

LANCASTER COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOL IN SUICIDE AFTERMATH

PHILOSOPHY:

Lancaster School District personnel strive to meet the emotional needs of students and staff. In the aftermath of a suicide, these needs will be diverse and extend beyond those directly connected to the suicide. Indeed, as many or more students and staff may bring to the surface the issues with which they are struggling. Examples of indirect impacts include the recent death of a loved one, the terminal illness of a loved one, one's own depression and past or present suicidal ideation and/or attempts or suicidal statements of friends in the past. The Lancaster School District personnel will be twofold: 1) to meet the emotional needs of students and staff affected, whether directly or indirectly, and 2) to be proactive in preventing additional suicides, known as "contagion" or "cluster" suicides.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Crisis Response Team, consisting of the administrators, the school counselors, the school psychologist, and the school nurse and others as appointed by administration will be convened.
2. The Crisis Response Team will assess the impact of the situation and plan for services for students and staff.
3. The Crisis Response Team will meet to debrief, with the goal of improving future interventions and services based on what has been learned from present experience.

Because the prevention of contagion suicides is of paramount importance, the following procedures will be adhered to in all suicides:

4. School will not be dismissed or cancelled even for the funeral.
5. Posters, banners, memorials, yearbook dedications, scholarships, all-school assemblies and similar tributes will not be allowed.
6. Visitation and/or funeral services will not be conducted on school grounds.

NOTE: Procedures 4, 5, and 6 are not in place to disrespect the deceased nor are they designed to interfere with the grieving of students and staff. Rather they are research-based best practices designed to minimize the chances of contagion suicides. Indeed, tributes to the deceased may result in a depressed or suicidal person believing he or she can get more attention in death than life.

Approved: