Psychological First Aid for Schools
Time Frame for Response

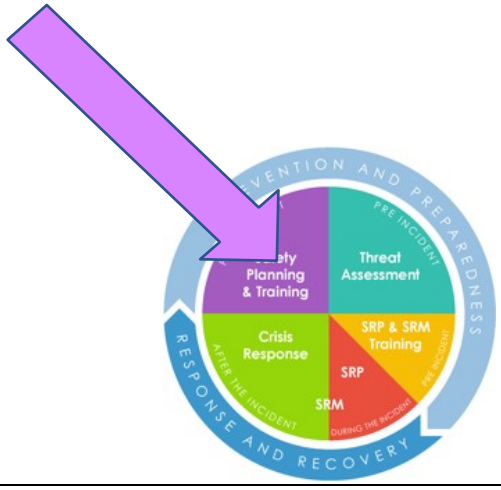
Prevention

School PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Each district develops an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that includes Threat Assessment, threat, hazard and incident risk assessment, the COOP (continuity of operations plan), an immediate response protocol (i.e. I Love You Guys Standard Response Protocol) and a recovery process (i.e. PFA-S).
- ☐ Develop school policies for death of student or staff member that reference the time frame for temporary memorials, empty chairs, memorial services at schools/funerals outside of school.
- ☐ Monitor data: attendance, tardies, office referrals, health office visits, decrease in focus/attention, decline in academic performance.
- ☐ All staff trained in warning signs and risk factors and know how to develop protective factors.

ESU PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Determine who will coordinate the team and be point of contact for districts
- ☐ Solicit PFA-S members from each school district to be on the ESU PFA-S team
- ☐ Determine communication system (email, text, phone call)
- ☐ Develop and sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each school district
- ☐ PFA-S team members sign a confidentiality agreement
- ☐ Participate in NDE training
- ☐ Assist and support schools in creating school-level PFA-S teams



Psychological First Aid for Schools
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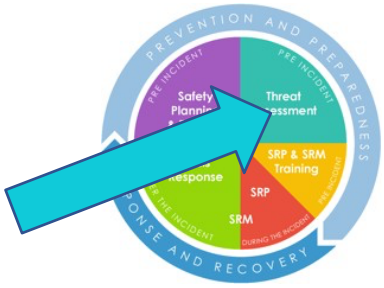
Preparedness

School PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Identify potential sites in the building which could be used for temporary memorials
- ☐ PFA-S team provides awareness training to all school staff
  - Staff have knowledge of PFA-S team and that ESU will provide a team to support
  - Staff are taught the district's policies (temporary memorials time frame, empty chairs, memorial services at schools/funerals outside of school)
  - Teach staff basic PFA-S identification and response and how to refer
  - Staff members who will teach coping skills identified
- ☐ Create an electronic folder that provides district team PFA-S contact information, address of school sites, maps of buildings, and pertinent demographic information
- ☐ PFA-S provides awareness training to all students
  - Students are taught the district's policies (temporary memorials time frame, empty chairs, memorial services at schools/funerals outside of school)
- ☐ Standard Response Protocol (SRP) lessons created, scheduled, practiced, and reinforced.
  - Teach coping skills
  - *If your district participates in a program such as Peer Gatekeepers or Hope Squad:* Identify students who may be able to help identify struggling students and can refer to the team and share safe messaging (identify who will train and provide support to the students)
  - Share information about Safe2HelpNE
    - Schedule a common time to teach all students about Safe2HelpNE
    - Posters and materials for the building
    - Provide information on what and when to report to help someone

ESU PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Create procedures for the ESU PFA-S team
- ☐ Compile resources such as statement "bank" of messages and coping skills handouts
- ☐ Assist and support schools as needed
- ☐ Provide training as requested by schools
- ☐ Participate in NDE training for ESU PFA-S teams



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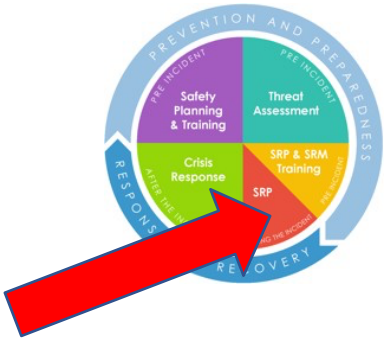
Minute 1 – Incident Occurs

School PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ **Verify details with law enforcement, obtain permission to use victim names**
- ☐ Initiate Incident Command System identifying Incident Commander
- ☐ Incident Commander assigns PIO and Safety Officer who determine needed messages to be sent as needed in controlling the situation
- ☐ Notify school level PFA-S team and begin assigning roles (Incident Command System)
- ☐ **Contacts ESU PFA-S Team Coordinator to request support**
- ☐ Provide coverage as assigned by Incident Commander
- ☐ Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance Teams activated
- ☐ Liaison is in communication with families directly impacted by the incident.
- ☐ Express sympathy.
- ☐ Inquire about what the school can share about their loss. If the family is unwilling or not ready to share, help the family craft a message that they do want released in order to minimize rumors, misinformation, and speculation.
- ☐ Ask what the school can do to support siblings.
- ☐ Ask parents to identify any of their child's friends who may be especially upset.
- ☐ Ask what school can do to support them.
- ☐ Let them know the school will be checking in with them in the coming days and weeks to determine what support the school can provide.
- ☐ Stabilization strategies utilized to calm and orient emotionally overwhelmed or disoriented students (coping/grounding).

ESU PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Receives the call
- ☐ Determine details (number of people and days needed)
- ☐ Put out request to ESU PFA-S team to determine availability
- ☐ Compile a response team
- ☐ Notify Incident Commander of when team will arrive.



Psychological First Aid for Schools
Time Frame for Response

Initial Stages - Incident Command System Is In Place

School PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Assign a staff member to brief the ESU PFA-S team when they arrive
- ☐ Schedule a PFA-S team meeting:
  - Develop message for students and determine time to be read
  - Determine at-risk students and staff who may need assistance in reading message to class
  - Develop message for community
- ☐ Inform total staff (phone tree, text/building electronic message, schedule staff meeting)
- ☐ Initial all-staff meeting:
  - Convey what information can be relayed to students.
  - Remind staff who the designated media spokesperson is and that they should refer any outside requests for comments or information to this individual.
  - Control rumors.
  - Provide staff support.
  - Inform staff where to send at-risk students and that they must be escorted by adult -- never alone.
- ☐ Support rooms identified by logistics team
- ☐ Staff read the message to students
- ☐ Notify superintendent or director of student services, who notifies where siblings and close relatives attend:
- ☐ Remove deceased student and siblings from attendance system so no automated messages regarding absence are sent home.
- ☐ Resources available for immediate needs: water, tissues, snacks
- ☐ PIO monitors media coverage and messaging, ensures information is accurate and up to date, sends out message maps as needed

ESU PFA-S Team Response

- ☐ Check in with Incident Commander and have roles assigned
- ☐ Attends building staff meeting if possible
- ☐ Provide support to struggling students and staff members
- ☐ Read message in classrooms if teacher requests
- ☐ Assist in classrooms where large number of at-risk students or staff need support
- ☐ Practical assistance offered
- ☐ Be observant for potential problems or pitfalls (i.e. breaking up groups that might be escalating the situation)
- ☐ View incident documentation and essential information (at-risk students/staff, etc.) in team files (hard copy, digital, or combination)
- ☐ Assist with documentation

Psychological First Aid for Schools
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Initial Stages - Incident Command System Is In Place (continued)

School PFA Team Response	ESU PFA-S Team Response
☐ Will the school need to be opened for additional support outside of school hours? If so, make sure this information is provided to students and parents. ☐ Coordinate resources for the support room(s). Locate tissues, water, fidgets, markers/crayons/ paper for memorials or artwork, flexible seating. ☐ Locate a map of the school building and mark locations of support rooms and hallways to use/avoid, etc. ☐ Address possible changes to school activities schedule ☐ Contact and coordinate with other outside resources (therapy dog, ministerial association, Behavioral Health agencies, etc.) ☐ Identify a break room for the PFA-S team members, space for PFA-S member items, food for team, etc. ☐ Determine who will provide documentation and log actions. ☐ Provide a listing of students/staff directly connected to the incident, students who may be triggered by previous trauma, students with special needs ☐ Review Core Action Debrief Prompts with support room hosts. ☐ **Incident Commander conducts Debriefing at end of day**	

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Responsive Stage – May Occur Over Multiple Days

School PFA Team Response	ESU PFA-S Team Response
☐ PIO sending message map messages as needed ☐ Set up temporary memorial (communicate end dates to students, staff, and families) [according to School Policy] ☐ Determine timeline and procedure for removing belongings from locker(s) and desk. [according to School Policy, coordinate with the family] ☐ Contact the family and make a home visit. ○ Offer condolences of the school ○ Inquire about funeral arrangements and what information they want shared ○ Provide with information about grief counseling ○ Share procedures for temporary memorials and invite to assist in removing student's locker and desk belongings. ☐ Attend Funerals/Memorial services and monitor students ☐ Direct and indirect information gathered ☐ **Conduct Debriefing at the close of the school day**	☐ Touch base with Incident Commander to determine if there is new information or changes in assignments ☐ Provide coverage in support room ☐ Walk the hallways and be aware of struggling students ☐ Help assign students to support rooms as needed ☐ Check-in with staff needing more support during their breaks ☐ Check-in with administration to provide support ☐ Provide basic information about social supports (access to services and agencies) ☐ Continue assisting with documentation

Psychological First Aid for Schools
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Recovery Stage – Long Term Response

School PFA Team Monitors	ESU Team Response Ends
☐ At-risk students and staff members identified and assign PFA-S team members to monitor needs ○ Behavior changes (drug and alcohol use, unsafe sexual behaviors, risk-taking, acting out, running away, aggression on playground or in school building, withdrawal) ○ Attendance: increased absences, tardies ○ Changes in school performance/ grades ○ Focus and attention ○ Significant emotions ○ Sleep problems ☐ Ensure students, staff and families have needed supports ☐ PFA-S team documents incident and files in team files (hard copy, digital, or combination) ☐ Prepare for anniversaries and special events. ☐ Prior to graduation ceremonies for the deceased student's class, check with the family ensuring they are aware of school policy. ☐ Be aware of special events, holidays, and anniversaries, as these may activate possible stress/grief responses in students and staff. ☐ In cases of suicide, provide caregiver/community education about suicide, grief and self-care within the first month following a student's death.	☐ Return to own school district/ESU ☐ School district may request assistance later with most impacted students ☐ Schools may request assistance with debriefing of the incident with staff or group of students.