

## **How to Cope with Traumatic Incidents** (e.g. Infectious Diseases/ Traffic Accidents/ Sudden Deaths/ Terrorist Attacks, etc.)

### **Suggestions for SCHOOLS**

(Details are in the [eBook on School Crisis Management](#) on EDB website)

A crisis can be precipitated by the suicide of a student or staff, sudden or accidental death, a violent incident, an infectious disease or a natural disaster. In facing a school crisis, a school should:

#### **1. Evaluate the Impact**

- Collect and verify information of the incident
- Assess the severity of the impact and the number of people affected
- Identify who the victims, survivors and witnesses are
- Determine if outside support is required

#### **2. Activate the School Crisis Management Team**

- Coordinate all resources in and outside school
- Draw up a crisis management plan on how to:
  - ensure immediate safety of all students and staff
  - control the consistency and the flow of information in and outside school to eliminate the spread of rumor
  - render support to emotionally disturbed individuals and groups
  - enhance students' personal growth through effective coping with the incident

#### **3. Conduct a Staff Meeting**

- Inform all teachers of the incident and clarify queries
- Explain the crisis management plan & the division of labor e.g. handle enquiries from the media & parents
- Handle the emotions of teachers and provide support to those in need

#### **4. Arrange Special Class Period for Students**

- Provide a safe and familiar environment to students
- Help students adopt a positive attitude in facing a crisis
- Provide age-appropriate channels or activities for students to express and manage their emotions
- Assist students in transferring their grief into constructive behaviours
- Identify at-risk students and refer them for follow-up support by the school's guidance personnel

## **5. Monitor Progress & Coordinate Follow-up**

- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the crisis management work
- Receive continuous feedback from staff on students' reaction
- Remind teachers to keep on observing students at-risk
- Work out and decide on short-term follow up plan for students
- Identify needs and organise preventive activities or programmes for students
- Identify needs and organise training for teachers