

SUMMER GUIDELINES

Guidelines When Responding to a School Tragedy That Occurs During the Summer

There are years when you return to school after the summer to learn that someone in your school community (student, teacher, or other staff member) has died. In the great commotion of the first days of school, you may also be faced with how to commemorate the lives of these special friends.

The District Emergency Counseling Support Team would like to offer some ideas to consider when there is a death or trauma over the summer that affects your school community. Our hope is to strengthen the lines of support that already exist among your staff and students, encouraging your school to be a truly interdependent community.

Supporting the school community in case of a summer crisis:

1. If news of a death reaches you before the start of the school year, call a meeting of your School Level Crisis Team or an ad-hoc crisis team consisting of yourself, the counselor, and a few other appropriate staff members. If news comes to you once school has begun, call the meeting as soon as possible.
2. Share the information about the incident with your team. Decide who in the school community will be affected by this incident and how to disseminate the information. Remember, there are always more people than we think affected by a school crisis. Other schools may have family members affected by the crisis, for example.
3. Develop a plan for how to support the emotional needs of those who are grieving. This plan may consist of any of the following activities either during the summer or at the beginning of the school year:
 - Group sharing time in the classrooms
 - A "Safe Room," or designated sharing room in the building, staffed by counselors and/or District Emergency Counseling Support Team Members
 - Staff support meetings
 - Parent support meetings
 - School commemoration or remembrance
 - Consultations about at-risk students
 - Accessing the Employee Assistance Program for staff support
 - Calling the District Emergency Counseling Support Team for further assistance with the plan
4. Use the internal team that you have developed to keep you in touch with the needs of the larger school community and for your own support.