

Appendix H

The Crisis Recovery Team

Recovery Issues

Planning for recovery will help you identify issues and make decisions to guide the recovery process. For example, you may need to consider such questions as:

- How will reunification with families and loved ones be handled?
- What type of coordination will be needed with law enforcement?
- What, how, and when should we tell people about an incident?
- How will counseling resources be provided?
- Are critical incident stress management teams needed?
- How should survivors be encouraged to express their reactions?
- How will we handle public information?
- Should we turn to outside consultation for help? To whom?
- How soon should we return to regular routines?
- Should we plan commemorative activities?
- What is the best way to assist families and loved ones of victims and survivors?

Establishing Crisis Recovery Teams

Crisis recovery teams manage the impact of serious incidents. A crisis recovery team can help in the healing process by:

- **Planning for immediate post-incident actions—**
 - Identifying and contacting any at-risk survivors, holding meetings with family or the community, and updating the plan.
- **Establishing casualty and fatality process—**
 - Determining who tells loved ones about casualties and fatalities.
- **Reducing fear—**
 - Helping to restore confidence in the safety of the environment by discussing security measures and addressing fears that an incident may occur again.
- **Facilitating grieving—**
 - Formulating a policy on funerals and other memorials, helping plan incident- and age-appropriate activities, and obtaining as needed the services of trained counselors and other experts from the community.

- **Supporting loved ones—**
 - Answering questions about the incident and the response, and offering advice on addressing children’s needs.
- **Promoting the primary mission—**
 - Promoting the mission of the organization (education or worship) by supporting a return to regular schedules and calling in substitute personnel as needed.

Community responders may have resources available to help staff recovery teams.

Crisis Recovery Team Members

Crisis recovery teams should include counselors and others who are:

- Trained to handle emotional response issues.
- Able and authorized to make decisions.
- Respected within the organization and the community.
- Sensitive to student/member, staff, and community needs.
- Calm and able to make decisions in stressful situations.

Qualified mental health professionals in the community that can assist during recovery should be identified.

Tips for Organizing Crisis Teams

- Consider including:
 - **Organization leaders**—people with authority to make decisions in the time of crisis.
 - **Staff**—those who have day-to-day contact with survivors, such as teachers, counselors, coaches, faith-based leaders, or others.
 - **Key personnel**—Individuals who have expertise in aspects of recovery operations, such as communications systems, information management, or crowd control.
 - **Law enforcement personnel**—those who will conduct the investigation and interact with staff, leaders, survivors, and the community.
- If an incident occurs, it will be important to have professionals in the community who are able to respond quickly and who will be committed to the effort over time.

After an incident: planning for recovery

- The initial recovery involves a joint effort between law-enforcement-to begin the investigative process-and crisis recovery teams pay for him to begin the reunification and healing process.
- It will take teams of have staff, counselors, faith-based leaders, and others to attend to the emotional needs of survivors and their loved ones.
- Establish crisis recovery teams immediately, if they have not already been planned for. Crisis recovery teams manage the impact of serious incidents. A crisis recovery team can help in the healing process by:
 - Public information officer's help to ensure that family members in the community receive accurate information, while protecting the privacy of those affected by the incident, and helping to dispel rumors.
 - Crisis recovery teams consider other practical details such as how to handle the outpouring of donations from the local and extended community, and how to best handle memorials.
 - Questions involving recovery issues-law enforcement will guide you through each phase
 - After a mass casualty event, it is important to quickly reunite survivors with their loved ones. Often the best approach is to relocate survivors to a location away from the incident scene. These reunification plans should be made quickly, within 5 to 10 minutes of the event. As soon as the media begins reporting an incident, it is natural for concerned individuals to rush to the scene, unless given other guidance.

The police Public Information Officer will:

- Convey a message of resilience, continued healing, and a return to normalcy; be proactive about pitching story ideas to the media that promote hope and healing; issue media advisories about memorial events open to the public, anniversary dates, fundraising or donations;
- In preparing a medium message, think about: what are the fax? Clarify the situation. What do you know, and what do you not know? What steps are you taking to address the situation? Provide a call to action for members or parents or students. Express empathy. Never guess, speculate, or predict the future. Do not release information until you have verified its accuracy.
- FEMA has an entire block of training specifically geared toward disaster response public information following a crisis. This course is

IS-29 public information officer awareness. Additional training may be available through your state or local emergency management agency.

After an Active Shooter Incident

Once the scene is secured, first responders will work with house of worship staff and victims on a variety of matters. This will include transporting the injured, interviewing witnesses, and initiating the investigation.

The house of worship's Emergency Operations Plan should identify trained personnel who will provide assistance to victims and their families.

- This should include establishing an incident response team (including community partners) that is trained to appropriately assess and triage an active shooter situation (as well as other emergencies), and provide emergency intervention services and victim assistance beginning immediately after the incident and throughout the recovery efforts.
- This team will integrate with local, state, and Federal resources when an emergency occurs. Within an ongoing and/or evolving emergency, where the immediate reunification of loved ones is not possible, providing family members with timely, accurate, and relevant information is paramount. Having family members wait for long periods for information about their loved ones not only adds to their stress and frustration, but can also escalate the emotions of the entire group.

When families are reunited, it is critical that there are **child release processes** in place where minors might be involved (e.g., childcare, religious classes) to assure that no child is released to an unauthorized person, even if that person well meaning.

- This will ensure that families and loved ones receive accurate and timely information in a compassionate way. While law enforcement and medical examiner procedures must be followed, families should receive accurate information as soon as possible. Having trained personnel to talk to loved ones about death and injury on hand or immediately.

In a survey of public schools, 84% had a written response plan for shooting incident however only 52% had practiced their students on the plan in the past year. Providing more practice will help you stay better prepared.

The two keys to successful exercises are

1. keep the drills **realistic**,
 - a. for example, during in evacuation drill, block a few normal routes.
2. keep the drills **unpredictable**,
 - a. for example, conduct the drill at awkward times, not ideal scenario.