

Santa Cruz County

School Emergency

Mental Health

Response

Protocol

Santa Cruz County School Emergency Mental Health Response Protocol

Purpose

To establish a procedure for school personnel to request mental health services following a critical incident which impacts the school community beyond the ability of the school and its district to provide these services in an effective and timely manner.

Critical incidents of this magnitude include school shootings, homicides and suicides of school community members, sudden deaths and life threatening injuries, violent acts resulting in trauma, natural disasters and school site emergencies.

This protocol describes a procedure for principals or designees to request mental health services for the school community following such a critical incident or event.

Procedure

Step 1

Principal or designee notifies school district office of the critical incident.

Step 2

School district Superintendent or designee determines whether or not the incident can be adequately responded to with school and district resources.

Step 3

If the school district Superintendent and district Mental Health liaison determine that the critical incident is, indeed, beyond the school and the district's capacity to provide an adequate mental health response, the liaison contacts the County's Mental Health (MH) School Emergency Response Team Coordinator or the County's MH Disaster/Trauma Coordinator, requests services, provides details of the incident, specifies where MH staff are to report and a school or district contact for Mental health to coordinate with on-site. *(See page 3A.)*

In the event of a school shooting or other incident requiring school evacuation, the liaison will specify the time and location of the school's "release site" where students will be reunited with family members.

Protocol
(Continued)

Step 4

In addition to requesting assistance from the County's Mental Health School Emergency Response Team Coordinator, the school or district's Mental Health liaison will notify the County Superintendent of Schools of the critical incident. When the incident is likely to significantly impact many individuals in the school community, written materials should be immediately distributed to parents, staff, teachers and students. Such materials may be requested from the Santa Cruz County Office of Education as needed.

Step 5

Once the County's MH School Emergency Response Team Coordinator or MH Disaster/Trauma Coordinator has received a call from the school district liaison, she/he will notify members of the School Emergency Response Team as needed to report to the school or to the release site.

The School Emergency Response Team is an inter-agency effort comprised of mental health clinicians from the County's Children's Mental Health program, Center for Grief & Loss of Hospice Caring Project, Youth Services, the Santa Cruz American Red Cross Disaster MH Response Team and the Monterey Bay Psychological Association Disaster Response Team.

Step 6

Once School Emergency Response Team members arrive at the designated site, they will report individually to a Team manager and, then, as a group to the school or district's Mental health liaison to be briefed regarding the incident and to receive their initial assignment in responding to the incident.

Each Team member will arrive on site in possession of his/her agency photo identification badge.

Step 7

Subsequent to the initial provision of mental health services, the school or district's Mental Health liaison will meet with School Emergency Response Team managers to review the activation process as well as discuss the need for additional mental health services which Team members might provide to the school community.

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Contact Names and Phone Numbers

Procedure: **Step 3**
Contact Names and Phone Numbers

The School District Mental Health Liaison contacts:

Gina Swan, *County Mental Health School Emergency Response Team Coordinator, at 454-4944 or 763-8951*

If unable to reach Gina Swan, then call:

Peter Spofford, *County Mental Health Disaster/Trauma Coordinator, at 454-4426*