Wyoming Central School District

Response to Tragedy & Crisis Manual

WYOMING INDIAN PROUD

Written by:

Kathleen Schuessler
Emily Herman
Maria Herman
Amy Camp
Michele Pearce
Many Daniels

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RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY & CRISIS

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RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY & CRISIS

PURPOSE

This manual provides strategies for addressing crisis intervention within the Wyoming Central School District. The primary purpose of crisis response is to help students and staff cope with painful emotions and feelings resulting from a school or community related crisis. Our goal is to assist students and staff to return to normal routines as quickly and calmly as possible following a disruption of the educational process. The following procedures outline the steps that Wyoming Central School District will implement in the event of a crisis. It should be stressed, however, that each situation presents facts and concerns unique to that case or event. These must be taken into consideration and adjustments to plans should be made accordingly. Throughout this process, sensitivity to the wishes of the family/families involved will be a primary concern.

DEFINITION OF CRISIS

A crisis is an unpredictable, tragic event or situation that has the potential to cause a state of upset and disorganization. Crises can happen before, during or after school and on or off school campuses. Crises range in scope and intensity from incidents that directly or indirectly affect a single student to ones that impact the entire community.

In essence, a crisis is a situation where schools could be faced with inadequate information, not enough time, and insufficient resources, but in which leaders, in collaboration with each Building Crisis Team (BCT) and /or the District Trauma, Illness & Grief (TIG) Teams, must make one or many crucial decisions. Some examples are: severe, chronic, or life threatening illness of a student, staff member or family member; death of a student, staff member, or significant person to a student or staff member; traumatic event, suicide, serious accident, fire, violent school intrusion, community/national/world crisis event or natural disaster.

BUILDING CRISIS TEAM (BCT)

Purpose: The purpose of a Building Crisis Team (BCT) is to provide leadership to their school community regarding grief and loss. They will make decisions as a team and will have various roles/responsibilities assigned to individual team members. In the event of a crisis, each BCT will implement the steps outlined in the district's *Response to Tragedy & Crisis* Manual. The TIG trained members of each building's crisis team will facilitate their team's response.

The BCT, when possible, should include the following:

- Superintendent/Principal
- Director of Student Services
- School Psychologist
- School Nurse
- Teacher(s)
- Secretaries
- Others as determined by BCT (i.e., Custodial, Food Service, Security and other Support Staff)

Responsibilities of the BCT include:

- Monthly meetings
- Assist with assessment of student/staff/building needs
- Support mental health/counseling response
- Share information and resources
- Provide education and in-service to team
- Team building among crisis team members

BUILDING CRISIS TEAMS (BCT)

To maximize the functioning of the BCT, team members should provide support to one another and an opportunity for reflection among the team. Care providers in a crisis perform at their best when their responses to a crisis are articulated.

The following guidelines are provided to assist BCTs with their own debriefing:

- 1. MAKE THE TEAM A PRIORITY. Take adequate breaks and monitor each other's functioning. Make certain that leadership is supported and/or that leadership is rotated. Create tasks that are reasonable.
- 2. ESTABLISH A COMMAND CENTER FOR THE TEAM. This allows for situational updates and clear communication. It also provides a safe place to be and to get away from the crisis.
- 3. SPEND ADEQUATE TIME ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF. Take time to listen to staff, community members, and students to learn what they believe will be a helpful response.
- 4. DEVELOP A PLAN BASED ON NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. As new information surfaces, reprioritize the response.
- 5. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. Become aware of your personal needs, vulnerable areas, and responses to others. Monitor your receptivity level. If you are feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, or helpless, take a break. Eat well, exercise well, and rest well.
- 6. RECONVENE THE TEAM AT THE END OF THE DAY. Debrief and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of action. Determine follow-up steps and complete forms.

WYOMING CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TRAUMA, ILLNESS & GRIEF (TIG) TEAM

Purpose: The purpose of the District TIG Team is to facilitate and assist with the systematic response to tragedy and crisis within the district. Membership is comprised of district staff members who have completed the comprehensive TIG training. The duration of the TIG response is determined by need and may include:

- Assist with assessment of student/staff/building needs
- Provide crisis intervention for students and staff
- Provide consultation
- Facilitate Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM Defusing)
- Facilitate Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
- Facilitate agency contacts
- Attend public meetings
- Participate in on-site planning and follow-up
- Provide class coverage
- Develop or access resource materials
- Provide student supervision
- Assist in Health Office
- Provide clerical assistance

Additional responsibilities may include:

- Develop and facilitate in-service training
- Collect and analyze data (i.e. Crisis Team Checklist information)
- Monitor and revise district crisis plan
- Access county-wide TIG members as needed

Wyoming Central School District

School Wide Incident

Level 1

Severe, chronic or lifethreatening illness of a student, staff member or their family member

Level 2

Student or staff member experiences death of an immediate family member, significant other, witnesses a tragedy, or experiences a traumatic event

Level 3

Death of a student or staff member

Level 1: Severe, chronic or life-threatening illness of a student, staff member or their family members

Life-Threatening Illness

Confidentiality and the wishes of the family will impact the response of the crisis team

Building Administrator/Designee verifies information
School-based staff/team (ex. BCT, House/Grade Level Team, SST) will convene to share information and develop a plan of action. Staff/team will have ongoing meetings as necessary
Building Administrator involved in the crisis will notify the BCT Facilitator/TIG trained staff member(s) of the situation and current status. Determination is made as to how and when to share information with the BCT (if not already notified), other affected buildings, and District TIG Facilitator
Staff/ team will meet to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of action, determine follow-up steps (ex. re-entry plan) and complete forms as necessary (<u>Crisis Response Checklist</u> p. 16 & <u>Crisis Response Evaluation</u> p. 17)

Experience of Loss/Tragedy/Trauma

Level 2: Student or staff member experiences death of an immediate family member, significant other, witnesses a tragedy, or experiences a traumatic event

Confidentiality and the wishes of the family will impact the response of the crisis team

Building Administrator/Designee verifies information
The Superintendent of Schools contacts Director of Student Services (or designee), and, when indicated, the Public Relations Coordinator and Supervisor of District Safety/Security
Building Superintendent/Principal (or designee) collaborates with the BCT Facilitator/TIG trained staff member. Determination is made as to how and when to share information with the BCT as well as staff, other affected buildings, and District TIG Facilitator
Building Crisis Team meets. A plan of action is developed, which may include some or all of the following:

- Gather the facts
- Identify staff member to verify facts with the family and continue to act as a family
- Determine and implement notification process for staff, students, parents and community, if necessary
- Assess mental health/counseling staffing needs
 - Director of Student Services or designee initiates District TIG response as needed
- Provide coverage for staff as needed
- Designate counseling areas for students and staff, and assign coverage (TIG trained staff available for defusing)
- Create and distribute a fact sheet for staff members, which may include:
 - facts about incident
 - helpful responses to students
 - o information about accessing counseling services
 - identifying at-risk students
 - o information about funeral/memorial services
- Assign member(s) of BCT to follow the student's or staff member's schedule if appropriate
- Schedule follow-up meeting to assess ongoing needs

• BCT will meet:

- o Debrief in a timely manner
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of action
- Determine follow-up steps
- Complete forms (<u>Crisis Response Checklist</u> p. 16 & <u>Crisis Response Evaluation</u> p. 17)

Death In The School Community

Level 3: Death of a student or staff member

Confidentiality and the wishes of the family will impact the response of the crisis team

- Building Administrator/Designee verifies information
- Building Superintendent/Principal (or designee) collaborates with the BCT Facilitator/TIG trained staff member. Determination is made as to how and when to share information with the BCT as well as staff, other affected buildings, and District TIG Facilitator. Building Principal also contacts:
 - Superintendent of Schools
 - Director of Student Services
 - District TIG Facilitator
 - Special Services Supervisor(s), when indicated
 - Public Relations Coordinator
 - Supervisor of District Safety/Security
- Superintendent / Director of student services notifies staff (including extracurricular coaches or advisors) of the crisis via phone, text and/or faculty/staff meeting
- Building Crisis Team meets to develop a plan of action, which *may* include some or all of the following:
 - Gather the facts
 - Identify staff member to verify facts with the family and continue to act as a family liaison
 - Assess mental health staffing needs
 - Director of Student Services or designee initiates District/Community TIG response as needed. Identify district/building staff member(s) to coordinate/direct outside support staff

- Determine and implement notification process for staff, students, parents and community, if necessary
- Provide coverage for staff as needed
- Designate counseling areas for students and staff, and assign coverage (TIG trained staff available for defusing). Bring <u>TIG boxes</u> (p. 22) to designated area(s)
- Create and distribute a fact sheet for staff members, which may include:
 - facts about the incident
 - helpful responses to students
 - information about accessing counseling services
 - o identifying at-risk students
 - o information about funeral/memorial services
- Assign member(s) of BCT to follow the student's or staff member's schedule
- Schedule follow-up meeting to assess ongoing needs

Faculty/staff meeting

- Distribute announcement/script to faculty/staff to read to students
- Remind staff that the school day routine should continue as normally as possible
- TIG Trained staff are available for Defusing (CISM)
- Staff receiving requests for additional information should be directed to the Superintendent or Director of Student Services
- Communication should only be disseminated through district spokesperson(s) (i.e. Superintendent, Public Relations Coordinator). Secretarial staff may be given a script to use if approached for information
- Review Commemoration Guidelines (p.18)
- BCT will meet:
 - Debriefing
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of action
 - Determine follow-up steps
 - Complete forms (<u>Crisis Response Checklist</u> p. 16 & Crisis Response Evaluation p. 17)

Level 4: School-wide or district-wide crisis

School-wide/District-wide Crisis

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the event, a school-wide crisis has the potential to become a district-wide crisis. Response steps are the same as Level 3, but due to the magnitude of the event and extent of those affected, a larger-scale response (Community TIG Response) may be indicated

Building Administrator/Designee verifies information
Director of Student Services (or designee) collaborates with the BCT Facilitator/TIG trained staff member. Determination is made as to how and when to share information with the BCT as well as staff, other affected buildings, and District TIG Facilitator. Superintendent also contacts: • Superintendent • District TIG Facilitator • Special Services Supervisor(s), when indicated • Public Relations Coordinator • Supervisor of District Safety/Security
Director of Student Services notifies staff (including extracurricular coaches or advisors) of the crisis via phone, text and/or faculty/staff meeting
Building Crisis Team meets to develop a plan of action, which <i>may</i> include some or all of the following: • Gather the facts • Identify staff member to verify facts with the family and continue to act as a family

- liaisonAssess mental health staffing needs
 - Director of Student Services or designee initiates District/Community TIG response as needed. Identify district/building staff member(s) to coordinate/direct outside support staff
- Determine and implement notification process for staff, students, parents and community, if necessary
- Provide coverage for staff as needed
- Designate counseling areas for students and staff, and assign coverage (TIG trained staff available for defusing). Bring TIG boxes to designated area(s)
- Create and distribute a fact sheet for staff members, which may include:
 - facts about the incident

- o helpful responses to students
- o information about accessing counseling services
- o identifying at-risk students
- information about funeral/memorial services
- Assign member(s) of BCT to follow the student's or staff member's schedule
- Schedule follow-up meeting to assess ongoing needs

Faculty/staff meeting:

- Distribute announcement/script to faculty/staff to read to students
- Remind staff that the school day routine should continue as normally as possible
- TIG Trained staff are available for Defusing (CISM)
- Requests to staff for additional information should be directed to the building principal or designee
- Communication should only be disseminated through district spokesperson(s) (i.e. Superintendent, Public Relations Coordinator). Secretarial staff may be given a script to use if approached for information
- Review Commemoration Guidelines (p. 18)
- BCT will meet:
 - Debriefing
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of action
 - Determine follow-up steps
 - Complete forms (<u>Crisis Response Checklist</u> p. 16 & Crisis Response Evaluation p. 17)

Level 5: District is faced with local, state, natural or manmade crisis

Disaster

- ** The scope and magnitude of the event will dictate the response**
- ** At a Level 5 Response it is anticipated that mental health needs of both students and staff will be heightened. The use of district TIG staff, as well as all other district mental health professionals, will be critical to supporting these needs.**
- District Administration assesses and determines the need for an emergency response (i.e. lock-down/lock-out, evacuation-see the <a href="https://www.wcsa.needistrict.com/wcsa.ne
- If indicated, District refers to Emergency Planning Document and/or the Crisis Response guidelines (p. 14)

CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Date & Time of Crisis:

(to be completed by building principal or designee within 72 hours of response)

School:

Le	evel of response to the crisis (please circle): 1 2 3 4 5			
Na	ature of crisis:			
Gı	rades affected (please circle): K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	11 12	!	
C	omplete the following:	Date	Time	N/A
	1. Notify Superintendent			
	2. Notify Director of Student Services			
	3. Notify District TIG Facilitator			
	4. Notify Public Relations Coordinator			
	5. Notify Supervisor of District Safety/Security/Planning			
	6. Notify Building Crisis Team (BCT) and hold meeting to develop plan. Identify staff member to act as family liaison			
	7. Notify staff (phone tree/ConnectEd)			
	8. Give secretarial staff public information script			
	9. Notify:			
	Transportation Manager			
	Building Food Manager Head Custodian			
	Building Sentry Supervisor			
	Athletic Supervisor and Coach(es)			
	Extracurricular Advisors			
	10. Prepare school staff (staff meeting, fact sheets, etc.)			
	11. Prepare and send home notification of event			
	12. Update Superintendent/designee			
	13. Hold follow-up BCT meeting (debriefing, develop follow-up plan, TIG support)			
	14. Staff debriefing/communication			
	15. Re-entry plan for affected student(s) of staff member(s)			
	16. TIG Lock- Notify appropriate administrator to add TIG lock. Update IC and Blackboard Connect information as warranted.			

*Upon completion, send to the Director of Student Services

Person Completing	j	Date	

CRISIS RESPONSE EVALUATION

This form is to be completed by the Building Crisis Team. The information you provide will assist in the ongoing review of the Response Manual and enhance Wyoming's response to crisis

School:		Date & time of crisis:
Level of res	ponse to the crisis (please o	circle): 1 2 3 4 5
Nature of cr	risis:	
The Crisis 1	Feam convened (check all th	at apply):
before	school during school	after school weekend/school holiday
	onal support requested? _ se identify: District su	YESNO upport Out-of-district TIG support
	e the number which best de pful, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = ve	scribes your team's experience: ry helpful)
1. How	helpful were the guidelines f 1 2 3	for determining the level of response?
2. How	helpful was the Crisis Respo	onse Checklist?
3. How	helpful was the additional di	strict support?
	1 2 3	N/A
4. How	helpful was the additional or 1 2 3	ut-of-district TIG support? N/A
Suggestion	s/comments	
*Please atta used, etc.)	ich any additional informatio	on (i.e. copies of notification to parents/staff, handouts
Perso	on Completing	Date

COMMEMORATION GUIDELINES

Wyoming Central School District

A school commemoration is intended to bring closure to a period of grieving and serves as a point from which to move on. Appropriate commemorative activities are those that benefit students and staff and help them cope with their grief. Commemorations should reflect the needs of the school community while being respectful to the deceased individual and their family. Prior to any commemorative activities or events occurring in the Wyoming school, a Commemoration Request Form must be completed and submitted to the BCT for approval.

For each commemoration, it is important to think about the precedent that is being set and the long-term implications. These guidelines are intended to assist building administrators in concert with their crisis teams. Crisis teams should work with families and/or assist individuals or groups who want to commemorate students and staff and be prepared to offer acceptable options. Student commemorations will be permitted for students who were enrolled in a district program at the time of the student's death.

It is recommended that:

- The commemoration wait until the immediate impact of the loss has subsided, but occur before the opening of the next school year.
- If a temporary location for commemoration is established (i.e. student's locker or desk), specify time limits (1 week) and that items left will be offered to the family.
- Allow student and staff opportunities to attend services within the community.
- Within the classroom, activities that address the loss will be conducted as is developmentally appropriate, with the support of the building crisis team.

Commemorations

The school reserves the right to accept or reject any and all commemorations donated or purchased in memory of a student or staff member. Furthermore, the school has the right to cause all commemorations, currently on school properties, to be discontinued. Any commemorations will be privately funded.

Suggested options include:

- 1. Purchase of library books, school supplies and equipment, with the approval of the building administrator. Donated books may include a bookplate and equipment may include an engraved plate not larger than two by six inches. Wording on the plates will be limited to "Donated in Memory of" or "In Memory of" and the student/staff member's legal name and year of donation.
- 2. Contributions by students/staff to memorials designated by the family, i.e. Cancer Society, MADD, local charities, etc.
- 3. Scholarships established in the names of students/staff per their high school.

Unacceptable commemorations include those which may:

- 1. Violate Title IX federal guidelines.
- 2. Contradict the Wyoming Central School District's mission.
- 3. Significantly alter the conduct of a regular school instructional day.
- 4. Significantly alter school activities or the school activities schedule.
- 5. Require the retirement or discontinued use of school property. This may include such items as monuments, statues, benches, etc.

- 6. Infringe on the separation of church and state.
- 7. Require the use of public funds for purchase, development or maintenance beyond the normal care and maintenance of school properties.

Yearbook Guidelines

- 1. Appropriate space may be designated (up to one page) in commemoration of all students/staff members who have died during that school year. This space may include a uniform size picture of each student/staff member, if available, along with the legal name and dates of birth and death, as deemed appropriate.
- 2. If there is a death after the printing of the yearbook and the student has not graduated, the student's picture may appear in the next year's yearbook. If the student was enrolled in high school, the student's picture may appear in the anticipated graduation year's yearbook upon consultation with the student's family.
- 3. A deceased student/staff member's picture, if available, may be included with the pictures of other students/staff in the class for the year covered by the yearbook.

Graduation

- 1. Graduation is a time to recognize the many years of work and achievement of the eighth grade year.
- 2. Any students who die during their eighth grade year may be acknowledged at graduation (with parent approval) prior to the conferring of diplomas for the graduating class. If a posthumous diploma is to be awarded, the name should be read and the diploma presented by a staff member to the family. The family shall sit in a designated area for the presentation. Students should not be involved in the presentation.
- 3. In the case of any students who have died during their eighth grade school career, their parent/guardian may request that they be acknowledged in a similar fashion at the time of the graduation of their class.

Wyoming Central School District Commemoration Request Form Please return form to the Building Crisis Team

Date:	Name of person(s) making request:		
Name of deceased:	Date of death:		
Relationship to deceas	ed:		
Requesting party's contact information:			
Address			
	Email:		
Description of request			
*The Wyoming Central So commemorations donated	chool District reserves the right to accept/reject any and all		
Approved Not	approved		
Rationale (if not approv	ed):		
Applicant informed of d	ecision (date):		
Signature of Building P	rincipal:		

Resource Guide

Grief is a normal process. How you experience grief depends on the nature of the death, your relationship to the person who died, your coping style and life experience. Each person's expression of grief is unique and there is no "right or wrong" way to grieve. Sometimes additional support may be helpful in processing feelings & creating a new sense of normalcy.

In case of a life threatening emergency please go to your nearest hospital emergency room or call 911.

Immediate Crisis Resources

Wyoming County Sheriff 585-786-8989
New York State Police 585-786-5152
Genesee County Sheriff 585-345-3000

NY Connects 585-786-6119 or 211

Lifeline 585-275-5151 or 211 (available 24/7 with support staff to

speak with)

Rochester Mobile Crisis Team 585-275-5151 or 211
Wyoming County Mobile Integration Team 585-786-0220
Wyoming County Mental Health Dept. 585-786-8871
Wyoming County Health Clinic Hot Line 585-786-0190

Wyoming County Suicide Crisis Prevention Hotline 800-724-8583

Warsaw Food Pantry 585-786-3868
Partners for Prevention 585-786-8970

Rochester Area Support Systems

 American Foundation For Suicide Prevention (AFSP-WNY) www.afsp.org

Understanding & preventing suicide through research, education & advocacy

A Caring Place

585-475-8800

Provides a safe place for children, teens & families to come for support & to learn effective ways of coping with feelings & experiences of loss.

• Gilda's Club Rochester

www.gildasclubrochester.org

A special Place where the focus is on living with cancer. Men, women & children with any kind of cancer & their family members can plan & build life-changing emotional & social support here.

Kids Adjusting Through Support (KATS)

www.campgooddays.org

A free support service helping children & parents cope with serious illness or death of a loved one.

• The Center for Compassion & Healing at Lifetime Care

www.lifetimecare.org

A "whole person" philosophy to support individuals dealing with the loss of a loved one.

The Consortium for Trauma, Illness & Grief (TIG)

www.tigconsortium.org

A county-wide agency effort to prepare school districts to have appropriate mental health support in place during incidents of trauma, violence, illness or death.

The Mental Health Association

www.mharochester.org

Assists people to find the tools & resources that they need to achieve & maintain mental wellness.

Rochester Area Support Groups

A Caring Place

Professionally facilitated age-specific peer support groups for kids, teens and their families.

Contact: 475-8825

Sponsor: Lifetime Care, The Center for Compassion and Healing

Eligibility: Children and teens ages 3 and up who have faced the loss of a significant person in their lives.

• Companions in Grief

The group supports individuals who have lost a loved one.

Contact: 671-1653

Sponsor: St. Rita's Parish – Webster

Eligibility: For those who have lost a loved one through death. All are welcome from all

areas and denominations.

Compassionate Friends

This is a support group that offers parents, who have lost a child, the opportunity to share with others in similar circumstances. A newsletter is also provided.

Contact: 214-1434 Theo.Munson@lifetimecare.org

586-4721 Mark & Phyllis Simon

Sponsor: Lifetime Care

Eligibility: For parents who have lost a child.

Kids Adjusting Through Support (KATS)

The groups are designed to help children and families cope with a serious illness/death. A newsletter, social events and 8 week coping support groups (in spring and fall) are provided.

Contact: 624-5555

Sponsor: Camp Good Days and Special Times

Eligibility: For children and families who have an immediate family member who has died or who has a serious illness.

• Open General Bereavement Group/LIFETIME CARE's Wellness Center

The group offers support and an educational component

Contact: 214-1434

Sponsor: Lifetime Care

Eligibility: For those who have lost a family member.

TIG Boxes

TIG boxes are portable resources to be utilized in the event of a crisis. TIG boxes should be developmentally appropriate and reflect the needs of the student population. The number and location of TIG boxes should be determined by the BCT based on the layout of the building and student population. The following is a list of suggested materials to keep in TIG boxes:

- 1. Copy of Response to Tragedy & Crisis Manual
- 2. Paper (legal pad)
- 3. Pens/markers (adult use only)
- 4. Dry erase markers and erasers (adult use only)
- 5. Crayons/colored pencils/sharpies
- 6. Glue stick/masking tape
- 7. Construction paper
- 8. Tissues
- 9. Name tags
- 10. Sign-in Sheets
- 11. Folder with phone lists
 - Crisis Team
 - DAO
 - Spry Staff
- 12. Student phone numbers and schedules
- 13. Master schedule
- 14. Yearbook or student/staff photos
- 15. Faculty/Staff phone tree