Custer County School District C-1
Westcliffe, Colorado

Custer County School District
Crisis Prevention and Response Plan

Response manual and resources to assist those preventing and dealing with crisis situations at Custer County Schools.

Updated: 2/8/2015
Who to Call During a Crisis

Once a crisis situation has been identified and assessed, make the following calls:

- Call 911 to alert local emergency response agencies, if necessary. Use 800 mhz responder radio if 911 is unavailable.
- Call Elementary Principal, Secondary School Principal, and/or Superintendent if possible and necessary.
- Contact information:
  - Custer County Sheriff: 783-2270
  - Elementary Principal: 783-4897 (O), 289-6000 (C)
  - Secondary Principal: 783-4921 (O), 276-4915 (C)
  - Superintendent: 783-4951 (O), 269-0611 (C)
Information for 911 Operator

- State your name
- State your location
- State the nature of the emergency
- In lockout/lockdown situations
  - State the location of the assailant or threat, if known
  - State the number of assailants, if known
  - Give a description of the assailants, if possible
  - State if weapons are present
  - State the number and type of weapons, if known
- Listen to the directions of the 911 operator
- Provide concise, but detailed and accurate, information
- Make sure 911 operator hangs up first
Quick Reference for Staff

- **Lockout!**
  - Return to inside of building
  - Account for students
  - Do business as normal

- **Lockdown!**
  - Move away from sight and maintain silence
  - Lock classroom door, turn off lights, account for students
  - Wait for first responders to open door

- **Evacuate!**
  - Type of evacuation and location will be announced
  - If fire alarm sounds without evacuation directions, proceed to standard evacuation locations
  - Leave items behind
  - Lead students to evacuation site
  - Account for students

- **Shelter!**
  - Type of shelter will be announced
  - Account for students
  - Report problems with red/green card method
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Appendix - Standard Response Protocol Manual
Crisis Team Phone Tree

Superintendent Calls:
Emergency Management: 783-2410 (O), 371-5137 (C)
Elementary Principal: 783-4897 (O), 289-6000 (C)
Secondary Principal: 783-4921 (O), 276-4915 (C)
School Board President: 371-2443
Main Office Personnel: 783-2291

Emergency Management Calls (as necessary):
Custer County Sheriff: 783-2270
Wet Mountain Fire Protection: 783-9245
Custer County Ambulance Corps: 783-2270
Custer County Search & Rescue: 783-2270
Custer County Public Health Agency: 783-3369

Elementary Principal Calls:
Elementary School Rep: 783-4890 (O)
Family Crisis Services: 719-275-2429 (O), 371-3430 (C)
SolVista Mental Health: 719-275-2351 (O)
School Nurse: 783-4920

Secondary Principal Calls:
Middle School Rep: 783-4907 (O)
High School Rep: 783-4895 (O)
Maintenance Supervisor: 783-4955 (O), 242-8891 (C)
School Counselor: 783-4927 (O)
Crisis Team Members

- Custer County Office of Emergency Management
- Custer County Public Health
- SolVista Mental Health
- Family Crisis Services
- Elementary Principal
- Secondary Principal
- Elementary Teacher
- Middle School Teacher
- High School Teacher
- Maintenance Supervisor
- School Nurse
- School Counselor
- Main Office Personnel
- Superintendent
- Other individuals as invited by school administration
Crisis Team Roles

- Media and Staff Liaison: Superintendent and/or Building Principal
- Family Liaison: Building Principal and/or Counselor
- Crisis Room: School Counselor, Ministerial Alliance, Mental Health Professionals
- Roamers: Faculty and Staff Members
- Medical Center Liaison: School Nurse
- Facilities Liaison: Facilities Director
- County Liaison: Office of Emergency Management

Additional duties may be created and assigned as needed. The superintendent shall determine these needs and assign appropriate staff members when necessary. If the superintendent is not available to perform this duty, it shall be given to the building principal(s).
General Duties During a Crisis

The Superintendent shall:

- Initiate the crisis team phone tree as soon as practical.
- Function as the Public Information Officer. If the superintendent cannot function as the PIO, the business manager shall fill this role.
- Determine whether assistance from outside agencies is necessary to provide support for students.
- Coordinate with emergency response command center
- Prepare statement for secretary to use in responding to phone calls
- Address the media.
- Remind employees that only designated spokespersons are authorized to talk with news media.
- Draft a letter to parents informing them of the crisis, if necessary
- Talk with police, clergy, family members as appropriate to confirm information.
- Inform the Board of Education
- Organize a before school staff meeting, if appropriate

The Counselor/Mental Health Professionals shall:

- Determine location and number of crisis counseling rooms.
- Contact parents of students that are identified as vulnerable to the situation if appropriate.
- Contact superintendent to implement Crisis Team Response, if not done already.
General Duties During a Crisis

The Principal(s) shall:

- Act as family liaison, and relay family wishes to school personnel.
- Designate a gathering place for parents and be there to answer questions and offer support.
- Arrange for extra support in main office to handle attendance, etc.
- Assist teachers in classroom intervention.
- Convey condolences to the family involved in crisis.
- Arrange for extra classroom coverage for teachers to take breaks, if possible.

The Secretary(ies) shall:

- Inform athletic director, transportation director, and food services director of the situation (these directors will then inform their staff of the situation).
- Review written statements to public and parents with superintendent.
- Forward all inquiries from the press to the superintendent.
- Log incoming and outgoing calls and personal contacts relevant to the crisis.

Additional duties may be created and assigned as needed. The superintendent shall determine these needs and assign appropriate staff members when necessary. If the superintendent is not available to perform this duty, it shall be given to the building principal(s).
Standard Response Protocol

Four Directives

Lockout! Secure the Perimeter
Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight
Evacuate! To the Stated Location
Shelter! For Hazard using Method
SRP in a Nutshell

**Lockout! “Secure the Perimeter”**
Students: Return to inside of building and do business as normal
Teachers: Recover students and staff from outside of building, increase situational awareness, take roll and account for students, do business as normal

**Lockdown! “Locks, Lights, Out of Sight”**
Students: Move away from sight and maintain silence
Teachers: Lock classroom door, turn off lights, move away from sight, maintain silence, wait for first responders to open door, communicate needed medical attention, find safe location if outside, take roll, account for students

**Evacuate! “Using the Announced Type and Location”**
Types include: In order, in hand, and tactically
Students: Leave stuff behind and form a single file line
Teachers: Take roll sheet if possible, lead students to evacuation location, take roll, account for students, report injuries or problems at the evacuation assembly to first responders using red card/green card method
SRP in a Nutshell

Shelter! “Using the Announced Type and Method
Types include: Tornado, Hazmat, Flood, Snow
Methods include: Drop, cover, and hold; and seal; in silence
Students: will know appropriate shelter types and methods
Teachers: trained in appropriate shelter methods, take roll and
account for students, report injuries or problems at the evacuation
assembly to first responders using red card/green card method

If fire alarm sounds without evacuation directions, proceed to
standard evacuation locations.

If a fire alarm sounds during a lockdown, staff and students
shall remain in lockdown unless fire is visible or smoke is
smelled or visible.

Refer to SRP manual for detailed instructions on each of the
four actions and directives.
Potential scenarios for Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter

- **Lockout!** – Threatening situation outside the school such as dangerous animal, unknown and suspicious vehicle, or information from emergency services of threatening individual in the area.
- **Lockdown!** – Threatening situation inside the school such as an active shooter or any other situation inside the school that poses a threat to student safety.
- **Evacuate!** – Situation requiring mobilization of students from one location to another such as fire, bomb threat, or building collapse.
- **Shelter!** – Situation requiring a need for personal protection such as hazmat, bomb threat, tornado, or other extreme weather conditions.
Relocation Guidelines

The following evacuation procedures shall be in place for rooms with no exterior doors. In all cases, exterior doors in classrooms will be the first option exit for evacuations.

- Elementary school students and teachers will evacuate to Cliff Lanes.
  - The 1st choice exit for preschool to 3rd grade will be the south doors of the elementary by the kindergarten and preschool rooms.
  - The alternate exit for preschool to 3rd grade will be the south doors near the Great Room and West Gym
  - The 1st choice exit for 4th and 5th grade will be the south doors near the Great Room and West Gym.
  - The alternate exit for 4th and 5th grade will be the east doors in the middle school hallway.

- Middle and high school students and teachers will evacuate to Valley Bible Fellowship
  - The 1st choice exit for middle school will be the doors on the east end of the middle school hallway.
  - The alternate exit for middle school will be the doors near the middle school girls locker room.
  - The 1st choice exit for high school will be the main school entrance or the doors at the southeast end of the high school hallway.
  - The alternate exit for high school will be through the concessions area.
Relocation Guidelines (cont.)

The following evacuation procedures shall be in place for rooms with no exterior doors. In all cases, exterior doors in classrooms will be the first option exit for evacuations.

- For students and teachers in the West Gym or Great Room
  - The 1st choice exit will be the south doors near the Great Room and West Gym.
  - The alternate exit will be the doors near the girls middle school locker room.

- For students and teachers in the library, band room, art room, and main office:
  - The 1st choice exit will be the main school entrance.
  - The alternate exit will be the south doors near the Great Room and West Gym.

- For students and teachers in the music room, MPR, and middle school locker rooms:
  - The 1st choice exit will be the west doors near the music room.
  - The alternate exit will be the doors near the girls middle school locker room.

- For students and teachers in the East Gym
  - The 1st choice exit will be the doors on the east side of the gym.
  - The alternate exit will be through the concessions area or the doors on the west side.

- For students in the Vocational and Administration Building
  - The 1st choice exit will be through nearest door on the east side of the building.
  - The alternate exit will be through the door on the northwest side of the building.
Relocation Guidelines (cont.)

At the evacuation site, the following reunification processes shall be followed:

- Students will enter the evacuation site upon arrival
- At Cliff Lanes, students will gather in the conference room
- At Valley Bible, students will gather in the fellowship hall.
- At the evacuation site, elementary students will stay with their grade level class. Secondary students will remain with the class they were in at the time of the evacuation.
- Custer County Public Health and Medical Reserve Corp will be directed to evacuation points prior to arrival of students and be available to assist with reunification.
- At the evacuation site a list of missing students shall be developed. Forms will be created in advance to account for missing students and for reunification of students and parents.
- Students will only be released to their parent or individual listed as an emergency contact. **This individual will be required to provide identification and a signature in order for the student to leave the evacuation site.**
- Parents will not be allowed in the same room as students
- As soon as possible, a ‘runner’ will be designated to bring information to the reunification site for parents that have children being transported to medical facilities.
- Either a computer and internet connection or printed lists will be available at the evacuation site for staff to access class rosters and contact information.

The building principal shall ensure these guidelines are followed. If the building principal is not at the evacuation site, the principal’s designee will be responsible for ensuring these procedures are followed.
County Shelter Activation

Custer County School District Facilities act as a shelter for Custer County. In the event that the county shelter is needed, the following guidelines will be utilized:

- If the activation occurs during school hours, school will likely be dismissed upon conversations between superintendent and emergency management.
- Should school dismissal occur, the school district will consult with Custer County Emergency Management to ensure that students are not sent to a location under evacuation orders.
- School district will follow instructions provided by, and provide assistance to, Custer County Emergency Management.
Extreme Weather

Extreme weather conditions, such as high winds or blizzard, may create circumstance that require students to stay in school beyond normal school hours. In these types of situations, the following guidelines will be utilized:

- After consulting with the transportation director and Custer County Road and Bridge, the superintendent will determine when the school district can safely transport students.
- In the event that safe transportation is not possible, the school district will work with emergency management to provide food and shelter for students.
- Parents will be contacted via EZ-SchoolMsg. Parents will be discouraged from travel to school in extreme weather situations, but will be allowed to transport their students home if they desire to come to the school.
- All present staff members will be asked to supervise students until the students can be safely transported home.
- In the event that visitors from another school are stuck at Custer County Schools, the school will provide food and shelter until the extreme weather subsides and safe transportation is possible.
Bus Accident

The following guidelines will be followed in the event of a transportation accident involving students, staff and/or faculty. The accident can involve a bus or any other means of official school transportation. A list of all students and staff being transported will be made available to the main school office for all school related trips.

On-site actions following an accident

- Call 911 for assistance
- Note the time the accident was reported and who reported the accident.
- Note the Following
  - Which law enforcement agency responded to the scene
  - Description of the accident
  - Extent of injuries
  - Names of injured
  - To which hospital or other medical facilities persons were taken
  - Names of any deceased
Bus Accident

Notify the central office of the time and nature of the accident. If the accident occurs during non-school hours, contact the superintendent or transportation director. Provide the following details:

- Time the school was notified and name of person making the notification
- Description of the accident
- Extent of the injuries
- Names of injured
- To which hospitals or other medical facilities persons were taken
- Names of deceased

Dispatch credible school representatives to the scene of the accident, if time and distance permits.
Accidental Death of Student
Off-Campus Death of a Student

The following procedure will be used in the event of an accidental death of a student, such as a fatal car accident that is unrelated to school functions. Please see separate procedures for a death on campus, and/or for a suicidal death.

**Initial Response**

1. The first staff person notified of the death will contact the building principal and provide the name and number of the informant, along with as much detail as possible about the incident. If the building principal is not available then another administrator should be notified.

2. Principal or designee gathers as much factual information as possible by speaking with the following: local police authorities, clergy, and family as appropriate. The principal contacts the counselor regarding the information gathered.

3. The family liaison or designee chosen by the Crisis Team will contact the family to provide support. The liaison will also inform the family of plans to inform students and faculty and plans for crisis support.
Accidental Death of Student
Off-Campus Death of a Student

4. The principal and secretary will prepare a statement to be passed on to appropriate faculty members regarding the death.
5. The principal or designee will notify the superintendent of the incident.
6. The superintendent will inform board members of the incident.
7. The superintendent will notify the Crisis Team by using the Crisis Response Phone Tree. The Crisis Team members will make plans to meet promptly.
8. The school administration will be the only team members involved in addressing the media regarding the death.
9. Faculty members will be initially contacted via EZ-SchoolMsg.
10. The superintendent may cancel or release school early if necessary, following consultation with building principals, counselor, and school board.
11. Crisis Team Members will identify and address the needs of vulnerable students and staff.
12. Mental health professionals may be contacted to provide extra counseling support for crisis counseling rooms. Counselors from surrounding schools may be called upon for extra support as appropriate.
Death on Campus

The following procedure will be followed in the event of a death on campus or in the building:

(Per Law Enforcement Instructions)

1. Immediately call 911 and activate the emergency medical system and the police department.
2. After being notified of death, a school administrator will not allow anyone to enter or leave the scene. The administrator shall not leave the scene until released by law enforcement.
3. Identify and separate all witnesses to a provided location. Retain witnesses until law enforcement arrives.
Procedures for Death on Campus
During the School Day

1. Previous procedures must be followed.
2. Administrative staff will contact Crisis Team members.
3. When information is confirmed, a written notice will be sent out to inform staff and students of the crisis. This notification may be emailed if appropriate. The notice will inform teachers to read the statement privately first, before reading it to students in the classrooms.
4. The superintendent may cancel or release school early if necessary, following consultation with building principals, counselor, and school board.

The previous guidelines for death on or off campus have been written to account for the death of a student. However, the same protocol will be followed in the event of death of a staff member.
# Checklist for Handling a Death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Person Assigned To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Notify building principal</td>
<td>first person aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Confirm facts</td>
<td>principal / designee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Notify Crisis Team Leader</td>
<td>principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Crisis Team phone tree initiated</td>
<td>superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Plan Crisis Team Meeting</td>
<td>superintendent / principal / counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Contact family to provide support</td>
<td>principal / counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Notify superintendent</td>
<td>principal / designee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Notify School Board</td>
<td>superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Plan for informing staff</td>
<td>principal / superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Prepare Statement</td>
<td>principal / designee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Inform Faculty and Staff</td>
<td>principal / superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Set up crisis rooms</td>
<td>Crisis Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Announce to students</td>
<td>Crisis Team / teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Contact Parents of students significantly influenced</td>
<td>Crisis Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. “Roamers” will monitor students</td>
<td>Faculty / Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Debriefing Meeting</td>
<td>Crisis Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. End of week Meeting</td>
<td>Crisis Team / Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Commemoration Plans</td>
<td>Crisis Team &amp; Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Contact Transportation Director to inform</td>
<td>Building Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bus driver of deceased student and have staff member ride bus.

Following a crisis, a quick return to normalcy is desired. Encourage students to return to school as soon as possible.
Classroom Plan

The days and weeks following a students crisis can have a profound effect upon the classroom environment. Here are some things to keep in mind for making the day complimentary to the grief process.

1. In some circumstances, teachers may be informing their classrooms of the incident. It is important to relay the facts in a non-judgmental manner. Students may ask questions that a teacher may not address. A good response to these questions is “I’m sorry, I cannot answer personal questions about other students.”

2. Assure students that accurate information regarding the situation will be shared regularly as known by school personnel.

3. Teachers should stress that the family is facing a very sensitive time.

4. It is helpful for teachers not to act passively about the incident. Talk about it appropriately, and allow students to share their reactions. It may be helpful to allow students to write about their reactions in class.

5. In the event of a student death, it may be helpful to talk with students about what to do with the empty desk in the classroom and allow students to be a part of the decision making process.

6. The victim’s teacher or teachers should be contacted as a lead in these situations. Teachers may wish to be aware of literature and stories that may be helpful to share with students during the grieving process.
Additional Considerations

- Crisis Team members will identify students that may be strongly affected by the loss.
- It may be a very difficult time for faculty and staff that are also experiencing the loss. Remember that students tend to model their reactions after adults. Sharing thoughts, tears, and memories with students may be appropriate; however, keeping control of the grief is important.
- Students may wish to be involved in commemorating the staff member. The following page contains guidelines on commemorations. Beyond one year following the incident, the school will not continue commemorations.
Commemoration for All Deaths

- Commemoration plans shall not be announced over the school’s PA system. Plans shall be shared with staff in a meeting or through email. Teachers will be responsible to share this information with students in an accurate and sensitive manner.
- Faculty, staff and student participation in wakes or funerals is on an individual basis. Students who wish to attend services should have written parental permission, and procedures for excused absences will be followed. It is recommended that students be accompanied by their parents or another adult.
- Depending on the nature and timing of the commemoration ceremony, school administration may choose to cancel school for all or part of the day of the service.
- Return to normalcy as quickly as possible.
Kidnapping/Missing Person

At every location there is the possibility of having a student removed from the school by a non-custodial parent or other person without the custodial parent’s permission and knowledge.

Checklist for Kidnapping/ Missing Person
Teachers are responsible for immediately reporting a missing student to the main office or administration:
- Administrators and available staff members will search for the student.
- If appropriate, call for student over the intercom to report to the office.
- Check the school records to determine if there may be a legal custody issue.
- Contact other administrators to notify them of the situation.
- Call the parent or guardian.
- Call 911 or Sheriff’s office.

When reporting, teachers should be prepared to:
- State when and where the student was last seen.
- Give description of the student’s clothing
- Give the name of close friends
- Give possible suspects’ names
- Give license plate number and/or make/model of vehicle
Medical Emergency

An accident that causes severe injury to a student, staff member, or visitor can occur at any district location, at any time. A person responding to this type of crisis situation will be required, in part, to use their best judgment, as each medical emergency situation will be unique.

Medical Emergency Checklist

- Call 911 and contact school administration
- Do not move the victim unless he or she is in a life threatening location, i.e. in the middle of the street, serious weather condition, etc.
- If the victim’s condition is life-threatening, begin life sustaining treatment or designate a trained employee to do so.
- Secure the area surrounding the victim and begin controlling students’ concerns and curiosities.
Sexual Assault

The sexual assault of a student or staff member is always shocking. Due to the emotional trauma involved in addition to the assault itself, keep in mind that the victim’s privacy should be maintained if possible.

**Guidelines for when Sexual Assault Occurs on Campus**

**Teachers shall:**
- Ensure the victim is in a safe, private area and assist to make him/her comfortable
- Secure the scene (lock the door)
- Inform administration

**Administration Shall:**
- Conduct appropriate Lockdown or Lockout Procedures
- Assign someone to notify all building administrators of the entire situation
- Do not interview student, but write down what is offered
- Call 911 and give as much of the following information as possible
- Notify parents, guardian, spouse, or the individual listed to be contacted in case of an emergency
- Provide emergency contact with list of mental health resources for sexual assault victims

**Law enforcement will be given necessary support and freedom to investigate**
Warning Signs of Depression

- Loss of interest in activities formerly enjoyed
- Noticeable changes in appetite and sleeping patterns
- Loss of energy and a feeling of fatigue
- Statements of worthlessness and hopelessness
- Inability to concentrate and a feeling of indecisiveness
- Overwhelming feelings of sadness
- Chronic physical symptoms such as headaches and anxiety

Students exhibiting signs of depression shall be referred to the school counselor and/or building principal.
## Warning Signs of Suicide

- Abrupt changes in personality
- Giving away possessions
- Previous suicide attempts
- Increased use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Eating disturbances and significant weight change
- Sleeping disturbance
- Inability to tolerate frustration
- Withdrawal or rebelliousness
- Inability or unwillingness to communicate
- Sexual promiscuity
- Neglecting personal appearance
- Diagnosed with Bipolar
- Theft and/or vandalism
- Depression
- Exaggerated and/or extended boredom
- Carelessness and/or accident prone
- Unusually long grief reaction
- Sadness and discouragement
- Hostile behavior
- Neglect of academic work
- Difficulty concentrating
- Family disruption, especially divorce
- Running away from home
- Abrupt ending of a romance

Information from the Shaka Franklin Foundation for Youth, Denver, CO (303)337-2515
How to Handle Suicide Threats

General Information About Suicide

- Staff members must inform school administration if they believe a student intends to self-harm.
- The majority of students attempting suicide have talked about it with another person.
- Suicide threats need to be taken seriously by all members of school community.
- Suicidal students often call for help after failed attempt.
- Suicide victims include people of all races, religions, and social classes. They have various personality types and exhibit the full range of intelligence. Suicidal thoughts affect students from every group in the school.
- Confronting students about their suspected suicide plans acts as a deterrent to suicidal behavior.
- Responding quickly may save a life.
Suicide Intervention Team

- School Counselor
- Secondary Principal
- Elementary Principal
- Superintendent
- Parents/Guardians
- Mental Health Professionals (as necessary)
Suicide Threat Referral Process

1. If a staff member is aware of a student that has threatened suicide, the staff member must report to a member of the suicide intervention team within 1 hour.

2. Share a concern and offer help. Whenever a member of the staff, parent, or students notice a student exhibiting early-warning signs of suicide, he or she should express concern about a possible suicide attempt and will get the student the needed help right now.

3. Act immediately. The concerned individual should then tell the student that he/she is going to help by putting him/her in contact with a team of school professionals who are trained to help with suicide issues.

4. Encourage the student to share her/his suicidal feelings with the team.

5. The team makes sure the student has been seen by a community health professional and contacts the student’s parent/guardian.

In the event of a suicide threat, nothing should be left to chance or put off until tomorrow. A life is at stake.
Follow Up Support for Suicide

Following a threat or attempt of suicide, administration shall:

- Devise a plan for student.
- Ask the student’s teacher to provide active personal and academic support.
- Provide counseling support for any staff, students, or parents affected by the episode.
- Provide support for positive reentry to school. Provide counseling sessions that will help the students resolve reentry problems such as how to talk with peers and faculty about the episode or catching up on schoolwork.
- May request a written release of information form signed by the parents. This makes it possible for confidential information to be shared between school personnel and treatment providers.
- Suggest the student and his parents have ongoing counseling support outside school hours.
- Thank staff, students, and parents who played a key role in bringing the student to the attention of team and helping him/her get the help he/she needed. Remind them that caring school community does make a difference in the lives of troubled students.
- If appropriate, hold staffing to determine whether school is appropriate for the child.
Action Following a Crisis

Crisis Team Meeting: The team will meet as soon as possible at the school. Team members are responsible for identifying potentially vulnerable faculty, staff, and students. A plan will be developed to inform vulnerable individuals in private of the situation. If possible, team members will contact parents of vulnerable students, to allow parents to inform their children of the situation in a private setting. The Crisis Team will also decide how all faculty and students will be informed of the situation, considering the wishes of the family(ies) affected by the crisis. The team may choose either an all school assembly (same facts – simultaneously), or have first hour teachers inform their students in class. Administration will also organize and staff counseling rooms to be made available to students and staff throughout the day or days following the incident.
Informing Faculty and Staff: If the information regarding the crisis is received after school hours, the Crisis Team will contact faculty and staff members at home if possible, to inform them of the situation. If necessary the crisis team may organize a brief faculty and staff meeting before school the day following the incident. The crisis team will inform faculty and staff about the plan for informing students; written statements regarding the facts of the situation may be prepared and provided to assist faculty members. If information is received during the school day, communication will be arranged as soon as possible to inform faculty and staff. Information will be shared with all school personnel, including custodial staff, cafeteria personnel, bus drivers, etc. Crisis team members will provide guidelines on how to accurately relate information to students, and how to handle the common questions.
**Action Following a Crisis (Cont.)**

**Informing Students:** As previously mentioned, students may be informed of the crisis as determined appropriate by school administration. Faculty may allow time for students to process the information in the classrooms and curriculum may be altered to allow students to work through grief. Faculty will allow students that have been strongly affected by the crisis to receive extra support and individual attention in the crisis counseling rooms. Teachers should keep a list of students sent to the crisis counseling rooms. Teachers will give latitude to students to individually process emotions connected with the crisis.

**Monitoring Students:** In the days following the crisis, faculty and staff will carefully observe to identify students/staff in need of support and counseling. Students that may need extra support, but have not utilized the crisis counseling rooms should be referred to the appropriate Crisis Team member (i.e. Counselor or Principal).
Debriefing: A short debriefing and organizational meeting may be held by Crisis Team members toward the end of the day. If this debriefing occurs, use of crisis counseling rooms and lists of vulnerable students will be reviewed. The needs for the next day will be discussed. Debriefing meetings will be held regularly, as long as the Crisis Team is involved.

Follow Up Meeting: Following the event the Crisis Team members will meet as necessary to evaluate how the situation was handled. Comments and suggestions for changes should be written down.

Crisis Team will meet at least annually to review procedures and update the Crisis Response and Intervention Plan.
Parent Notification Letter

In the case that administration determines communication is needed with parents subsequent to a crisis situation, the following guidelines will be utilized.

- Talk over the contents of the letter you are sending with the victim’s family (in the case of a crisis with an individual or small group) to respect their wishes.
- Remember all medical information about students and staff is confidential. Do not give any medical information unless you have definite permission from the people involved or family members. This is especially important if there is a serious illness or death.
- It is best not to use the word “suicide” or a similar term in any written information. Families may not want this known, or may change their minds about stating it publicly after giving initial permission.
- The letter to parents should include factual information on what has happened.
- Information regarding how school staff members are handling the situation will be included (crisis team actions, support of grief counselors, classroom activities, etc.).
- If memorial services have been set up, relay this information in the letter. It is important to inform parents that they should attend the memorial service with their elementary and middle school students, and stay with their children during the service. School personnel will not be responsible for students during the service.
- Students who want to attend memorial services while school is in session must have parent permission.
- The letter should include any follow-up support that will be available for students at school, as well as community resource information.
Media Suggestions for School Administration

1. Develop a written statement concerning the facts of the incident.
2. Explain restrictions for the media. (Media may not talk to students on school grounds, etc.)
3. Relay only facts, not opinions, and be honest about the situation.
4. Stress positive actions taken by the school to handle the situation.
Age Responses to Crisis

Children’s response to trauma and disaster vary with the age of the child. These responses are considered normal if experienced for less than one month. After one month, however, the child may be developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages 1-6</th>
<th>Age 6-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bedwetting</td>
<td>• Bedwetting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crying</td>
<td>• Nightmares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immobility</td>
<td>• Sleep Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Running</td>
<td>• Unwilling to fall asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excessive clinging</td>
<td>• Interrupted Sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thumb sucking</td>
<td>• Need for nightlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of dark</td>
<td>• Fear of darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of animals</td>
<td>• Irrational fears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nightmares</td>
<td>• Irritability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensitive to noise</td>
<td>• Disobedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Irritability</td>
<td>• Excessive Clinging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confusion</td>
<td>• Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speech difficulties</td>
<td>• Nausea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eating Problems</td>
<td>• Visual/Hearing problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of Concentration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Age Responses to Crisis (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages 10-12 (Girls)</th>
<th>Ages 12+ (Girls)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 12-14 (Boys)</td>
<td>Ages 14-18 (Boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pre-Adolescence

- Become more childlike
- Symbolic meaning to pre-trauma events as omens
- Symbolic reasons to post-trauma survival
- Self-judgmental
- Night terrors
- Sleeplessness
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Headaches
- Stomach pains
- Increased Sleep
- Confusion
- Easily Distracted

### Resembles adult response

- Feelings of shame
- Rebellious Acts
- Move into adult world
- Judgmental of own/others behavior
- Eating/sleep disorders
- Depression
- Night terrors
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Suicidal Ideation

Although these responses are considered normal, if they continue for several days, help should be sought.

**Any suicidal verbalization indicates a need for professional help.**
Information on Stages of Grief

Most people who have lost a loved one report going through several stages in grieving. These stages vary in length for each individual, but are generally temporary. People affected by a death often worry about what emotions are normal and wonder how long these emotions will last. Timing the grieving process is not possible, as it is different for everyone.

**First stage:** The first stage begins when an individual is impacted by the loss. Often shock, disbelief and denial are the strongest emotions. You may feel numb, paralyzed, confused or helpless. It is common to feel detached from others and disconnected from yourself. It is too soon to accept the depth of your loss during this time.
Stages of Grief (Cont.)

Second Stage: In this stage the reality of your loss begins to sink in, and feelings of depression can be very upsetting. You will probably feel overwhelmed by depression, guilt and/or anger. Many thoughts such as “I should have…” and “If only….” may be recurring in your mind. You might find yourself directing anger at the nearest object, whether appropriate or not (your spouse, children, doctor, minister, God, or even the person who has died). You may feel very vulnerable. Your mind may wander, making it difficult to read, write or make decisions. Sleep can be difficult, leaving you tired and less able to deal with everyday matters. You may lose interest in eating, and may become more susceptible to minor aches and illness. You may have an irresistible urge to get away, a fear or dread of being alone or an unreasonable fear of danger.

Third Stage: In this stage the recovery process begins. This does not mean that you will forget your loved one or that the pain disappears completely, but you do slowly heal and start to break the strong emotional ties with the past and focus on the present and the future. You become aware of sources of strength within yourself and decide to move on with your life. Give yourself all the time you need to heal.

Information from the Colorado State Patrol Victim Assistance Unit brochure
Help Lines

- Dial 911 for emergencies
- Custer County Sheriff 783-2270
- Custer County Department of Human Services 783-2371
- Custer County Department of Public Health 783-3369
- West Central Mental Health 783-9064
- Family Crisis Services (719) 275-2429
- Family Support Line 877-695-7996
- Alternatives to Family Violence (303) 289-4441 24-hour
- Bethany Lifeline 1-800-238-4269
- Boys Town National Hotline 1-800-448-3000
- COVA (Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance) 303-861-1160
- Denver Center for Crime Victims (303) 894-8000 24-hour
- National Runaway Safeline 1-800-786-2929
- National AIDS Hotline 1-800-342-AIDS 24-hour
Help Lines (Cont.)

- Nova Crisis Response 800-879-6682
- Pueblo Suicide Prevention Center 719-544-1133 24-hour
- Poison Control Center 800-222-1222
- Rape Hotline (303) 322-7273
- SAFE-2-TELL 877-524-7233 (to report threatening behavior)
- Suicide Prevention Partnership 719-596-5433 Hotline 24-hour
- Women’s Crisis Center (303) 688-8484
- Women in Crisis (303) 420-6752
Proactive Actions In Development

- Training to occur for students/teachers in hallways or unsupervised areas in the event of a lockdown
- Establish annual drill dates/schedule
- School Culture - anti-bullying vs. supportive environment
- School Culture - eliminate culture of silence, develop a culture of reporting
- Risk/threat assessment protocols and subsequent safety plans
- Annual review of intercom and alarm volume
- Staff training on intercom system - staff can initiate lock-down (2)
- Annual training on 800 mhz radios
- Annual review of room numbers posted on exterior windows
- Table top exercises for school staff
- PIO Training
- Develop communication protocol to parents and staff - create pre-recorded messages for lockout, lock down, evacuation and reunification
- Addition of cameras, key cards, front door buzzer
- Consideration of SRO
- Annual review of crisis plan with law enforcement - review procedures
- Annual training for classified, volunteer, substitute, and coaching staff
Pre-planning for Incident Management Teams

Custer County School District administration shall actively participate in activities and exercises with Custer County Emergency Management in order to prepare for emergency situations that could occur at the school or within the county.