

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN



These guidelines outline the action plan for the management of a crisis situation within our school community.

We believe:

1. As our world is not perfect because of sin and its effects, we can expect crisis situations to occur within our school community as a common part of living this side of heaven. 1 Corinthians
2. Even though our world and our lives are in crisis at times, there is comfort in knowing that God is sovereign over all that happens and that Jesus experienced suffering.
3. God uses crisis situations for His purposes and is always working for the good of those who love Him, even when they cannot see nor feel that this is the case. Rom 8:28
4. We will seek to imitate Jesus' compassion, sensitivity and responsiveness to those school community members involved within a crisis situation. He gave particular priority to ministering to the helpless, the bereaved and those at risk. His loving action gave hope. 2 Cor 1:4
5. Christ's death is the highest price for every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain

and we recognise:

1. A crisis situation is where staff, students or parents feel extremely threatened, unsafe, vulnerable or distressed such that it seriously affects their welfare and well-being.
2. We do not presume to know why suffering happens, but we do know why we trust God who does know why.

therefore we will:

1. Identify the crisis
2. Implement a crisis management plan
3. Contact significant persons
4. Inform the school community
5. Activate counselling and or intervention as needed
6. Re-establish normality
7. Debrief with relevant members of the school community
8. Record and file all relevant data in student or confidential file

Critical Incident Management

Phase 1: Identification of the Crisis

“And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans. For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him- and all along he knew who would- should become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers.”

Romans 8:28-29

The crisis might include:

- Sudden death, suicide, murder of a community member or ex-community member (N.A.N.A.)
- Family break up
- Natural disaster (e.g. fire, bomb threat, explosion, earthquake, gas or chemical hazard etc)
- Incidents on excursions or camps (e.g. injury, getting lost)
- Drug / alcohol abuse
- Student running away from home or school
- Serious injury or illness (physical or emotional)
- Serious criminal charge against a member of the community
- Vandalism
- Witnessing an accident or assault (physical or sexual)
- Student pregnancy
- Infectious disease outbreak (e.g. meningococcal disease)
- Unfavourable media attention

Phase 2: Implementation of Crisis Management Plan

(Within the first 24 hours of the crisis situation)

- Pray whilst acting.
- Obtain factual information. It is very important to clear up misinformation as soon as possible. (Only the Principal is to speak to the media.)
- Verify the severity of the situation and immediately refer to a staff executive member.
- Staff executive meets and determines management plan.
- Principal informs Chairman of the Board of crisis situation and management plan.
- Form Counselling / Intervention Team.
- The team might consist of:
 - Association member
 - staff executive
 - skilled staff member
 - selected local pastor if relevant
 - approved counsellor and psychologist if necessary

Phase 3: Contacting significant persons

(Within 24 to 72 hours of the crisis situation)

- Identify those community members who are 'at risk' - students, staff, parents.
- (ie, those who may be particularly upset and may need special counselling.)
- Contact those families 'at risk'. Inform them of counselling facilities, school support and prayers. (see Appendix 5.)
- Allow discussion for small groups and/or individual counselling.
- Provide facilities for small group and/ or individual counselling and support at:
 - school level - grief management strategies
 - outside agencies
- Adjust the timetable as necessary
- Allow time for attendance at hospital, funerals etc.

Phase 4: Informing the school community

(Within 48 to 72 hours of crisis situation)

- Only necessary details are to be passed on to the school community. Confidentiality is to be ensured where appropriate.
- Inform staff by memo if a full staff (teaching/non-teaching) meeting is not possible to ensure all receive the same information. Follow up at the first available opportunity with a full staff meeting.
- Staff advised on what and how to inform students.
- Staff members are also informed about what to expect in future weeks and months.
- Inform students in class groups or assembly. Students should be allowed to discuss the situation and express how they feel about what has happened and to pray about it.
- Information to include:
 - facts
 - school's response and actions
- Students are to be made aware of the availability of counselling if needed.
- Inform parents of the crisis situation via email.

Phase 5: Counselling / Intervention Team

(Within 24 to 72 hours after the crisis situation)

- Activate counselling / intervention team.
- The counselling/intervention team may be required initially for an intensive period of time, followed up by a less intensive period over the ensuing weeks, month or term.
- Long term intervention may require that the individual be referred to an appropriate outside agency.
- Offices or rooms will be designated as focal points for the counselling / intervention team.
- The team will meet daily to provide continuous evaluation and student/staff/parent status.
- A report from the team may need to be submitted to the Chairman of the Board
- Ongoing prayer will be encouraged and specific prayer sessions will be held to uphold our hurting school community.

Phase 6: Re-establishment of normality

(Within one week of the crisis situation)

- Rules that might have been relaxed are now enforced.
- School bells return to normal.
- The school reverts to regular timetable, classes and activities.
- Homework as usual.
- Logical consequences are given for inappropriate actions.
- Staff meetings etc. are re-established.
- Newsletters and social media carry positive aspects of the school.

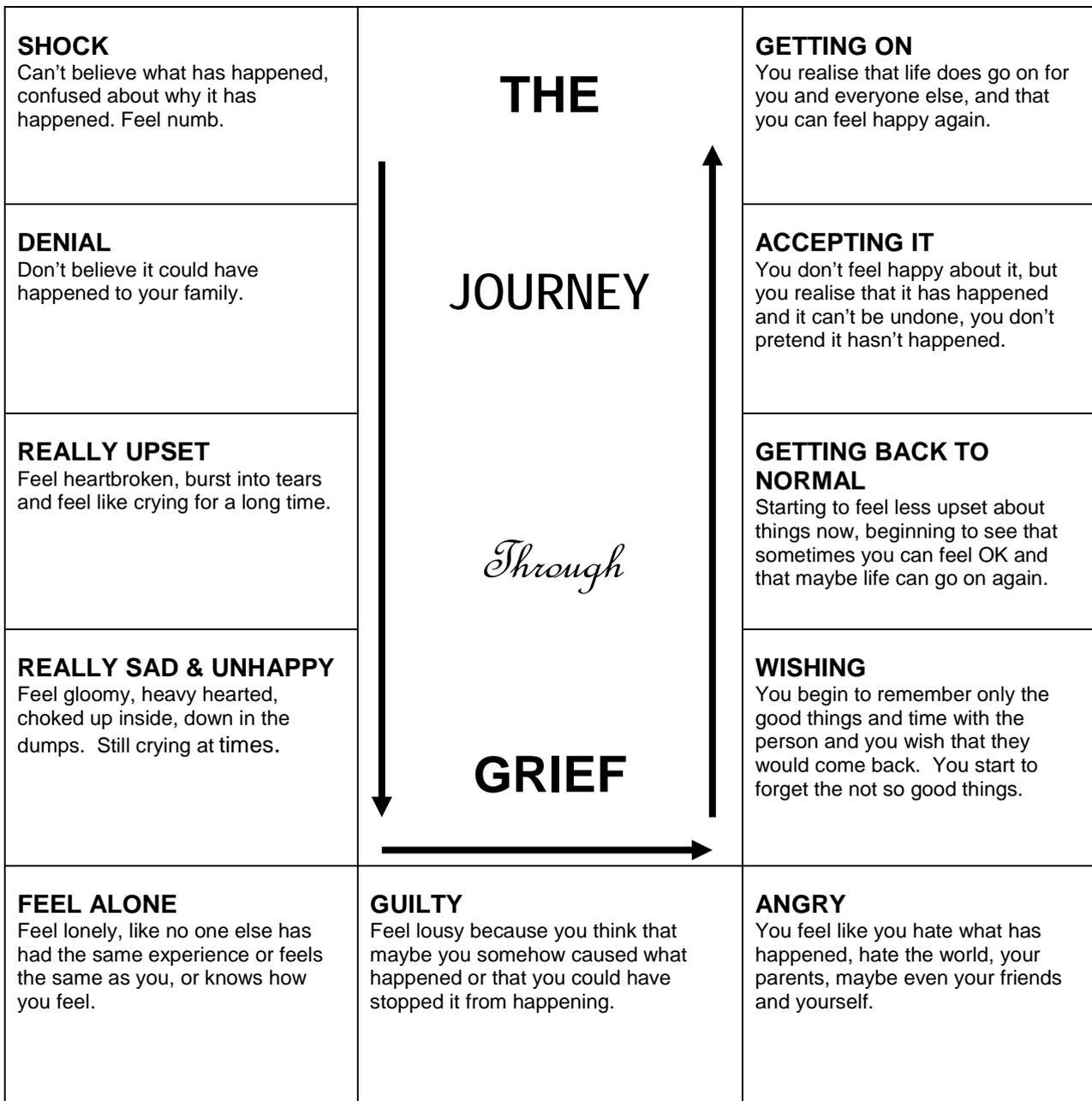
Phase 7: Parent / Student / Staff Member Debrief

(Within three weeks of the Crisis situation)

- The debriefing may include a formal meeting or question time with professionals.
- An assembly may be held to celebrate God's sovereignty and healing of our school community.
- Identification and need for ongoing support.
- The management plan is evaluated and reviewed.

Dealing with Grief

All staff members need to be aware of the stages through which a grieving person might move and be ready to offer understanding, acceptance and compassion.



Family - Split

It is a privilege to care for the children of split families and to ensure that they experience the peace and hope of the Gospel.

Teachers will appreciate and enact the Family Law Act. Some key elements of this are:

- **Best interests of the child.** This is the most important consideration and requires Teachers to be wise and compassionate.
- **Equal shared parental responsibility.** This means that both parents have an equal role in making decisions about important issues that affect their children, such as schooling and health care.
- **Children knowing both parents and being protected from harm.** These are primary aspects of determining the best interests of the child.
- **Time with parents.** This may not be equal time, but should be substantial and significant. This includes day-to-day routine time and not just weekends and holidays.
- **Resolving disputes cooperatively.** Family Law structures are in place for parents to resolve disputes without going to court. Teachers will **not** participate in this process.
- **Time with grandparents.** It is important that children spend time with their grandparents and other relatives, provided this does not put children at risk of harm. Involvement of grandparents in the life of the school and in the life of the student is always at the discretion of the parents.

Teachers will accommodate the needs of children whose biological parents do not live together.

Teachers will:

- Recognise and accommodate a child's trauma, uncertainty, confusion, disappointment and hurt.
- Monitor and enact any Court Orders. i.e. contact the Principal if a parent without Court permission to see their child comes to the classroom.
- Accommodate any miscellaneous disruption e.g. understand when children have not completed homework due to being with the non-residential parent. (Homework will still need to be done.)
- Meet with both parents as needed e.g. at Parent / Teacher Conferences. (This will usually be at separate times.)
- Send via email to a non-residential parent significant documentation or information which is ordinarily provided to the residential parent. This includes test results, welfare and discipline documentation, notices regarding excursions and camps, school photographs or major school activities. These will be provided in sufficient time to allow the non-residential parent to attend school activities, order school photographs and the like. (Parent approval will normally be provided by the residential parent.)
- Consult with the Principal immediately if the Teacher feels that it is not in the interests of the child for the non-residential parent to be involved in the life of the school or to receive information or documents.
- Make welcome any new partners i.e. step-parents.

The school will:

- Provide non-residential parents with reports, newsletters and information on whole school events.

Family Trauma

When a parent comes to school and informs a teacher that there are difficulties with her/his spouse, the teacher will:

- Consider whether it would be more appropriate if the parent spoke with a senior member of staff
- Listen, explore and understand (Extreme care should be exercised in offering advice)
- Assure the parent of confidentiality, but also that it is wise to inform those other staff members who are involved (the kid's teachers)
- Not take sides between husband or wife
- Explore those areas that are **relevant to the children** (i.e. not delve into spouse issues)
- **Advocate the needs of the child**
- Advise the parent:
 - not to take their distress out on the children
 - not to turn their children against the spouse
 - not to implicate the children nor confide in the children too much
- Request that the parent **keep the school in contact** with any relevant developments
- Inform the parent that the school needs to sight any interim or final legal orders regarding the children ie. restraint orders, custody and access orders etc. The school must sight originals.
- Suggest that the parent contact the Business Manager regarding any difficulties in paying **fees**.
- Encourage the parent to feel free to discuss their children with teachers and that their teachers will be caring for them
- If appropriate, refer parents to counsellors or lawyers
- Pray with the parent if appropriate ...it would not be appropriate to preach!
- In the end, it is important that the person leaves your company with more hope than when she/he arrived.