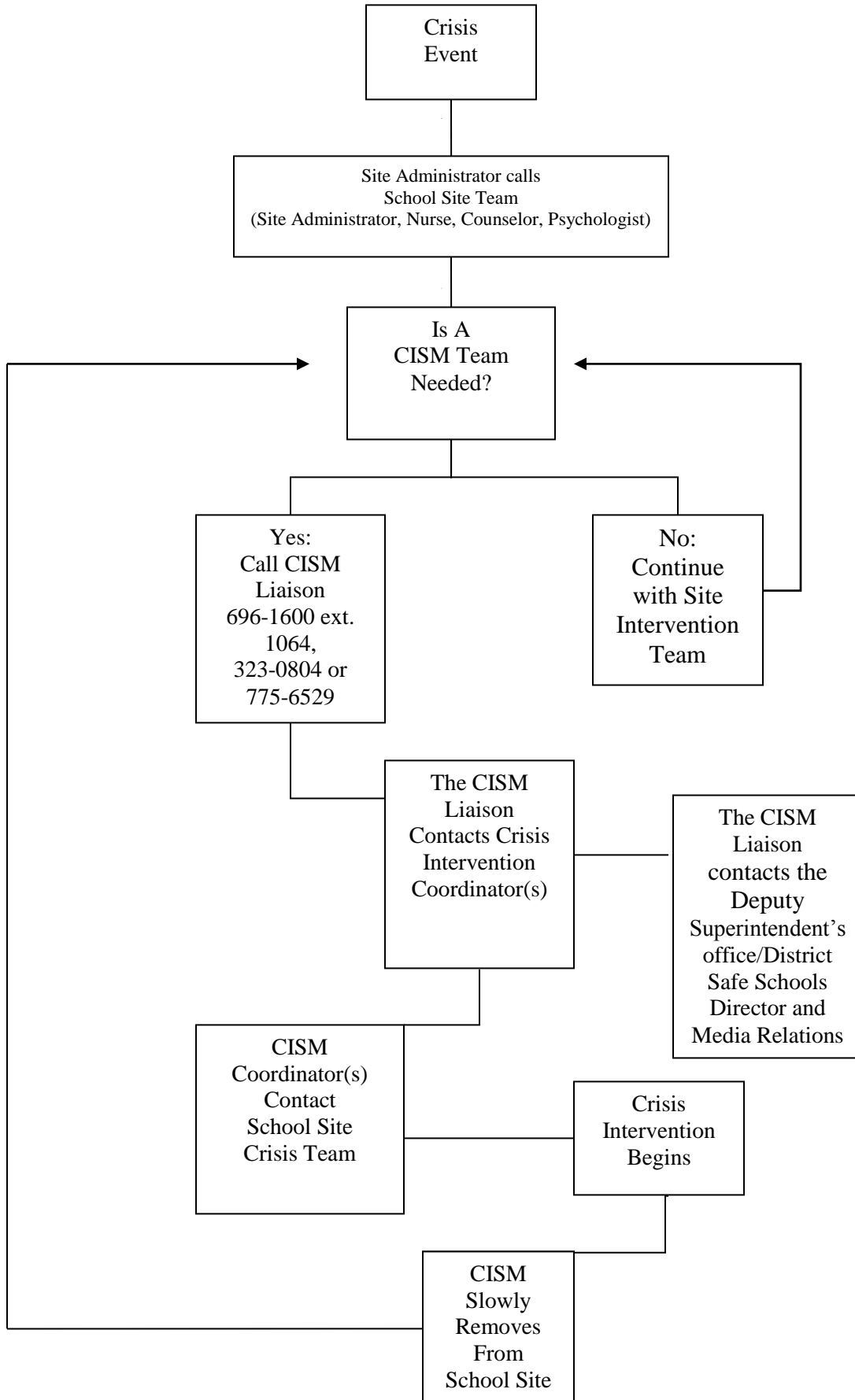
Identify Next Steps: Routine is good, keep busy. Trauma can trigger memories of past events.

Discuss the event again. If you experience over a month of stress (trouble eating, sleeping, worrying a lot, etc) then seek help from a counselor, religious counselor, psychologist, etc.

Normalize the roller coaster of grief—you will feel good one day, and sad the next, and that's OK.

APPENDIX I

CISM Team: Flowchart of Contact



APPENDIX II

Community Counseling Agencies/Counselors

Community Counseling Agencies/Counselors

Family, Adolescent, and Children’s Treatment Center of Temecula (Riverside County Mental Health Department)	951-600-6350
Hospice of the Valley.....	951-672-1666
Helpline of Riverside.....	951-686-4357
Mourning Star.....	951-894-5336

APPENDIX III

Student Handout: What is Grief?

What is Grief?

What does grief feel like?

Grief can feel like many things. The time right after you find about a death or loss can often be a time of numbing, disbelief, or not feeling anything at all. After a while, the feelings can transform into many different emotions—anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, and guilt. People can also feel physical sensations such as stomach aches, headaches, nausea, low energy, trouble eating or sleeping, or a funny tight feeling in the throat or chest.

What are some of the strong emotions like?

Anger is one strong emotion often triggered when a person is grieving. You might find that you are angry at a situation or at a person, even the person who died. You might show this anger to those around you, snapping at them for small things. It is important to understand that although it is acceptable to feel anger, it is important to express it in a way that is appropriate. You may wish to talk about these feelings with a parent, clergy member, or counselor. Intense exercise can sometimes help these feelings as well.

Guilt is another emotion people may feel after someone dies. You may feel guilty that you weren't a better friend, son, or daughter to the person. You may have thought that you could have done something to help. You may even feel guilty that you are the one who is alive and well. These feelings are all normal. Often, guilt in these situations is not appropriate. It would be important to talk about these feelings to someone you trust. It is O.K. to feel guilty, but it is important to turn the guilt into positives. Try to make things better by doing something positive for others, or a cause.

Sadness is probably the most common strong emotion. It can take a profound form, causing you to cry, want to sleep, or withdraw. You may find it helpful to write or draw, or paint about these emotions. Getting outside and walking or jogging can help, as can talking with someone you trust.

When should I get help?

If you find that you want to hurt yourself or others, or if the grief you feel lasts for more than a month, then it would be important to talk to someone. Start with your parents and let them know what you are feeling. You can talk to a school counselor or nurse, your doctor, a psychologist, or a clergy member.

How will I know when I'm healed?

Although it may not seem like it soon after a tragic loss, things will look better again. You will be able to think about the person who died in a positive way, remembering good times without any of the negative emotions. There may also be times when suddenly the grief can return, but it will be for shorter and shorter periods and with less intensity. Grief is a normal process and should be allowed to take its course. Let it happen, allow yourself to experience it, and when you begin to feel better, make your goals and learn from your loss.

APPENDIX IV

Parent Handout: Helping Children Cope with Stressful Situations

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Tips for Parents

Below are several steps parents can take to help their children understand and cope with stressful situations. While most children will continue to function fairly normally, it is important for parents to be supportive and to help their children deal with difficult experiences.

1. Be aware of your own attitudes, reactions and feelings toward the situation.

Remember that you are the most important person in your child's life. Children often mirror their parent's attitudes and behaviors. As parents, we need to be aware of how we are feeling and adjusting to difficult times. Sometimes the best way to help our children is to take steps that help us manage stress positively in our own lives. This may mean talking and joining with other people or organizations for support (church, family, political groups) taking steps to stay physically and mentally healthy (sleep, diet, etc.) or simply remembering to stay calm when working with your children.

2. Give your children accurate information in language they can understand.

Keep it clear, simple, direct, and short. The goal is to provide children with a simple understanding of what's going on around them while not overwhelming them with details.

Be calm as you present the facts and information you have to your children. Also, remember it's "O.K." to say, "I don't know" or "Let's find out" when presented with hard to answer questions.

3. Reassure your children that they are safe.

Children often feel fear when someone close to them is injured, so it's important to emphasize the idea that they will continue to be safe at home and at school.

Continue to do things that comfort children: hugs, kissing, expressing love, taking time for fun, etc.

If necessary, review with your child standard safety issues. Reminding children that there are "things you already do to help keep safe" can be reassuring if this is done in a positive, routine manner.

4. Allow your children to express their feelings and ideas.

Ask your child what they think is happening, or how they feel about what they are hearing. Be a good listener and be prepared to be open, accepting, non-judgmental and understanding.

Teach your child how to express feelings and ideas appropriately. Feelings such as helplessness, anger, fear, general anxiety, etc. are o.k. and need to be "talked out" (ex: "Dad, I feel..." or "Mom, I think..."). Afterwards, place an emphasis on listening to and respecting other's ideas and feelings. Teach your child how to express themselves while being respectful of other points of view. ("We can disagree and still be friends.")

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH STRESSFUL SITUATIONS (page 2)

5. Help the child develop a plan of positive action.

Taking some positive action can help people feel constructive and “back in control”. This might include:

- Writing a letter of support to the family.
- Discussing, talking and sharing ideas within constructive limits.
- Taking part in religious activities.
- Helping an individual or the community in ways that are non-related to the situation such as volunteering at a hospital.
- Expressing yourself through art projects and other expressive media.

These actions can be taken individually, as a family, or by joining groups in the community, even the smallest action can be significant in trying to “improve the part of the world that’s in front of you”.

6. Become aware of common signs of stress in your children.

Normal signs of distress in children may include:

Fears, problems sleeping, eating problems, increased aggressiveness or irritability, agitation, “clinginess”, regression, becoming “overemotional”, difficulty focusing or concentrating, increased variability in work performance, increased physical complaints, abnormal preoccupations, diminished interest in usual activities, pervasive concern about the well being of family members, withdrawal, and periods of crying.

Minor problems in these areas can often be handled within the family. In addition to the methods already described, the following will also help to reduce stress:

- Strengthen the family by spending more time together, especially during times when children are anxious.
- Maintain routine (bedtimes, chores, school attendance, recreational activities, etc.).
- Monitor your children’s T.V. viewing.
- See to it that family members continue to exercise, get enough sleep, and eat healthy foods.

If these signs of distress become severe or prolonged, parents should seek the advice of a community professional such as a pediatrician, counselor, school psychologist, or child psychologist. In general, any prolonged or significant change in behavior, cognitive functioning, or personality might signal that the child may need help coping with some severe stress. Families who have experienced a recent family change (divorce, death, loss of job, etc.) particularly need to be aware of how their children are coping. Also, please let your children’s teachers know if there is a problem so that they will be better able to help your children at school.

If you have questions, comments, or would like help getting a referral to a community helping agency, please feel free to contact the counselor, nurse, or school psychologist at your child’s school.

APPENDIX V

Teacher Handouts:

- **Discussing Crisis in the Classroom**
- **Recognizing Student Risk Factors**
- **Indicators of Children at Risk**
- **Confidential Referral Form for CISM Team**
- **Student Counseling Procedures**

DISCUSSING CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM

Teacher Tips

1. Identify your own feelings regarding the situation. If it would be helpful, you can talk to the counseling staff or ask one of the counselors to assist you in talking to your class.
2. There are no “magical words”. The most important thing is to be honest, open, and respectful. Allow students to ventilate their feelings, beliefs, questions, etc. It’s o.k. to share your own feelings while being aware that you are also modeling positive ways of coping.
3. Stress the importance of sticking to the facts. During a crisis, rumors can be a problem so ask the students not to pass them on during or after school. If you have questions, ask someone (an adult) who knows.
4. Be aware that there are many possible student reactions:

Denial, anger, joking, withdrawal, shock, wanting to go home, difficulty concentrating, fear, anger at other students’ reaction, lack of understanding or confusion, reflection, acting out, depression, no reaction at all, regression, etc.

Validate the students’ feelings by explaining that there are many types of “normal” reactions. These feelings may be very strong initially and eventually lessen in intensity.

5. Discuss with the students ways to cope with stress, especially when trauma or a crisis has occurred (talking with people who care about you, getting back into a routine, taking steps to improve things, exercise, doing fun stuff, etc.)
6. Be aware of verbal and non-verbal signs of extreme stress; students may have difficulty handling the situation but are not able to ask for help. Make sure you identify these students to the counseling staff.
7. Students often find comfort or closure in some group activity that helps them to express feelings or strengthen the feelings of group closeness or group support. The counseling staff can help you choose among various possible activities.
8. In general:

Listen: Allow student to express feelings. Don’t feel obligated to give advice or find simple solutions.

Be Honest: Understand your own feelings.

Share Feelings: Allow your own humanness to show. Let the student know he/she is not alone and that these strong feelings do not last indefinitely.

Get Help: Recommend reaching out to a trusting parent, teacher, counselor, or Crisis Team member if need be.

Be Sensitive: You may be working with students who were already experiencing serious emotional issues, crisis or trauma prior to the event you are discussing.

RECOGNIZING STUDENT RISK FACTORS

Tips for Teachers

In general, when teachers see signs of distress or potential risk in the behavior or schoolwork of their students, they should consult with the school's counselor, psychologist, nurse, or site administrator. Such signals are not always easy to evaluate and the school counselor, nurse, and psychologist are trained to assess risk while maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Administrators particularly need to be involved when there is any possible potential of danger to other students or adults. The concern for student safety is the school's chief priority, and to ensure student well-being teachers need to be familiar with signs that can indicate the need for referral and assessment.

Signs of Stress in Children

Themes or behavior which may signal signs of distress in children can include:

Recurrent or significant statements, pictures, or stories of death; statements about self-injury or injury to others – particularly plans or attempts; property destruction; satanic or gang related themes; significant change of peer group affiliation; increased aggressiveness or irritability; agitation; rage or extreme or persistent anger; loss of control; extreme anxiety; “clinginess”; significant regression to immature behaviors; frequently becoming “overemotional”; extreme difficulty focusing or concentrating; increased variability in work performance; increased physical complaints; abnormal preoccupations (recurring thoughts of anger, death, conflict, etc.); depressed mood (sadness, hopelessness, discouragement); loss of energy; the need to expend markedly increased effort to perform routine daily functioning; significantly diminished interest or pleasure in usual activities; “not caring anymore”; feelings of worthlessness or guilt; fears; problems sleeping; eating problems or severe appetite changes; pervasive concern about the well-being of family members or significant others; withdrawal; periods of crying.

Students may experience some of these behaviors normally. Some behaviors may constitute a reasonable reaction to a situational event. Some of the above signs may need to be weighed in the light of a student's developmental age, culture, social group, family life, interests, religion, and experiences. Many signs are much more significant for students with certain histories, such as families who have experienced a recent family change (divorce, death, loss of job, etc.), substance use, medical problems, previous abuse, or mental illness. Other signs, such as suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans are significant by themselves and require immediate action.

While teachers should refer students to counselors or administrators for risk assessment, it is appropriate for teachers to ask students about behaviors, writings, pictures, poems, etc. which raise a concern about the student. Such inquiries should be open ended, example: “I read your paper. Can you tell me a little more about it?” or “In reading this, I got the feeling that you seem very angry/sad. Can you tell me about that?” Such interviews can give the teacher a clearer indication if certain behaviors are normal developmental reactions or a more serious signal of stress.

In summary, teachers should be sensitive to any prolonged or significant change in behavior, cognitive functioning, affect, or personality that might signal that the child needs help coping with some severe stress. **The rule of thumb should be: when in doubt, consult.**

INDICATORS OF CHILDREN AT RISK FOR TEACHERS

Listed below are examples of behaviors that may identify a child at risk

If, after a crisis, a child in your class...

- Becomes Moody
- Has a change in eating or sleeping patterns
- Stops participating in activities they had enjoyed
- Has poor peer relations
- Shows exceptional amount of fear or paranoia in dealing with others
- Shows magical thinking such as, the idea that they could have prevented a crisis from occurring
- Seems very tired
- Begins avoiding school
- Appears very angry
- Withdraws from friends or family
- Has frequent ailments
- Shows signs of alcohol or drug use
- Unexplained decrease in performance
- Has great difficulty expressing feelings
- Starts acting out violently
- Makes suicidal or homicidal threats
- Seems extremely sad and may cry a lot
- Begins acting more immature
- Begins being reluctant to go home

...then please discuss this child's behavior with your school counselor, nurse, or psychologist.

CONFIDENTIAL REFERRAL FORM FOR CISM TEAM

Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Referred by: _____ Home room/room #: _____

Reason for Referral: _____

For CISM Team

Action Plan: _____

STUDENT CISM PROCEDURES

Please read before school begins

At this point in time, most of our student population will have the need to get back to their routine school day. This need for regular daily activities helps in processing loss and uncomfortable feelings.

If you observe students who are in need of *individual* or *small group counseling*, or who have requested to speak with a counselor, counseling sessions are available in the Counseling Center. Counselors are also available to visit your classroom if you would like assistance with classroom discussions.

Please use the following procedures to better facilitate campus security:

- If a student requests to speak with a counselor, or demonstrates the need to do so, send the student to the Counseling Center *with a pass* that includes their name and the time.
- If more than one student needs counseling, write *each of their names* on a single pass and tell them to go directly to the Counseling Center as a group.
- If you need assistance within your classroom, call _____ to request a counselor.

Students will be given a pass back to class after their counseling session ends.

Thank you for your cooperation in assisting us to provide the best help possible in a safe and orderly way.

The Crisis Counseling Staff

APPENDIX VI

Sample Letters

- **Sample Letter to Staff Regarding Class Coverage**
- **Sample Announcement for Death in a Staff Member's Family**
- **Sample Letter to Parents When a Murder has Occurred**
- **Sample Letter to Parents when a Murder Has Occurred
(Spanish)**
- **Sample Letter Serious Injury**
- **Sample Letter Serious Injury (Spanish)**
- **Sample Letter #1 Death of Student**
- **Sample Letter #1 Death of a Student (Spanish)**
- **Sample Letter #2 Death of a Student**
- **Sample Letter #2 Death of a Student (Spanish)**

(Using School Letterhead)

**SAMPLE LETTER TO STAFF
REGARDING CLASS COVERAGE**

DATE: _____

TO: _____

FROM: _____

RE: Class Coverage

With sincere sympathy for the loss of your student, I am offering the following support.

Please let _____ know if you feel that you need coverage for your class today. We will provide class coverage so you can speak with a counselor if you desire that service.

As for handling the “empty seat” in your classroom, it was suggested that you allow the students in that class to determine if they want to rearrange seats, remove the seat, leave it as it is, etc. If you would like some counseling support in this process let _____ know a.s.a.p.

Thank you for the compassion and leadership you have shown to all of your students in this time of crisis.

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT – STAFF FOR DEATH IN A STAFF MEMBER’S FAMILY

Dear Colleague:

Yesterday, many of you were dealing with a number of difficult emotional reactions about the death of _____. I know you care a great deal for _____ and you want to reach out and help her through this tragedy.

(Give accurate information) Example:

_____ was informed that her father died of a heart attack while on vacation in Florida.

Your care and support for _____ will be an important part in her ability to cope with this loss and at the same time continue on with his/her personal and professional life.

Last night, I shared with _____ the fact that so many of you were so concerned and that you would do something for her to show your feelings and to comfort her. She was sincerely touched by this and the care that you all are showing.

We discussed ways that people could demonstrate their caring. _____ has decided that she would like people to make contributions to _____ in _____ name. He had a love for their work and their support to public education.

Funeral services for _____ will be held at 10:00 a.m. on _____. Everyone is invited to _____ home following the services. Her address is:
_____.

Your caring and support has been and will continue to be very important to _____. The sensitive and loving nature of the people with which she has had the privilege of working for so many years in _____ has been so clearly communicated to _____. She is indeed fortunate.

Very Truly Yours,

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS WHEN A MURDER HAS OCCURRED

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A very sad thing has happened today that I want to share with you. (*Give accurate information about the murder, using the word "murder"*), example:

A neighborhood child who is the brother of one of our students here at school was murdered earlier this week. We are all profoundly saddened by his death.

We have shared this information and had discussions with all of our students so that they know what has happened. Counselors, staff and other support personnel have been and will continue to be available for students, staff and parents on an on-going basis. Please call the school at (*school phone number*) if you would like to talk with someone.

We encourage you to talk with your child. The violent death of a (*student/staff*) member may cause a variety of reactions in your child. Most children will experience being afraid for their own life and for the lives of those they love.

We will be planning follow-up activities to help cope with children's fears, with lessons on safety and security. You may want to talk to your children about safety at home and on the way to school.

We need your help. Please send your child who walks to school *at the appropriate time only*. School beings at (*school start time*).

Please ***do not*** send your child early to play on the playground. We recommend children walk with other friends to and from school. Children must go home directly after dismissal. Let's work together to provide the safest and most secure environment for our children.

There are news reporters around the school. You need not respond to reporter's questions if you are approached. Naturally, we will not allow the reporters to interview your child at school; however, a reporter could approach your child while he/she is off school grounds.

The violent death of a young person is a great tragedy. It is a sad thing to have to teach our children about the violence in our world and that sometimes we do not have the power to prevent it. This is a loss for us all. We can offer our children our love and our intention to make a safe and kinder world. This is something we can do together. Please, let us know if there is any way we can support you during this difficult time.

(*If planned*) A **Parent Support Night** is planned for (*date, time and place*). At that time, we can talk further about how to help ourselves and our children.

Our thoughts are with the family and with each of you.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS WHEN A MURDER HAS OCCURRED – *Spanish*

Estimados padres de familia:

Un acontecimiento muy triste ocurrió hoy del cual deseo informarles. (*Give accurate information about the murder, using the word “murder”*), Example:

Un niño de la vecindad que es hermano de uno de nuestros estudiante aquí en la escuela, fue asesinado al principio de la semana. Estamos muy entristecidos por su muerte.

Nosotros les hemos dado esta información a todos nuestros estudiantes y hemos hablado con ellos para que se enteren de lo que ha ocurrido. Los consejeros, el personal escolar y otros miembros del personal auxiliar han estado, y continuarán a estar, disponibles para hablar con los estudiantes, el personal escolar y los padres de familia. Si desea ayuda, por favor, llame al personal de la escuela al número _____ si desea hablar con alguien.

Posiblemente, usted también quiera hablar con su hijo(hija). La muerte violenta de un estudiante o de un miembro del personal escolar puede causar una variedad de reacciones en su hijo(hija). La mayoría de los niños temen perder sus vidas y las de las personas que quieren.

Se programarán actividades subsecuentes para ayudarles a los niños a enfrentar sus temores, dándoles lecciones en seguridad. Posiblemente, usted puede hablar con su hijo(hija) sobre la seguridad en casa y en camino a la escuela.

Necesitamos su ayuda por favor, mande a su hijo(hija), que camina a la escuela, a la hora apropiada únicamente. Las clases empiezan a las (school start time).

Por favor, no mande a su hijo(hija) temprano para que juegue en el campo de recreo. Recomendamos que los niños caminen con sus amigos yendo a y regresando de la escuela. Los niños deben irse directamente a casa después de salir de la escuela. Trabajemos juntos para proveerles a nuestros niños el ambiente más seguro y libre de peligro.

Hay periodistas alrededor de la escuela. Ustedes no necesitan contestar las preguntas de los periodistas si se acercan a usted. Naturalmente, no le permitiremos a los periodistas entrevistar a su hijo(hija) en la escuela.

La muerte de una persona joven es trágico. Sin embargo, una muerte violenta es una tragedia diferente y más grande. Es triste tener que hablarles a nuestros niños acerca de la violencia que hay en nuestro mundo y que a veces no tenemos el poder para evitarla. Esto es una pérdida para todos nosotros. Les podemos ofrecer a nuestros niños nuestro cariño y nuestra intención de convertir el mundo en un mundo más seguro y bondadoso. Esto es algo que podemos hacer juntos. Por favor, háganos saber si les podemos ayudar en algo en estos momentos difíciles.

(If planned) Se ha programado una reunión de apoyo para los padres de familia por la tarde el (date, time, place). A ese tiempo, podemos hablar más a fondo sobre cómo ayudar a nuestros niños y a nosotros mismos.

Acompañamos a la familia y a cada uno de ustedes en ustedes en nuestro pesar.

Atentamente,

SAMPLE LETTER SERIOUS INJURY

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child participated in a discussion group today regarding the injury of one of our students.

Yesterday afternoon, a sixth grader at our school was hit by a car on First Street while riding his bike. The student is in pediatric intensive care. At last report, he was in critical condition. Many of the children who heard about the accident are naturally quite concerned, and many of the children who know the student have started to ask questions or express strong emotional feelings.

In response to this, your child's teacher and a member of the CISM Team from Murrieta Unified School District Student Support Department have spoken to the children regarding this accident. We encourage the children to express their feelings, ask questions, and discuss various ways which help us feel better in difficult times. The following is a list of items that some of the students said they could do to feel better:

- Be cautious and take safety precautions when bike riding
- Don't take unnecessary risky chances
- Talk about your feelings about the situation (to friends, family, teachers, counselors or any caring adult)
- Crying is Okay
- Do things that make you feel better, like hanging around your friends, fun activities, hobbies, exercise, being alone, etc.
- Write your feelings, thoughts, wishes and plans in a diary, letter or journal
- Artistic expression (drawing, painting, etc)
- Write to the city government about keeping the streets safer for kids (speed bumps, stop signs, more patrols, etc.)
- Get back to a normal routine as quickly as possible

We especially emphasize the need for students to discuss their feelings and ideas with their parents.

The discussion groups went very well and we hope that you allow your child to continue to express his/her feelings and concerns at home.

If you have questions or are concerned about how your child is handling the situation, please feel free to call us. Our school has also agreed to provide an information center (*phone number*) starting on (*date*) for people inquiring about the situation.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER SERIOUS INJURY – SPANISH

Estimados padres de familia:

Su hijo(hija) participó en una discusión hoy en grupo acerca de la herida de uno de nuestros estudiantes.

Ayer por la tarde, un estudiante de sexto año de en nuestra escuela fue atropellado(da) por un carro cuando paseaba en bicicleta por la calle _____. El estudiante está internado(da) en la sala de cuidado intensivo de pediatría en el hospital. Las últimas noticias de su condición indican que él(ella) está en estado crítico. Muchos de los estudiantes que se dieron cuenta del accidente naturalmente están preocupados y muchos de ellos que conocen al estudiante han empezado a hacer preguntas o a expresar sus emociones.

En respuesta a esto, el(la) maestro(tra) y uno de los psicólogos de la escuela del Departamento de Servicios Estudiantiles han hablado con los niños acerca de este accidente. Les animamos a los niños a que expresen sus sentimientos y a que hagan preguntas. Hemos hablado sobre diferentes cosas que nos ayudan a sentirnos mejor durante tiempos difíciles. A continuación, se enumeran algunas de las cosas que indicaron los estudiantes que se pueden hacer para sentirse mejor.

- Tengan cuidado y tomen precauciones de seguridad cuando paseen en bicicleta
- No tomen riesgos innecesarios
- Hablen sobre lo que están sintiendo acerca de la situación (con su familia, con sus amistades, maestros, consejeros, o cualquier adulto que se preocupe)
- Está bien llorar
- Hagan cosas que les hagan sentir mejor, por ejemplo, el pasar tiempo con amigos, el participar en actividades divertidas, pasatiempos, el hacer ejercicios, el pasar tiempo (solo) sola, etc.
- Escriban sus sentimientos, pensamientos, deseos, y planes en un diario o en una carta. El usar el medio artístico para expresarse (dibujar, pintar, etc.), también, puede ayudar a sentirse mejor. Pueden hablar sobre éstas o pueden mantenerlas confidenciales.
- Escriban cartas al gobierno municipal sobre el mantener las calles libres de peligro. (baches para disminuir la velocidad, letreros “Alto”, más patrullas, etc.)
- Regresen a la rutina normal tan pronto como sea posible; el hacer las actividades regulares ayuda a sentirse mejor.

Hacemos hincapié en la necesidad de los estudiantes de hablar con sus padres acerca de sus sentimientos e ideas.

Los grupos de discusión tuvieron mucho éxito y esperamos que ustedes les permitan a sus hijos continuar expresando sus sentimientos y sus dudas en casa.

Si tienen alguna pregunta o están preocupados acerca de cómo su hijo(hija) está enfrentándose a la situación, por favor, no dude en llamarnos. Nuestra escuela, también, ha acordado proveer el número telefónico de un centro de información _____ empezando el _____ para que las personas que estén interesadas puedan obtener información sobre la situación.

Atentamente,

SAMPLE LETTER #1 DEATH OF A STUDENT

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child participated in a discussion group today regarding the death of one of our students.

Over the holiday weekend, one of our students in _____ grade died due to complications related to _____ . Students have naturally begun to ask questions and express their emotions.

In response to this, your child's teacher and a team of school counselors, psychologists and school nurses from Murrieta Unified School District Student Support Department, have spent the day visiting classrooms and counseling students, both individually and in small groups. Students were encouraged to share their feelings, ask questions, and discuss various ways of coping in such difficult times. While at school, talking to teachers and counselors, students came up with these ideas that they could do to feel better:

- Talk about your feelings regarding the situation (to friends, family, teachers, counselors or any other caring adult)
- Crying is okay
- Do things that make you feel better, like hanging around with friends
- Fun activities
- Hobbies
- Exercise
- Being alone
- Write out your feelings, thoughts, wishes and plans in a diary, letter or journal
- Artistic expressions, drawings, paintings, etc. can also make you feel better (this can be shared or kept private)
- Talk about the memories you have of the student
- Share some of these memories with your friends or family
- Get back to a normal routine as quickly as possible – doing normal activities can make you feel better

We especially emphasize the need for students to discuss their feelings and ideas with their parents. The counseling and discussion groups went very well, and we hope that you encourage your child to continue to express his/her feelings and concerns at home. If you have any questions or concerns about how your child is handling this situation, please be aware that the school counseling services will be available and that you can call the school at (*school phone number*) for more information. You might be interested in the following information as well:

A school memorial fund is in the process of being established. If you have any questions about funeral arrangements, or would like to contribute to the memorial fund, please leave a message for _____ at the school office.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER #1 DEATH OF A STUDENT SPANISH

Estimados padres de familia:

Su hijo(hija) participó en una discusión hoy en grupo acerca del fallecimiento de uno de nuestros estudiantes.

Durante el fin de semana festivo, uno de nuestros estudiantes de _____ falleció debido a complicaciones relacionadas con _____. Los estudiantes naturalmente han empezado a hacer preguntas y a expresar sus emociones.

En respuesta a esto, el(la) maestro(tra) y un equipo de consejeros de la escuela y psicólogos del Departamento de Servicios Estudiantiles han visitado los salones y han aconsejado a los estudiantes individualmente y en grupos pequeños. Se les animan a los estudiantes a que expresen sus sentimientos, hagan preguntas y hablen sobre diferentes modos de enfrentarse con situaciones difíciles. Al hablar con los maestros y consejeros en la escuela, los estudiantes ofrecieron las ideas a continuación para sentirse mejor.

- Hablen sobre lo que están sintiendo acerca de la situación (con su familia, con sus amistades, maestros, consejeros, o cualquier adulto que se preocupe)
- Está bien llorar
- Hagan cosas que les hagan sentir mejor, por ejemplo, el pasar tiempo con amigos
- Participen en actividades divertidas
- Entreténganse con algún pasatiempo
- Hagan ejercicios
- Pasen tiempo solos
- Escriban sus sentimientos, pensamientos, deseos, y planes en una carta o en un diario
- Las expresiones artísticas (dibujar, pintar, etc.), también, pueden ayudar a sentirse mejor. (Pueden hablar acerca de éstas o pueden mantenerlas confidenciales)
- Hablen sobre los recuerdos que tengan del estudiante
- Hablen sobre estos recuerdos con miembros de la familia o sus amistades
- Regresen a la rutina normal tan pronto como sea posible; el hacer las actividades regulares ayuda a sentirse mejor

Hacemos hincapié en la necesidad de los estudiantes de hablar con sus padres acerca de sus sentimientos e ideas. Los grupos de asesoramiento y discusión tuvieron mucho éxito y esperamos que ustedes les permitan a sus hijos continuar expresando sus sentimientos y sus dudas en casa. Si tienen alguna pregunta o están preocupados acerca de cómo su hijo(hija) se enfrenta con la situación, por favor, sepan que los servicios de asesoramiento están disponibles en la escuela y que pueden llamar al número _____ para obtener información adicional. Posiblemente, ustedes, también, estén interesados en la siguiente información:

Se está estableciendo un fondo escolar conmemorativo. Si tienen alguna pregunta sobre los servicios funerales, o desean contribuir al fondo conmemorativo, favor de dejarle un mensaje a _____ en la oficina de la escuela.

Atentamente,

SAMPLE LETTER #2 DEATH OF A STUDENT

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A very sad thing happened today that I want to share with you.

(Share the information honestly) Example:

This morning, one of our kindergarten students was hit by a car outside of his home in southwest Sacramento. According to his family, he ran out into the street and was seriously injured. He died at the hospital. We are all profoundly saddened by his death.

We have shared this information and have had discussions with all of our students (*in the classroom/school*) so that they know what has happened. Counselors, teachers and other support personnel have been and will continue to be available to students, teachers and parents on an ongoing basis. Please call the school at (*school phone number*), if you would like assistance.

As parents, we encourage you to talk to your children also. The death of a (*student/teacher*) may affect a child in a variety of ways depending on the age of the child, how well the child knew the one who died, and the child's prior experience with grief.

When reacting to a death, a child may:

- appear not to be affected
- be thinking about it privately
- ask a lot of questions
- be frightened
- be agitated and angry
- be sad and withdrawn
- try extra hard to be good

We suggest you listen to your children. If they seem to need to talk, answer their questions simply, honestly and possibly over and over again.

(optional) A Parent Information Night is planned for (*date, time and place*). At that time, we can talk further about how to help children in grief.

Our thoughts are with the family.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER #2 DEATH OF A STUDENT – SPANISH

Estimados padres de familia:

Hoy ocurrió un acontecimiento muy triste del cual deseo informarles.

(Share the information honestly) Example:

Esta mañana, uno de nuestros estudiantes de kindergarten fue atropellado por un carro fuera de su casa en el sudoeste de Sacramento. Según la familia, él corrió a la calle y fue lesionado seriamente. El falleció en el hospital. Estamos muy entristecidos por su fallecimiento.

Nosotros les hemos dado esta información a todos nuestros estudiantes y hemos hablado con ellos (*en el salón, en la escuela*) para que se enteren de lo que ha ocurrido. Los consejeros, los maestros y otros miembros del personal auxiliar han estado, y continuarán a estar, disponibles para hablar con los estudiantes, los maestros y los padres de familia. Si desea ayuda, por favor, llame al personal de la escuela al número telefónico _____.

Como padres, posiblemente ustedes también quieran hablar con sus hijos. El fallecimiento de un (estudiante, maestro) puede afectar a un niño de diferentes modos, dependiendo de la edad del niño, cuánto conocía al niño que falleció, y la experiencia anterior que haya tenido el niño con el pesar.

Cuando un(una) niño(niña) reacciona a la muerte, él(ella) puede:

- parecer no afectarle
- estar pensando sobre de ello en privado
- hacer muchas preguntas
- estar temeroso(sa)
- estar agitado(da) y enojado(da)
- estar triste y reservado(da)
- tartar demasiado de portarse bien

Les sugerimos que escuchen a sus hijos. Si ellos quieren hablar, contesten sus preguntas sencilla y francamente y, posiblemente, una y otra vez.

(Optional) Se ha programado una reunión informativa por la tarde el (*date, time, place*). A ese tiempo, podemos hablar más a fondo sobre cómo ayudar a los niños con sus pesares.

Acompañamos a la familia en su pesar.

Atentamente,