

Recovery Crisis Plan

Alabama State Department of Education

Prevention and Support Services

5227 Gordon Persons Building

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334-694-4717

Recovery

During the recovery phase after a violent, critical, or traumatic event, school personnel should implement safety measures and crisis intervention to victimized students and staff. Violent, critical, and traumatic events could disrupt the emotional equilibrium of the students and staff and prevent the resumption of teaching and learning. Crisis intervention is focused on minimizing the stress of the event, providing emotional support and improving the individual's coping strategies. Crisis counseling should be brief and is not psychotherapy.

It is imperative for each LEA to establish both district level and school crisis intervention teams (CIT) of student support staff to assist in restoring the learning environment to immediate normalcy. Efforts of the district level and school CIT should include providing psychological first aid, comfort and emotional support to school victims. The goal of recovery consists of restoring the learning environment as soon as possible and providing a caring and supportive school environment.

The district level CIT is administered by the Superintendent of the school district and is deployed at the request of the principals when a school CIT is overwhelmed by the magnitude of the incident. District CIT members are usually psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other central office staff who have regular assignments but can be called upon when needed by the Superintendent of the district. School CIT members could consist of the following list of people:

Principal – Officially chooses CIT members, request additional district support, keeps central office informed.

Assistant principal – Assesses the extent of impact on the school, serves as logistics coordinator, identifies rooms for media, counseling, etc.

Public Information Officer – Media spokesperson chosen by the Superintendent or LEA

Psychologist, social worker or counselor – Designated leader of crisis counseling, and or provides individual/group counseling.

General Education and Special Education Teacher Representatives

Nurse – Monitors health problems and somatic complaints initiated by the crisis/disaster.

Secretary/office manager – Serves as communications hub, reports information to the Principal, and conveys information from the Principal to other members of the team.

Custodian – Responsible for hazard mitigation and lockdown as requested by the Principal

All members of the School Safety Planning Committee

Once at the school, the district CIT and the school site CIT merge. The combined team is responsible for communications, logistics, triage, assessment, planning, and treatment. CIT work begins after law enforcement and other emergency personnel have secured and deemed the affected area to be safe. Their major tasks are to assess the situation, identify the problems and degree of impact, identify locations for individual and group crisis counseling, and assess and determine what resources are needed.

Prior to any consideration of community-based organizations providing services it is the district's responsibility to examine the requirements or restrictions cited in local or state regulations. If no local or state regulations exist it is the district's responsibility to establish a minimum set of standards to protect the students, families, staff and administration.

All agencies that provide health services to students may be required to provide the local school district with original Certificates of Insurance naming the district as co-insured for general liability and professional malpractice. Additionally, school personnel should be aware of the maximum number of students that the local hospital can provide care for during and after an incident.

I. 4 Key Components of Recovery

- Physical/Structural Recovery
- Fiscal/Business Recovery
- Academic Recovery
- Social / Emotional Recovery

1. Physical/Structural Recovery

- A. Assess the building structure - the Principal, building and grounds personnel along with the Insurance agent, and district business/risk manager
- B. Provide temporary relocation of classes or activities if damages require repair or rebuilding – the Superintendent and Administrators
- C. Make decisions on the date to resume transportation. Reroute buses if necessary and possibly reconfigure drop off zones – Superintendent and Transportation supervisor
- D. If the cafeteria is affected, look at alternative areas for food service and inspection by health authorities - Principal and Cafeteria manager
- E. Assess damages or replacement of furniture, equipment and supplies such as desks, books, computers, gym equipment, labs, and teacher supplies – the Principal, Asst. Principal or Administrators
- F. Clean up damaged facilities. (Maintenance and or other related personnel)
- G. Crime scenes should require directives from law enforcement.

2. Fiscal/Business Recovery

- A. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and district director of technology should restore payroll and accounting systems and access to personnel and student data which need to be available prior to school re-opening.
- B. The Principal and CFO should track expenditures and payments for the incident. The book keeper should track overtime hours, rentals, supplies and equipment and ensure these costs are segregated from normal school business expenditures.
- C. Contracting services are needed immediately for cleanup, debris removal, and utility restoration. This may require a board policy for implementation.
- D. District director of technology or designee should back up electronic data files daily.

3. Academic Recovery

Short term

- A. The Superintendent/Principal should make the decision to re-open school and resume classes as soon as possible.
- B. The Principal or Administrative Assistant should convey accurate and complete information on re-open date and time to parents/students/staff via TV, radio, mass system call-out, mass email or text.
- C. The book keeper, teaching staff, building and grounds personnel should develop lists of needed items. If needed, academic materials, supplies, and equipment should be replaced immediately for class resumption as authorized from the central office.
- D. The Principal or Administrator should schedule staff briefings to inform them of routine schedule modifications, provision of counseling services and communications sent to student's homes.
- E. The Principal or Administrator should communicate with parents or guardians via meetings, phone, web site, letter, mass email or text.
- F. The Principal should schedule faculty/staff/student debriefing sessions to allow ventilation and discussion

Long term continuing services

- A. Curriculum director should arrange for homebound instruction or tutoring services for students unable to attend school
- B. Teachers should rearrange or reschedule tests or assignments if necessary due to physical limitations of the building, loss of instruction time or lack of necessary materials
- C. Teachers and counselors should allow for periodic visits to counseling services

4. Social / Emotional Recovery

Student support staff (e.g. nurses, school social workers, counselors, school psychologists, and the psychometrist) working collaboratively with teachers, administrators and community mental health agencies should plan strategies for the social/emotional recovery of the students.

- A. The LEA Superintendent/Principals should establish partnerships and develop agreements between the school and community agencies (e.g. Serve Alabama, community mental health agencies and faith groups).
- B. LEA should identify community-based resources **before** an emergency or disaster (e.g. American Red Cross, local dept. of public health and dept. of mental health - DMH).
- C. The LEA should encourage staff use of the district's Employee Assistance Program, (EAP). In-house or contracted mental health services should be provided to help employees deal with personal problems.
- D. Head counselor should have a list of available licensed agents for counseling. This information could be acquired from the local DMH before the school year begins.

- E. The Counselor Supervisor should organize emotional support systems or groups with student support services personnel district-wide. This could consist of counselors and social worker(s) in their school system.
- F. Counselors should have knowledge of the American School Counselor Association, (ASCA) code of Ethics.
- G. Counselors, Psychologist, or social workers should actively listen, establish rapport, have basic knowledge of the effects of trauma, understand the limits of crisis counseling, know the appropriate referral of students/staff to higher levels of care, and maintain confidentiality.
- H. Open and collaborative communication with outside agencies should ensure an appropriate transition for referred clients..
- I. Documentation/log of counseling sessions should be required for all students who have been counseled (name, date, and time).

Counselor Responsibilities

Counselors should assess emotional needs of students and implement interventions based upon those needs including follow-up and referral for continued care. Students who do not fully recover from the traumatic event should receive trauma focused treatment. Additionally, counselors should train staff to recognize **symptoms of extreme stress** in children. Also parents should seek professional help for their child if the symptoms are extreme and persist for more than 3 months.

Internal symptoms

- ❖ Worrying/Sadness
- ❖ Depression – feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- ❖ Fear
- ❖ Guilt
- ❖ Physical complaints – headaches, stomachaches, nausea, fatigue
- ❖ Isolation/Withdrawal from activities and friends

External symptoms

- ❖ Suspected drug or alcohol use
- ❖ Sexual promiscuity
- ❖ Suicidal behavior/ideations – beware of plans, suicide notes, access to and interest in weapons
- ❖ Threatens to hurt others
- ❖ Self-destructive behaviors – biting, burning, cutting, scratching, running into traffic, speeding and/or driving recklessly

Faculty/Staff Responsibilities

Faculty/Staff who identify students at risk of **observed or of delayed emotional responses** should refer students to the counselor/mental health professional. The CIT should be knowledgeable of various cultural and ethnic group responses to trauma and grief before the traumatic event occurs. Fear, anger, and sadness are universal emotions to trauma. Most

traditional cultures can be described as collectivists because trauma is experienced and shared by friends, neighbors, and acquaintances (e.g. Sandy Hook). In mental health terms, a crisis refers to how an individual responds to the situation.

- ❖ Social withdrawal
 - ❖ Drastic weight loss
 - ❖ Despair
 - ❖ Nail biting
 - ❖ Poor hygiene/disheveled appearance
 - ❖ Sleeping during class/Excessive daydreaming
 - ❖ Restlessness/Procrastination
- a) Teachers should allow ventilation by students to express their feelings
 - b) Teachers should convey safety/security measures while providing comfort, support and reassurance of their safety.
 - c) Teachers should consider allowing students to create a class banner or story, write poems, or send get well cards

II. Considerations for Teachers of Diverse Student Populations

In crisis situations, communication with culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families should be available in the dominant language of the student and family whenever possible. Including written notices sent home as well as oral communication during crisis intervention. This could be accomplished through the inclusion of bilingual professionals on the CIT (e.g. ELL teachers).

III. Considerations for Teachers of Special Needs Students

Some special needs students have triggers that may be indicators they are in danger. These triggers could consist of speech changes, nervous tics, sweating, anxiety, nervousness, and physical complaints. It is important for faculty/staff to implement **interventions** that are tailored to the symptoms, and disability.

Possible Interventions for Special Populations

- A. Autism – keep daily routines consistent and use social stories to help the student understand
- B. Cognitive Challenges – give explanations using concrete language and pictures
- C. Learning Disabilities – use simple and concrete language, or direct instruction
- D. Severe Emotional Disturbance / Behavior Disorders – review IEP, conduct individual and group counseling sessions, solicit parental support and referral to community agency as a last resort. Parents must be consulted before making this referral.
- E. Vision Impaired – adults should communicate using verbal cues to reinforce what they see and feel

- F. Hearing Impaired – use simple and concrete language as well as visual materials and a sign language interpreter for those who can't lip read
- G. Total Communication Students / Deaf – sign language interpreter needed for communication

IV. Considerations for Healthcare Providers (Nurses & Trained Medical assistants)

Appropriate Staff

Medications should be disbursed by a nurse or trained medical assistant. There should be documentation of annual training for medical assistants as noted in the Medication Curriculum pages 10 & 55 “Staff Training”.

Invasive Procedures & PPA

Only a RN or LPN should provide invasive procedures such as tracheotomy care/suctioning, gastrostomy/naso-gastric tube feedings, or medication by injections. Additionally, each student's file must include documentation of procedures performed and a prescriber/parent authorization (PPA) which is a doctor's order and parent request for medication.

Securing and Storing Medications

All medication should be secured and properly stored according to the Medication Curriculum pages 13, 15, 42-45 and AL Law HB56 Act No. 2003-271. The location of medications should be based on PPA when requirements are met. Some medications may be kept on person for chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cystic fibrosis and all other prescribed medications should be stored in a designated secure area according to the Medication Curriculum (ACT2007 – 463).

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of all medical information must be maintained. Additionally, medication should be given in a private area while maintaining confidentiality. Ref.: Record Creation/Record Storage pages 39-40 “Guidelines for Protecting Confidential Health Information”. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

Administering Medication

Medication should be given by a nurse or trained medical assistant in a confidential, secure, and private location.

Individual Health Care Plan / Individual Emergency Action Plan

Students' health information should include the Prescriber/Parent Authorization (PPA), and Health Assessment Record. Students with chronic health problems or health concerns should also have an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) or Individual Emergency Action Plan (IEAP). The IHCPs and IEAPs should include location of medications, transportation

information, provision of field trips and extracurricular activities, and guidelines for dealing with unforeseen events such as inclement weather, lockdowns and evacuation of school.

Ref.: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; ALSDE/ABN

Curriculum to Teach Unlicensed School Personnel How to Assist

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)

Every school should have an AED (AL Law Act No.: 2009-754) and AED system procedures (AL Law Act No.: 1999-370). An AED is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm. If needed, it can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm. AEDs are used to treat [sudden cardiac arrest](#) (SCA).

V. Considerations for Public Information Officer (PIO)

The LEA should have a designated media spokesperson with a press release plan before a tragedy occurs. The PIO should answer media questions accurately without disclosing unnecessary or confidential information while avoiding speculative opinion comments.

Situations & Suggestions

VI. Dismissal from School

- A. Principals should follow their safety plan policies/procedures on time and location for students to be picked up.
- B. Accurate information on dismissal and location for dismissal should be sent out to parents thru mass system call out, TV, mass email/text, and/or radio by Administrative Asst. or designee.
- C. Teachers should escort their students at the designated location and remain there with them.
- D. Teachers should have their roll book with electronic copy of compiled student contact information and mark students off the list as they are picked up.
- E. Only adults whose names appear on student contact sheet will be allowed to pick up students. All other students must remain at school until their parents pick them up.

VII. Shelter in Place

A. Chemical spills off Campus

1. Move inside a dwelling immediately
2. Close and lock all windows and doors.
3. Turn off all ventilation systems
4. Enter and seal a room to prevent air from entering by using towels and/or tape.
5. Listen to intercom for further emergency instructions.

6. Stay off the phone
7. Do not allow any students to leave your room unless instructed to do so by the Principal/Administrator.
8. Parents should not attempt to pick up children from schools unless instructed to do so by the Principal, firefighters or emergency responders.
9. ***Evacuate the building if the chemical spill is inside the building.***

B. Inclement Weather during school hours

1. Superintendent/Principals should monitor local and regional weather channel. If school will be disrupted, it may be best to cancel/delay before the day begins
2. Assess threat and/or damaged areas at or near the school
3. Contact district maintenance regarding cleanup/corrective measures
4. Use media, mass text, and or mass call out to notify community, parents, and others, as necessary.
5. If students are at school during the storm, LEA superintendent should contact ALSDE superintendent and the local EMA director who will contact the state EMA director for resources.
6. Contact transportation if early dismissal needed

C. Overnight Shelter (Inclement Weather)

1. Suggestion: Master keys to cafeteria, kitchen, pantry, and nurse's office should be secured in a designated location in the main office.
2. LEAs should be proactive and make arrangements with local EMA for resources needed such as pillows, blankets, water and food.
3. Suggestion: Students should be brought to a central location such as the gym or cafeteria.

D. Plane Crash or Train Derailment

1. Immediately contact and consult with the LEA superintendent and local county EMA to determine the feasibility of sheltering in place or evacuating.

VIII. Field Trips

Emergency Information

1. Critical information should be readily accessible to the appropriate personnel.
2. Consent forms and emergency contact along with the student medical information should be on hand when students are escorted on field trips. This information should include work and home numbers for parents/guardians or next of kin, chronic health conditions such as asthma, medications taken, and allergies to food, drugs, or insect bites.

3. School staff and chaperones who accompany the students should also provide the same critical information to the person coordinating the field trip.
4. Suggestion: Wrist bands containing individual name and emergency information are helpful tools to identify students and contact parents quickly. These could be made from laminated card stock. These could be worn by chaperones as well.
5. If the field trip requires students to stay overnight, chaperones must remain present with the students at all times including hours when they are asleep. Under no circumstances should the students be left alone or with unauthorized adults.

IX. Death, Grief, and Bereavement

A. Death of Student or Faculty Member – After school hours or on the weekend

Principal's responsibilities

1. Phone contact with the family for verification of the facts and acknowledgement of the death
2. Principal contacts LEA superintendent
3. LEA Safety Coordinator submit a crisis report to Prevention and Support Services at ALSDE.
4. LEA Superintendent/Principal/designee contacts CIT.
5. Principal should establish a prearranged phone chain to notify teachers (mass text/ email, or phone tree) and inform them of the death, plans for a brief staff meeting the following day prior to the students arriving at school to discuss activities for the next couple of days, and to introduce the CIT.
6. Principals should provide the teachers with a prepared factual statement of condolences to announce at the beginning of first period in the confines of the classroom.
7. A school representative from the building or the district, accompanied by a crisis team member, should make a personal appearance at the home of the deceased to express condolences, offer support, and leave contact numbers for information regarding the funeral.
8. Arrangements should be made to return the personal contents of the faculty member's desk / closet or the personal contents of the student's locker to the family.
9. The family's wishes regarding visitation at the funeral home and the funeral should be honored and respected.
10. An Administrator and/or crisis team member should be present at the family hour for visitation and the funeral.

CIT Responsibilities

The CIT should provide brief grief counseling, assess the mental stability of the students/teachers closest to the deceased individual and make referrals to the appropriate agencies. The CIT should encourage students, friends of the deceased student, and teachers to express their emotions and feelings. The team should provide

adequate supportive assistance and counseling by utilizing the following skills/strategies.

- ❖ Be present and authentic
- ❖ Listen more, talk less
- ❖ Avoid trying to cheer up students
- ❖ Allow emotional expression
- ❖ Show empathy

Teachers and counselors should identify students most affected and identify situations listed below that may need referrals to outside services after consulting with parents.

- ❖ Continued school problems
- ❖ Excessive guilt
- ❖ Apathy or depression
- ❖ Social withdrawal and isolation
- ❖ Self-destructive behaviors
- ❖ Suicidal talk or behaviors

Teachers and the CIT should guide students toward appropriate memorials. The school counselors should ensure those most affected receive follow-up assistance for as long as needed. Also the CIT should convene regularly to discuss what is and what is not working.

B. News of tragedy/death received during school hours

1. Students who are family members should be brought to the principal's or counselor's office to meet with parents or other responsible adults. These students should receive follow-up services.
2. If there are siblings in other schools, the administrator should be notified.
3. Close friends, boyfriend or girlfriend should be informed privately before other students are informed. Close friends should also receive follow-up services.

C. Suicide

1. Follow your local policies/procedures for suicide on or off campus.
2. Give less recognition if this did not occur at school in efforts to minimize making suicide attractive and to prohibit it from taking on heroic dimensions.
3. Any student known to have had prior knowledge of the person's intentions should receive individual attention by a crisis team member.

State Agencies *

A. AL Department of Public Health (ADPH)

201 Monroe St.
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-206-5618

Provides: Health assessment information, leadership in public health policy, access to quality health services and information, Disease prevention information, Health regulations information, Emergency Preparedness, EMS, Injury Prevention

B. AL Department of Human Resources (ADHR)

Gordon Persons Bldg. Suite 2104
50 N. Ripley St.
Montgomery, AL 36130
334-242-1310

Provides: Financial assistance to low-income families, health information and services.

C. Serve Alabama (The Governor's Office of Faith Based and Volunteer Service)

Eight Commerce St., 10th floor
Montgomery, AL 36104
334-954-7440

Administer FEMA's Disaster Case Management Program, Volunteer and Donations Management after disasters, Administer Governor's Emergency Relief Fund

D. American Red Cross

5015 Woods Crossing
Montgomery, AL 36106
334-260-3980

Provides: Disaster Relief, Health/Safety Classes, International Services, Services to the Armed Forces, Volunteer Services, Blood Services, Project Share

E. AL Department of Mental Health (ADMH)

RSA Union Building
100 North Union St.
P.O. Box 301410
Montgomery, AL 36130-1410
334-242-3454

Provides services for mental illness, intellectual disability, and substance abuse addictions.

F. AL Emergency Management Agency

5898 County Rd. 41
P.O. Drawer 2160
Clanton, AL 35046-2160
205-280-2476

Alabama's coordinating agency for disaster preparedness, response and recovery

Information on School Safety Plans:

- ❖ **AL State Dept. of Education** alabamaachieves.org

Access the web site and click on the following:

Families and Students

Prevention and Support

School Safety - Crisis Planning

- ❖ **Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center**

Sponsored by US Dept. of Education Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS)

Supports schools, school districts and institutions of higher education

References

“After the Crisis” Support Group Facilitator’s Guide

A Manual of State Laws and Regulations – “School Safety and Discipline 2022” AL State Department of Education

Jane’s School Safety Handbook 2nd ed.

National Education Association Health Information Network - School Crisis Guide

<https://www.nea.org/resource-library/neas-school-crisis-guide>

“Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide For Schools and Communities” – The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools – US Department of Education

“When Disaster Strikes” by Alan W. McEvoy

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