Section 5

Recovery

RECOVERY:

Recovery
Responding to Trauma and Returning to Learning

Introduction to Trauma and Crisis Recovery
A fundamental goal of the Shelton School District is to provide students with the opportunity to learn and achieve to the best of their abilities in school environments that are safe and secure. Physical and psychological security are essential components of school learning environments. This is because a sense of psychological security is a basic human need. When safety and security needs are met, students are free to explore, engage in learning, and actualize their full potential. This is what we mean by "safe and effective learning environments" for every child, every day.

Sometimes serious danger threatens a school, whether it is a natural disaster such as a flood or earthquake, or a person-caused event such as a school shooting or gang violence. Exposure to danger (e.g., gang violence), life-threatening experiences (e.g., a school bus accident), and traumatic events (e.g., a suicide) impact our sense of psychological security and challenge our ability to cope.

This Crisis Recovery section of the Emergency Response Plan will:
- Provide information about the impact of trauma on students and schools.
- Describe the District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT)
- Describe School Crisis Recovery Teams (SCRT)
- Provide the Site Administrator and the School Crisis Recovery Team Coordinator with resources to share with parents and students.
- Assist the Site Administrator and the School Crisis Recovery Team Coordinator in managing the crisis recovery phase of a traumatic event with the goal of returning to learning as quickly as possible.

It is the goal of the crisis recovery teams to ensure that protocols and procedures are followed so that schools may return to a "safe and effective learning environment" in a timely manner while also providing follow-ups with school staff, students, and parents at the impacted school site(s).

CRISIS RECOVERY TEAMS
District Crisis Recovery Team
The District Crisis Recovery Team is an on-call, volunteer team that is staffed by professional staff and community partners who have extensive experience in crisis recovery.

The District Crisis Recovery Team (DCRT) provides support to schools to help manage and address the emotional impact of a crisis. District Crisis Recovery Team members will help teachers talk to their students, provide direct services to students, support parents in addressing concerns about their children, and make referrals to treatment resources in the community. The DCRT will provide support to a school when invited by the Site Administrator (Principal) or when directed by the Superintendent. The District Crisis Recovery Team always coordinates its response and services with the Site Administrator and the School Crisis Recovery Team (SCRT).

The DCRT supports schools, staff, students and families by providing assessment services, interventions and linkages to resources in the community.

School Crisis Recovery Team
The Site Administrator establishes a School Crisis Recovery Team at the beginning of each school year when the school's Emergency Management Plan is developed. As part of the School's "E-Team," the School Crisis

Recovery Team Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the school's response to a traumatic event, assessing its psychological impact on students, staff, and parents identifying needed resources, and providing assessment and intervention as indicated. School Crisis Recovery Teams are staffed by specialized services staff (e.g., School Psychologists, Social Workers and/or Nurses) and other building staff with mental health training (e.g., School Counselors and School Based Health Center staff). Site Administrators should take care to select staff that have high credibility, display a sense of responsibility, think and act well under stress, maintain confidentiality and work well with students and families.

The purposes of these teams are:
- Assist with coping and understanding of reactions to danger and traumatic stress
- Support the emotional stabilization of students, teachers and parents and restore psychological security
- Restore a safe and effective learning environment

Responsibilities
- Establishes procedures to guide the work of the DCRT
- Maintains linkages to partner agencies that support a crisis recovery response (i.e., mental health)
- Maintains a list of appropriate mental health resources in the community
- Maintains letters and handouts for students, teachers and parents regarding trauma and recovery
- Organizes crisis recovery training opportunities
- Notifies all members of the on-call DCRT when there is an emergency
- Notifies appropriate offices and personnel (i.e., Superintendents, Facilities, PIO, etc.) as indicated
- Ensures that team members debrief after each crisis recovery response
- Receives a written summary from DCRT Team Leaders about response to a critical event

District Crisis Recovery Team Membership
The District Crisis Recovery Team is an on-call, volunteer team that is primarily composed of School Psychologists, Social Workers, School Counselors and Nurses, but includes volunteers from other disciplines as appropriate.

The DCRT is comprised of about three (3) members
- A responder from the Employee Assistance Program may join the DCRT on every crisis call to provide support to team members and school personnel
- School Principals release volunteer members of DCRT from their assigned school whenever there is a need for a crisis recovery response

How the District Crisis Recovery Team Works
The DCRT works closely with Site Administrators to develop an appropriate recovery plan for each school.

District Crisis Recovery Team Responsibilities
- Site Administrators will contact the District EOC who will contact members of the DCRT
- The Site Administrator will provide information to the DCRT Team Leader to include:
  - Factual information
  - History of incident (if applicable)
  - Family information (e.g., siblings, etc.) and requests
  - Community knowledge of incident, current rumors current needs of students, staff, parents and community
- The DCRT Team Leader, the Site Administrator, and the School Crisis Recovery Coordinator will set a meeting time at the school to plan the specific response at the school.

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- All on-call DCRT members will attend the school planning meeting and implement a crisis recovery response
- The DCRT Team Leader will maintain communication with the relevant departments as appropriate
- The DCRT Team Leader will submit a written report to the District superintendent regarding the crisis recovery response at the school and needed follow-up

To Mobilize the DCRT
Site Administrators request the District Crisis Recovery Team through the DCRT Team Leader and notify the District EOC.

When the traumatic event is not an emergency (e.g., the loss of a teacher to cancer), the Site Administrator may contact the DCRT Team Leader directly for support

School Crisis Recovery Teams
As part of his/her emergency management planning, the Site Administrator establishes a School Crisis Recovery Team at the beginning of each school year. This occurs when the Site Administrator designates roles for the School Emergency Response Team – the "E-Team." As part of this process, the Site Administrator must designate a School Crisis Recovery Team Coordinator and assist him/her in carrying out the following responsibilities

Establishing a School Crisis Recovery Team
- Identify the School Crisis Recovery Team Coordinator
- This person will coordinate the in-school crisis recovery response and interface with the DCRT when they are involved
- Identify additional School Crisis Recovery Team members with mental health or counseling training.
- These individuals will provide support to students, staff and parents
- Provide orientation for School Crisis Recovery Team members and discuss how to coordinate with the District Crisis Recovery Team. The team needs to know what to expect before a crisis
- Review the District Crisis Recovery Team Protocol
- Each School Crisis Recovery Team needs to know how to interface with the DCRT

Deciding if District Crisis Recovery Team Support is Needed
The most urgent priority during a crisis is to provide for safety and account for all students. The work of crisis recovery begins as soon as students are safe and accounted for.

The Site Administrator must initially decide if the crisis recovery response can be managed by the School Crisis Recovery Team or if the expertise of the District Crisis Recovery Team is needed. The District Crisis Recovery Team will provide different types of assistance depending on the nature of the emergency or crisis. The DCRT will provide a range of support services for individual crises and school-wide emergencies. In the event of a large scale crisis that would overwhelm District resources, the District Crisis Recovery Team will provide support services in partnership with County, City and State agencies. The DCRT will coordinate crisis recovery efforts in a large scale emergency.

Key Factors in the Decision to Request the DCRT
School Crisis Recovery Team Manages the Crisis if…
- The emergency or crisis is relatively small scale (e.g., a student breaks an arm; a teacher is in a car accident)

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- The emergency or crisis involves one student or a few students (e.g., a student who previously attended the school dies; a teacher has a death in the family)
- The impact of the emergency or crisis is limited (e.g., a student with a broken arm is transported to the hospital; a lost student is found)

Call the District Crisis Recovery Team if…
- The emergency or crisis is very serious and moderate to large scale (e.g., a student may have been abducted; a student is hit by a car; a student dies on school grounds)
- The emergency is serious and/or involves multiple students (e.g., a student commits suicide; two students are killed in their neighborhood in a shooting incident)
- The emergency or crisis affects the school and/or community and may take time to resolve (e.g., an earthquake at a school, a car careens into a playground and injures multiple students; students witness a tragic event)

Responding to a Crisis
Making a plan is the first step to beginning the recovery process. If the crisis is managed by the School Crisis Recovery Team, then the SCRT will develop a plan. If the District Crisis Recovery Team is involved, the DCRT will work together with the Site Administrator and the SCRT to develop a recovery plan. The work of crisis recovery begins as soon as students are accounted for and safe.

Recommendations for Responding to a Crisis
- Decide if you need the support of the District Crisis Recovery Team
- Use the District Crisis Recovery Team protocol to develop a recovery response.
- The Site Administrator will make this plan with the SCRT if the SCRT will manage crisis recovery
- The Site Administrator must be present to make this plan with the DCRT if the District Team will be involved
- Contact the School Crisis Recovery Team Coordinator and all mental health specialists (e.g., school psychologists, Social Workers, School Counselors, Nurses) if they are out of the building on the day of the crisis
- If practical, consult with the District Crisis Recovery Team before making any announcements to staff, students, or parents
- Consider who should contact families of impacted students to obtain information and/or to determine their wishes regarding the release of information
- Identify students or staff who may be in need of services
- Implement the crisis recovery plan (e.g., letters to parents, interventions for students, etc.)
- Plan for follow-up with impacted students and staff as indicated

Working with County and Community Agencies
The DCRT Team Leader maintains partnerships with the following agencies to support crisis recovery in the event of an emergency:
- ESD 113 Behavioral Health Services
- Catholic Community Services
- Catholic Community Services
- Behavioral Health Resources
- Children's Crisis Stabilization Program

School Emergency Response Protocol (SERP)

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.

Protocol

STEP1 Principal or designee notifies school district office of the critical incident.

STEP2 School district Superintendent or designee determines whether or not the incident can be adequately responded to with school and district resources.

STEP3 If the school district Superintendent and district DCRT Team Leader determine that the critical incident is, indeed, beyond the school and the district's capacity to provide an adequate mental health response, the DCRT Team Leader will contact the school's site coordinators to inform them of the district's decision to coordinate with the community mental health team.

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

STEP 4 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 OSPI.

STEP 5 The DCRT Team Leader 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 community.

STEP 6 Once School Emergency Response Team members arrive at the designated site, they will report to the DCRT Team Leader 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 DCRT Team Leader 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.