



Supporting Mental Health & Wellbeing Resilience in Crisis: A Decade of Insights Working with International Schools

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Goals of responding to school crisis:

1. To create an environment of safety & security
2. To support coping & resilience
3. To return to the focus of learning

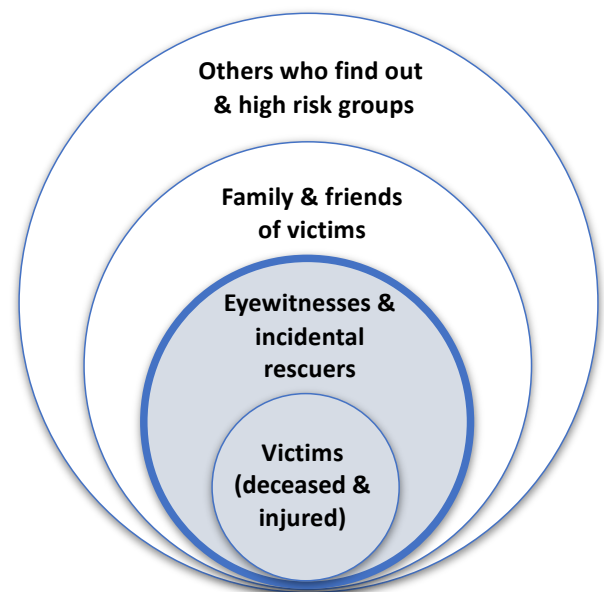
Tasks of a crisis response team:

1. Plan – identifying who needs support.
2. Train – local caregivers who will support the community after the team leaves.
3. Provide Direct Service – crisis intervention, group crisis intervention, companionship, & psychoeducation.

Based on the work of the National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA), USA <https://trynova.org>.

Circles of vulnerability

Triaging those most in need of support



Higher-risk students:

Identifying and following up with at-risk students is an important part of containing the ripple effects of a traumatic incident. headspace (2015) identifies the following students as being most at risk:

- Close friends of those who were injured or died
- Those who may have had a negative interaction(s) with those who died
- Those who show visible signs of being distressed
- Those who witnessed the incident
- Those who have risk factors and/or warning signs of suicide
- LGBTQIA+

Primary needs of the community:

1. Validation of their individual experiences
2. Education about typical reactions to crisis
3. Tools for coping and resilience



Aspects of resilience:

1. Connect with **social support**
2. Acknowledge **emotional** impact
3. Utilize **cognitive** abilities
4. Maintain **physical health** and well-being
5. Seek **education & experience**
6. Strengthen **self-esteem**
7. Connect with individual **spirituality** (if relevant)
8. Identify what works for your **personality**

External professional support:

1. Administrative consultants
2. Board of Directors/Owners consultants
3. Counselling
4. Crisis communication
5. Cultural guides
6. Legal consultants
7. Child protection & safeguarding
8. Police/Fire/EMS
9. Mental health crisis response
10. Risk Management
11. Business Continuity

Preparing for crisis in a nutshell:

1. Development and testing of school policies
2. Training of staff & reciprocal resources
3. Development of pre-crisis relationships with external resources
4. Review crisis plan annually and after events

Recommended Resources:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and Suicide Prevention Resource Centre. (2018). *After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools, Second Edition*. Newton, MA: Education Development Centre, Inc. Downloaded from <https://sprc.org/online-library/after-suicide-toolkit-schools>
- headspace, National Youth Mental Health Foundation Ltd. (2015). *Responding to Suicide in Secondary Schools: a Delphi Study*. Downloaded from <https://headspace.org.au/assets/School-Support/hSS-Delphi-Study-web.pdf>
- Rees, P. & Seaton, N. (2011). Psychologists' response to crises: International perspectives. *School Psychology International*, 32(1), pp. 73-94.

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