

# Crisis Management Processes

School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students is a project by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness an applied research center at The Pennsylvania State University and is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity Grant number HE1254-19-0009.

For more information on these resources click on the links below:

<https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>

<https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>

<https://www.psu.edu/>

<https://dodeagrants.org/>

Our goal is to provide school personnel with free, evidence-based resources to support military-connected students. This training is part of our Suicide Prevention series.

## Important Reminders

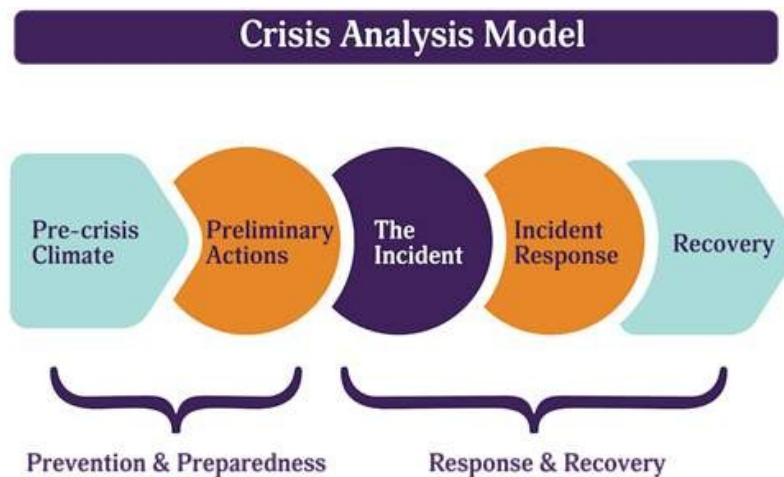
Before starting this training, please read the items below carefully and check the box in front of each item to indicate your understanding.

- The following content discusses suicide and may be upsetting to some individuals.
- Follow all district, local, state, and federal regulations. This training is **NOT** intended to replace or override existing procedures or laws.

## Introduction

### What is the purpose of this training?

The U.S. Department of Education outlines four phases of Crisis Management: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. The Crisis Analysis Model (see below) depicts the relationship between each of these components and the chronology of a crisis event. This training targets the prevention and preparedness aspects of the model as it relates to the potential for student suicide or self-harm.



Preparedness focuses on the process of preparing for the worst-case scenario. Comprehensive preparedness must start with communication and collaboration within the school and community. Each individual must know his or her role and responsibilities before a critical incident occurs. The Crisis Management Team is essential to ensuring that the intervention and postvention procedures are developed and communicated effectively. Team members generally include the administrator, school psychologist, school counselor, school nurse, a classroom teacher, and other professional staff as needed.

The role/responsibility of the Crisis Management Team is to assist in:

- Developing a written crisis management plan to guide school staff in responding to a critical incident or crisis event
- Coping with a critical incident which could lead to a crisis event, and
- Responding to a crisis event

This training will focus on the first responsibility of the Crisis Management Team listed above.

Development of response procedures should be tied to school-wide prevention strategies. Therefore, to ensure accurate communication and effective responses, you must be sure that any prevention programs are clearly identified within a school-wide crisis plan. Prevention efforts should target established concerns and risks for student populations. High-risk environments include conditions where suicidal tendencies are undetected and unaddressed. Alleviating psychological stress on students is critical to prevention.

The Crisis Management Team can help the administrator assess the threat from individual students based on early warning signs such as bullying or discipline referrals. Warning signs may also be identified through universal screening for behavioral and emotional risk, suicide- specific screening, observation, and reported concerns from students, family members, or school personnel.

## Objective

The goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

**Assist your school's crisis management team in auditing an existing crisis management plan or developing a written crisis management plan to guide school staff in responding to a critical incident or crisis event.**

*How confident are you in your ability to do this now?*

Please click on the link below to submit your response.

[https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6Gp3iBHlvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide03](https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gp3iBHlvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide03)

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below before proceeding with this training.

Answered the survey question in the link.

Clicked the arrow underneath the survey question to submit your response.

Recorded the ID number provided after you submitted your answer to the survey question. You will need it to complete the survey at the end of this training.

## Research

What is most important for me to know?

*If your school has an existing crisis management plan, locate a copy of it before proceeding. See if all of the components presented in this training are present. If your school does NOT have an existing crisis management plan, use this training as a starting point to create one.*

As schools establish and maintain Crisis Management Teams and update plans, teams must address the following on an annual basis.

Note — the following components do not explicitly relate to self-harm or suicide. However, consider the impact of self-harm or suicide on each.

### **Establish a School Crisis Team**

The specific role of this team and its members is to assess the incident, determine impact, and identify the pre-planned response that is appropriate and relevant. Crisis Management Team members should be trained and available to mobilize quickly, so they may address a range of immediate needs. For example, a nurse may be called upon to administer CPR or other basic first aid procedures. Counselors may be assigned to communicate with troubled students— offering consolation and diffusing anxiety.

The Crisis Management Team should also develop a protocol for communicating with the school community. Staff should be notified of an incident in a systematic way, whether through a school calling tree or an emergency notification system. Use the following framework for complete and efficient communication:

- What do I know?
- Who needs to know?
- Have I told them?

### **Provide Emergency Supply Kits (Administrator Grab-and-Go Kits)**

The Administrator Grab-and-Go Kit (not to be confused with classroom “Go Kits”) should contain all the items and information necessary for a school administrator to manage the Critical and Post-Critical stages effectively from an alternative location or the Incident Command Center.

### **Establish Incident Command System Relationships and Procedures**

When a critical incident is beyond the capability of the school staff, it becomes a crisis event, and the Incident Command System (ICS) is activated. The ICS is a nationally recognized organizational system used to address crisis events when a multi-agency response may be required. This system facilitates priority-setting, interagency cooperation, and the efficient flow of resources and information necessary during a crisis.

### **Practice, Drill, Exercise**

During a critical incident, the school community must know what to do, how to do it, and where to do it. A Crisis Team’s ability to respond immediately, effectively, and skillfully will be directly related to their rehearsed response to a given emergency scenario.

Remember to practice assisting school staff first, so they will be more capable of helping students. This may be overlooked in practice scenarios when emotions are not running as high, but it is critically important for real-life scenarios. Keep in mind the oxygen mask metaphor: when you fly on an airplane, you are instructed to put your oxygen mask on first—before helping others. If you run out of oxygen, you can’t help anyone else with their mask. If you are responsible for others in a crisis situation, make sure your needs are met first, so you can provide the necessary assistance to others.

### **Develop a Post-Crisis Recovery Plan**

A Post-Crisis Recovery Plan should address the management of the following concerns:

- Injury and death notifications
- Casualty assistance
- Rumor control
- Media management
- Counseling and support for grief and loss reactions
- Memorial activities
- Identification of symptoms of post-traumatic distress
  - Ensure that all adults—including parents—know the typical reactions children have to a crisis. Children may experience worries, fears, sleeping problems, and academic and/or behavioral regression.
- Resiliency activities

- Relief efforts

Following a crisis, administrators can expect to face the following challenges: educating students to cope with the aftermath of a tragedy, reducing the fear that is being experienced by the students and faculty, and facilitating the grieving process.

### **Crisis Management Team Leader**

#### Administrator

- Verify crisis – Notify Superintendent and local district administrator if appropriate
- Inform teachers and staff that the School Resource Officer is the school's media contact
- Assemble Crisis Management Team
- Notify Media Liaison
- Write announcement with input from Team Designate Family Liaison
- Inform parents of plan
- Schedule emergency staff meeting Establish Crisis Room
- Write condolence letter to family (if necessary)
- Grant staff release time to attend funeral (if necessary) Maintain high visibility during crisis
- Debrief with the crisis team for support and long-term planning

Some tasks could be delegated to a Crisis Event Facilitator who would be selected by, and serve as a representative of, an administrator to make day-to-day decisions for a specific crisis situation. The designated Crisis Event Facilitator would be expected to turn to the administrator when needed, including when the allocation of resources is being considered.

### **Crisis Event Facilitator**

- Oversee day-to-day management of crisis response to and with the study body, school personnel, and community/installation members
- Communicate between the Crisis Team and the administrator
- Provide school/community communication
- Check in with administrator when a decision requires a higher level of approval

### **School Psychologist/Counselors**

- Provide classroom assistance
- Staff the Crisis Room – talk with affected students about the crisis
- Contact community support services
- Provide grief information – support students and staff
- Encourage students and staff to express their feelings
- Contact parents as needed – provide referrals to community agencies

### **Nurse/Medical Personnel**

- Assist with communications with medical treatment facility
- Clarify and verify information
- Provide medical information and emergency care as needed

### **Roamers**

- Keep media out of the school
- Be available to speak with classes about how to respond to others after a crisis

### **Public Affairs**

- Inform teachers and staff that (the School Resource Officer, or whoever is nominated) is the school's media contact
- The (School Resource Officer) is the school's one and only contact person
- The (School Resource Officer) is the spokesperson for the school – the person who knows what information is allowed to be given to the media and what is sensitive to public knowledge

# Application

## How might this look in my professional practice?

Remember that the goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

**Assist your school's crisis management team in auditing an existing crisis management plan or developing a written crisis management plan to guide school staff in responding to a critical incident or crisis event.**

In the questions below identify which MTSS team member is responsible for the listed tasks.

1. Oversee day-to-day management of crisis response.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: b) Crisis Event Facilitator

2. Assist with communications with medical treatment facility.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: d) Nurse

3. Staff the Crisis Room.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: c) School Psychologists/Counselors

4. Write announcement with input from the Team.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: a) Crisis Management Team Leader

5. Verify crisis – Notify Superintendent and local district.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: a) Crisis Management Team Leader

6. Provide grief information – support students and staff.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: c) School Psychologists/Counselors

7. Provide school/community communication.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: b) Crisis Event Facilitator

8. Provide medical information and emergency care.

- a) Crisis Management Team Leader
- b) Crisis Event Facilitator
- c) School Psychologists/Counselors
- d) Nurse

Correct answer: d) Nurse

## Implementation

**How can I effectively implement this content in my professional practice?**

Please review the considerations below regarding potential implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, and collaboration strategies related to this content. This will help you coordinate the next steps as you begin to incorporate the information presented in this training into your professional practice.

**This information can also be found on a handout that you will be able to download at the end of this training.**

## Implementation Strategies

- If you do not serve on your school's crisis management team, how familiar are you with the team's procedures? What additional training would be helpful prior to joining your school's crisis management team?
- Considering your role on your school's Crisis Management Team, what are your responsibilities related to suicide and self-harm prevention?

## Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

- Regular training and review of procedures with all staff.
- Regular meetings for the crisis team to examine existing procedures and their effectiveness.

## Collaboration Strategies

- Communication strategies should be established and practiced. Everyone should know who to contact and by whom they may be contacted.
- Check-in with other members of your team in the event of a crisis. Ensure that all professionals have the support that they need.

## Resources

**Are there any resources available to help me implement this content?**

Click on the link below to download a tool that you can use to implement this content in your professional practice.

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:e3093a38-e3f5-4088-9c18-f02b64273b45>

# Feedback

## How can I help improve this training?

The objective of this training was to increase your confidence in your ability to:

**Assist your school's crisis management team in auditing an existing crisis management plan or developing a written crisis management plan to guide school staff in responding to a critical incident or crisis event.**

Answer the questions in the link below to let us know how well this training increased your confidence in your ability to accomplish this objective. Once you have answered all of the questions, click the blue arrow button underneath to submit your responses.

[https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide03](https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide03)

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below.

- Answered all the survey questions above. You may have to scroll to see all of the questions.
- Clicked the arrow underneath the last survey question to submit your responses.

# Additional Readings

## Where can I learn more about this content?

The following resources were used to create this training. If you would like more information about the information presented in this training, we encourage you to start here.

US Department of Education: Practical Information on Crisis Planning, 2016. Retrieved October 27, 2020, from <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/crisisplanning.html>

# Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this training. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at [schoolresources@psu.edu](mailto:schoolresources@psu.edu).

## Proceed to the next training

Click on the link below to move on to the next training titled *Readiness to Respond to a Completed Student Suicide*. In this training, you will increase your confidence in your ability to evaluate your school's current level of preparedness to respond to a completed student suicide.

[https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide\\_04-readiness-to-respond-to-a-completed-suicide\\_201022/](https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_04-readiness-to-respond-to-a-completed-suicide_201022/)

## Return to the module directory

Click on the link below to return to the module directory.

<https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/modules/>