

Crisis Response Guidelines for K-12 and Institutions Of Higher Education

Colorado School Safety Resource Center
Colorado Department of Public Safety

Ron Lee,
School Outreach Consultant

Brad Stiles,
Emergency Response Outreach Consultant

CSSRC Safety Summit
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How It All Got Started



*Chris Harms,
Director of the Colorado School Safety
Resource Center, CO Dept Public Safety*



*John McDonald,
Former Executive Director, Security &
Emergency Management, Jefferson County
Schools*



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Members of the Working Group

- Nancy Barjenbruch, Auraria Higher Education Center
- Lea Bernstein-Holmes, Sheridan School District
- Todd Bittner, Norwood School District
- Greg Busch, Colorado Community College System
- Melissa Craven, Denver Public Schools
- Franci Crepeau-Hobson, University of Colorado-Denver
- Curt Drennen, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Essi Ellis, University of Colorado, Anschutz Campus
- Reed Floarea, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Stacy Gahagen, Adams 12 Five Star School District
- Kati Garner, Colorado School Safety Resource Center
- Lynn Garst, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Chris Harms, Colorado School Safety Resource Center
- Meredith Henry, Littleton Public Schools
- Nathan Kubes, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Ron Lee, Colorado School Safety Resource Center
- Nancy Lewis, Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance
- Sadie Martinez, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Ami McCarthy, Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance
- John McDonald, JeffCo Public Schools
- Margaret Ochoa, Colorado School Safety Resource Center
- Gabby Roldan, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Meghan Shelton, Colorado Department of Human Services
- Brad Stiles, Colorado School Safety Resource Center
- Nate Thompson, Littleton Public Schools
- Mike Vagher, Lake County Schools
- Rachael Whitney, 27J Schools
- Eric Zimmerman, Cherry Creek Schools



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1. Life Cycle of a Disaster (p. 5)
2. Preparing for a Crisis (pp.7-17)
3. During an Emergency (pp.18-23)
4. After a Critical Event (pp.24-28)
5. Ongoing Crisis support (pp.29-33)
6. Appendix (p. 34)



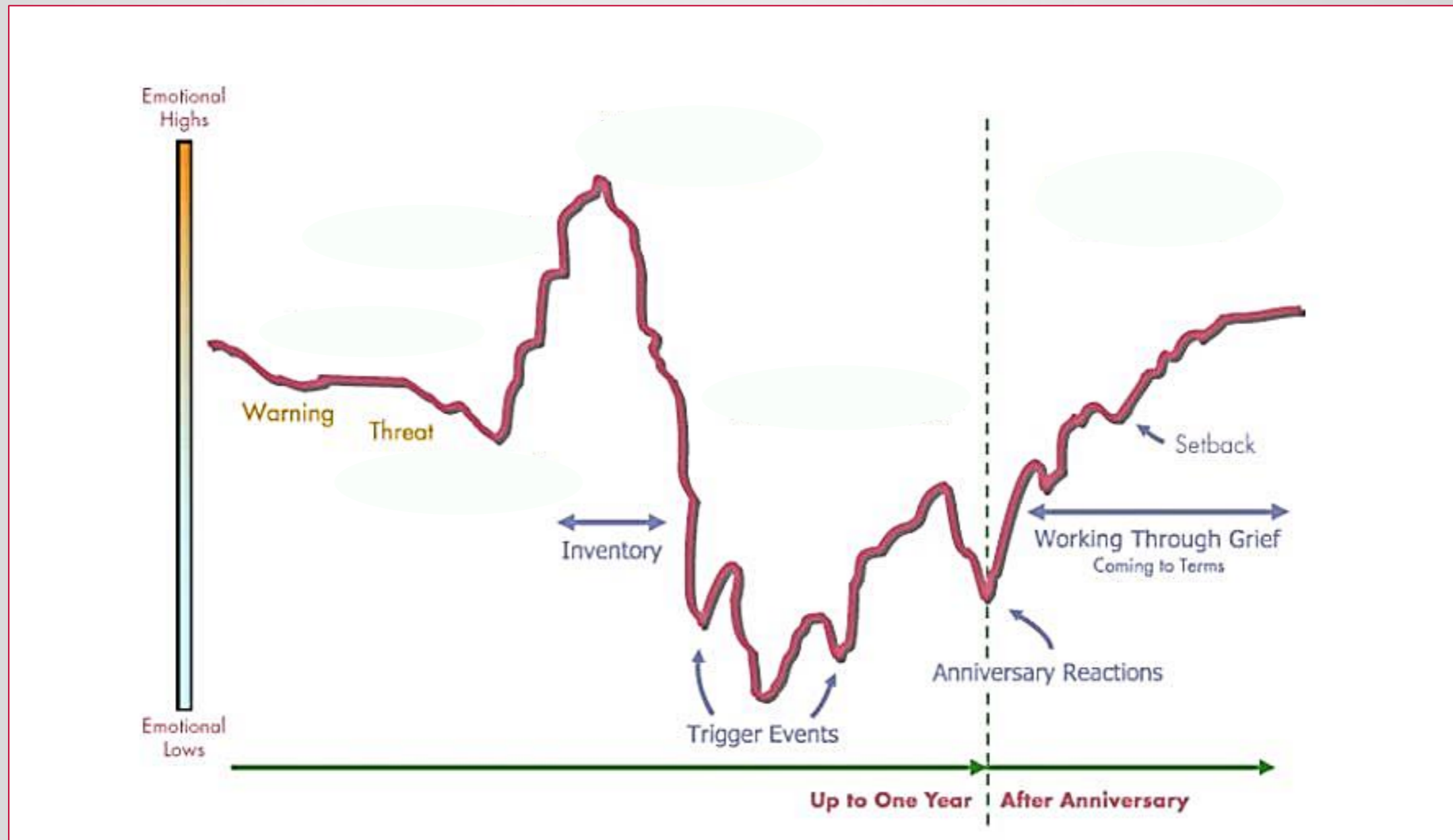
CSSRC Crisis Response Guidelines for K-12 Schools
and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)

March 2022



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Life Cycle of a Disaster



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Preparing For A Crisis



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Preparing for a Crisis

- Review and update EOP
- Identify and Train your Safety Teams
- K-12 Safety and All Staff trainings
 - FEMA: Incident Command System
 - MH Crisis Responders
 - Multi-Agency
 - Psychological First Aid
 - Engage-Calm-Distract



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Preparing for a Crisis

- IHE identify core planning team trainings
 - FEMA Intro to ICS
 - FEMA Intro to Emergency Mgmt for Higher Education

Consider:

- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation
- National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
- Psychological First Aid



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Preparing for a Crisis

- Create MOUs that comply with FERPA & other privacy laws
- Conduct Drills and Exercises
- Communication Plan
- Continuity of Operation Plan
- Incident Facilities/Alternative Sites
- School Community Considerations for EOP Planning
- Parent, Guardian and Family Consideration
- **Other Considerations:** daycare/summer programs, hotline systems, family information contracts, reunification site capacity



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Law Enforcement Interviews of Minor Students

- Balance the criminal investigation with mental health recovery
- Allow for connection, mental health support, and easing into investigative questioning
- Give parents, staff and students consideration for how they want to share information (with or without parents, whether or not they are a witness or a suspect)
- Create procedures on school role for support if an investigator returns for questioning in the weeks and months that follow.
- Plan for Victims Assistance requesting lists of victims and/or lists of all students in the school



Littleton Public Schools, 2022



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Impromptu Memorial Considerations

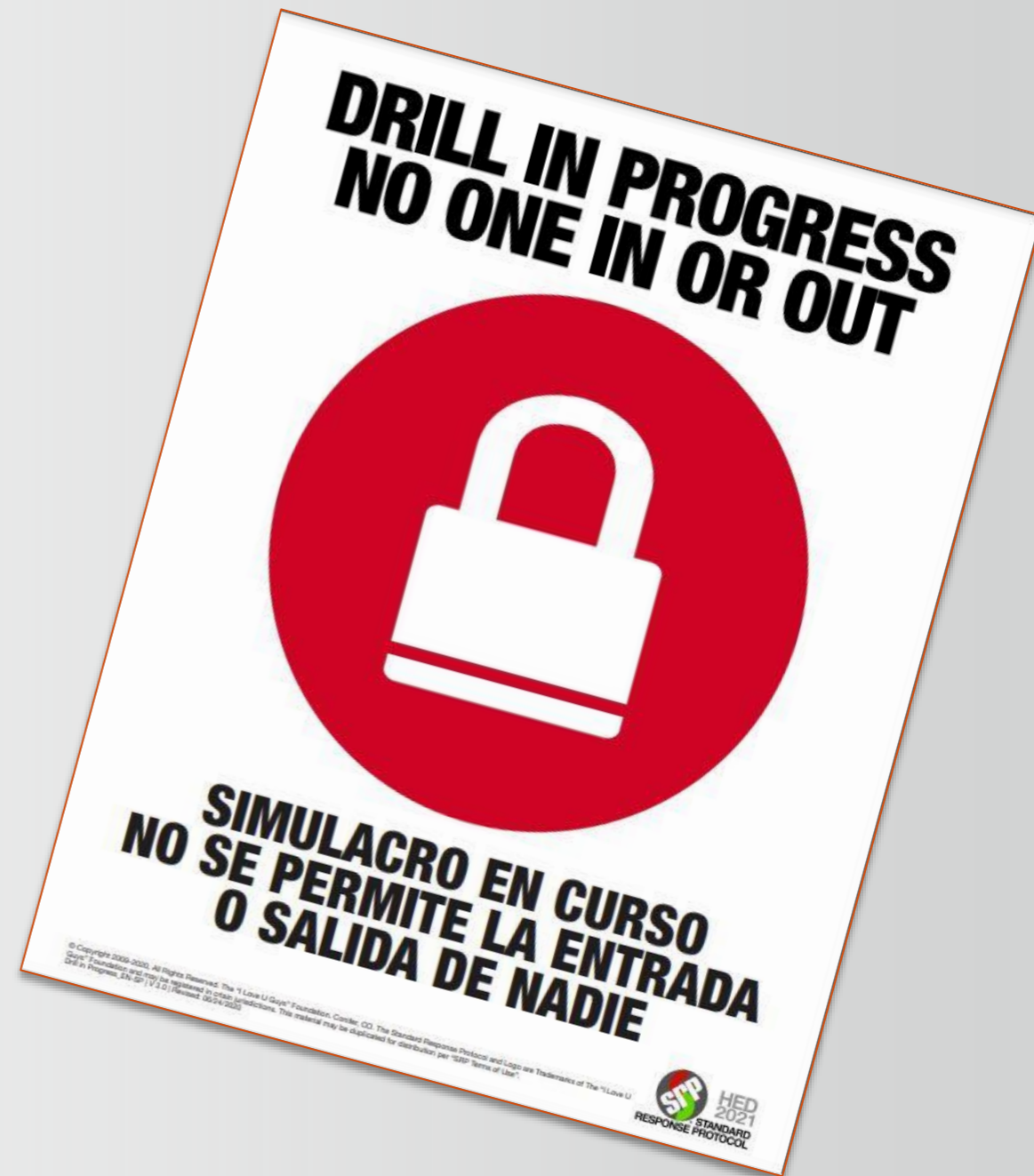
- Policy on handling events
- Discourage permanent memorials on school grounds
- Consistency in handling memorials over time
- Handling spontaneous memorials
- Steer towards “Living Memorial” events
- Strike balance between honoring the loss and resuming normal operations



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Resources to Prepare Ahead of Time

- Method to designate volunteers
- Signs for IC post, reunification, etc.
- Method of identifying and referring students of concern (PREPaRE for K-12)
- *After a Suicide: A toolkit for Schools (K-12)*
- *Postvention: A Guide for Suicide Response on College Campuses (IHE)*
- Create a resource list (see pages 14-15 in Guide)



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During a Crisis



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School Incident Command Team (ICS) System - Smaller School Example

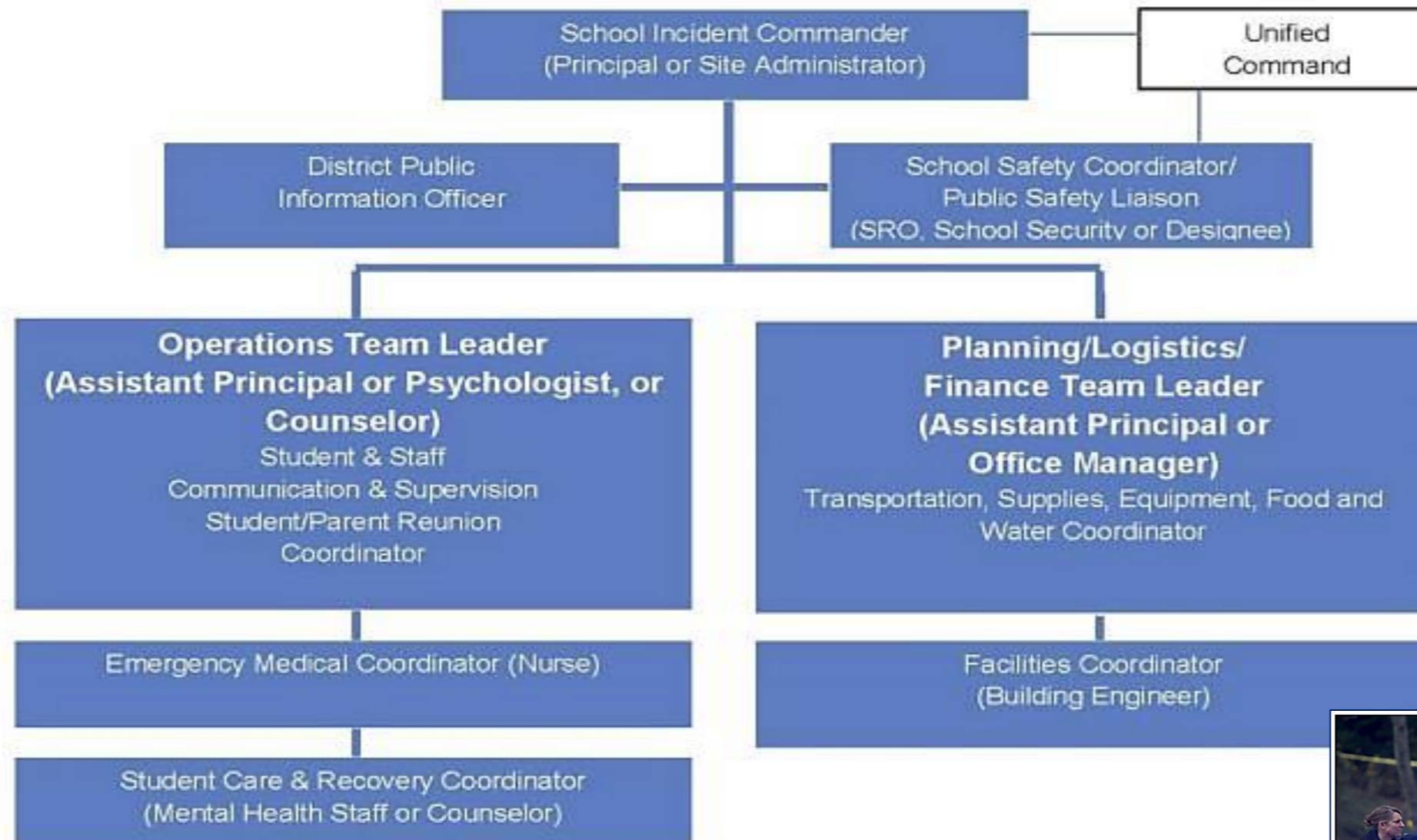
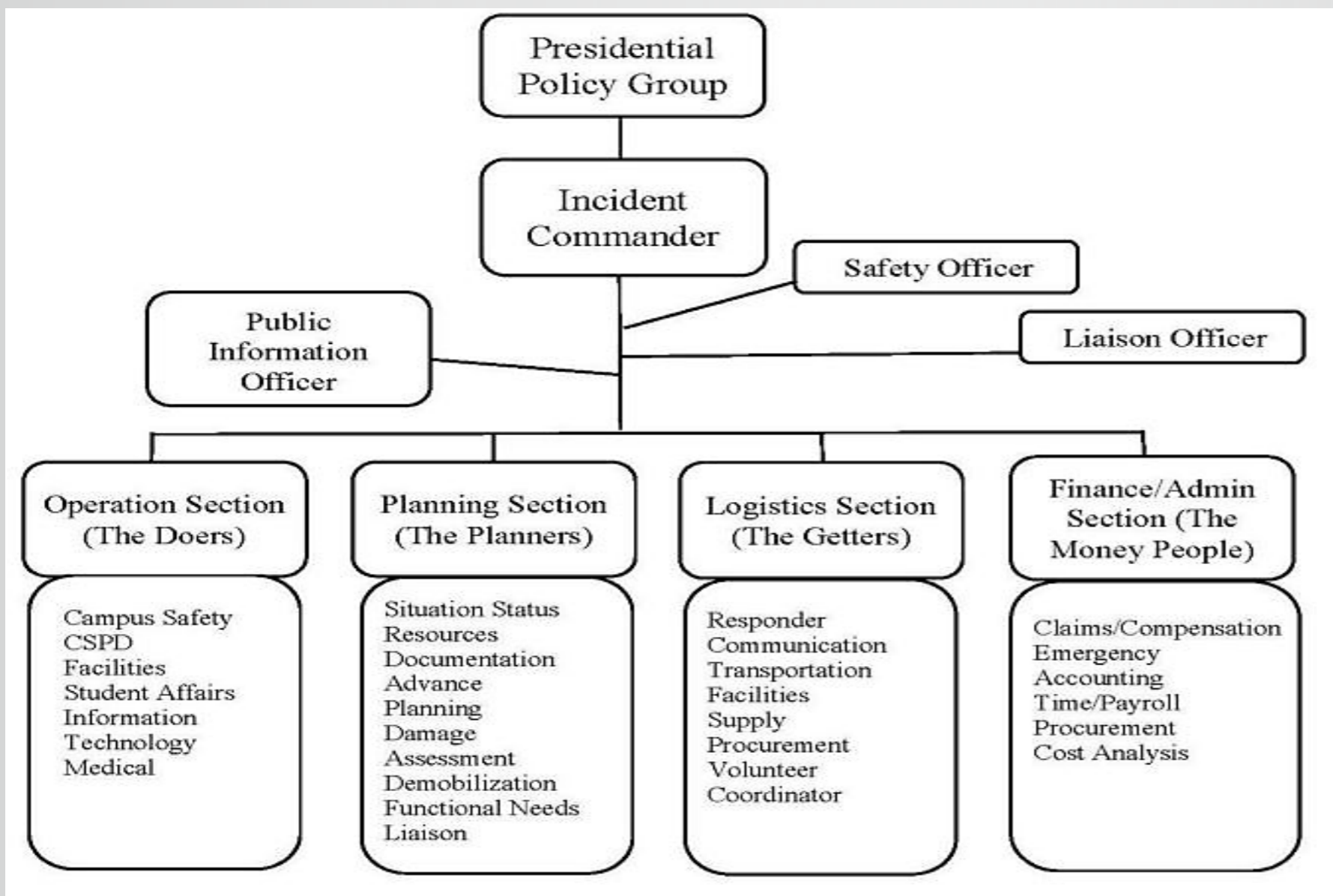


Figure 2



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IHE Incident Command Sample



Colorado Northeastern Community College incident command post

Figure 3

Santos, M., 2017-2018 p.17



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Rely on Incident Command System

- First witnesses establish emergency response actions
- Possible crime scene
- Establish Incident Commander
- Contact emergency responders
- Determine need for outside assistance
- If needed, notify reunification and transportation coordinators



Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning student led emergency drill



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MH Planning



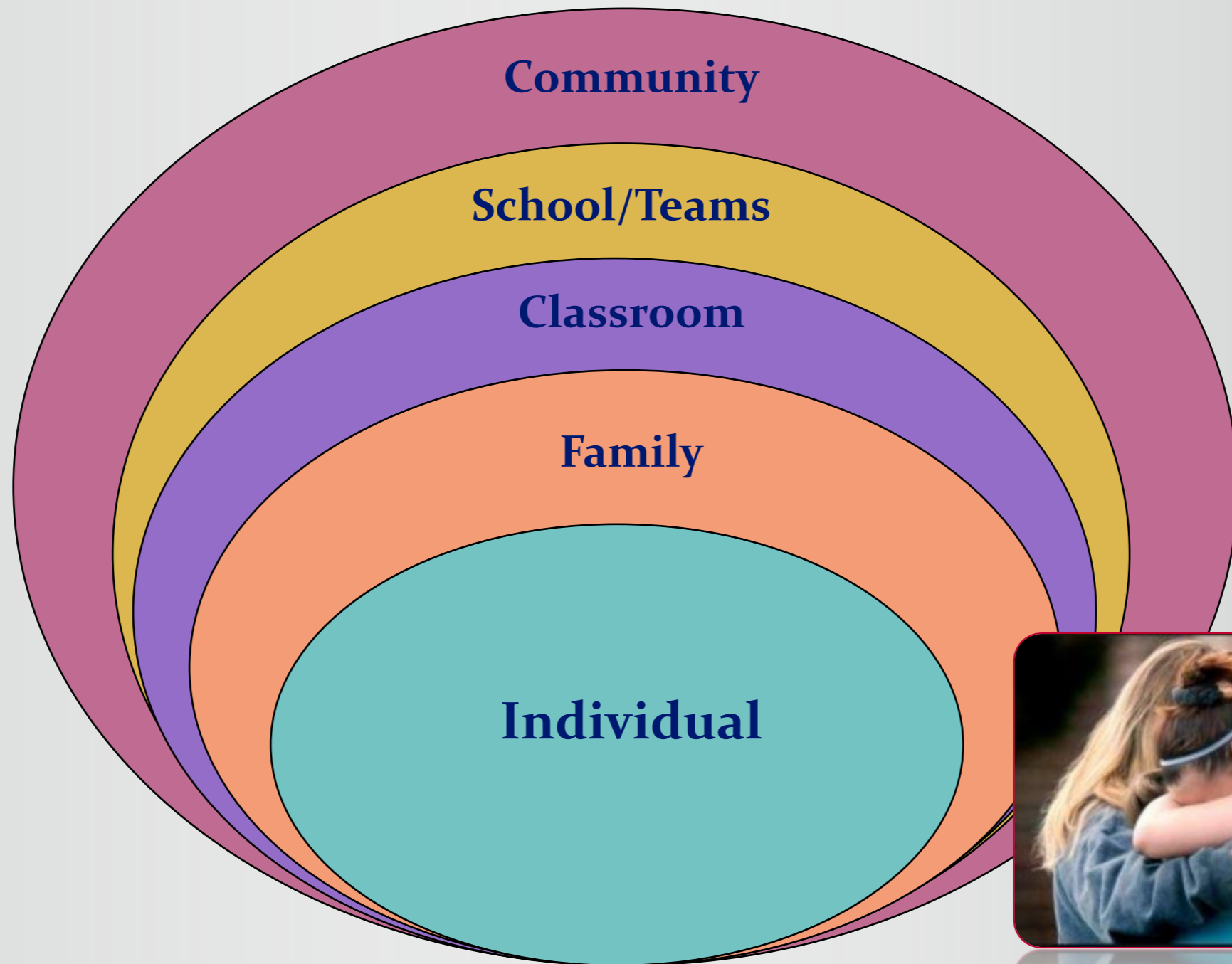
Determine Safe Haven location, types of MH services & staffing needs

Adapted from Figure 5, Crepeau-Hobson et al, 2020



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Determine the Circle of Impact



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After a Critical Event



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After a Critical Event

Immediately after a critical event

- Account for students and staff
- Crisis response group updated
- Identify at risk students and staff
- NOVA's 3 Tasks for Effective Recovery:
 - [SS] Safety & Security,
 - [VV] Ventilation & Validation,
 - [PP] Prediction & Preparation
- Plan for following Day



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After a Critical Event

Plan for the following day:

- Provide information to staff
- Gather deceased belongings
- Prepare necessary scripts/communications
- Prepare staff on what to expect from students (Engage-Calm-Distract)
- Pool subs for teachers, staff
- MH providers availability & assignments
- Stage a “safe haven/drop-in center”
- Determine supplies (food, water, art, etc.)
- Decide on triage procedures



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After a Critical Event

Plan for the following day (continued):

- Chart student/staff locations at time of event
- Establish liaison at hospital
- If cell service/website down, consider WiFi booster
- Coordinate volunteers and donations
- Inform parent/alumni groups/community partners of aftercare plan
- Obtain facts from police
- Document services provided and who was served
- If school is crime scene, arrange for transportation and return to pick up possessions
- Keep receipts for all expenses



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Mental Health Planning After the Crisis

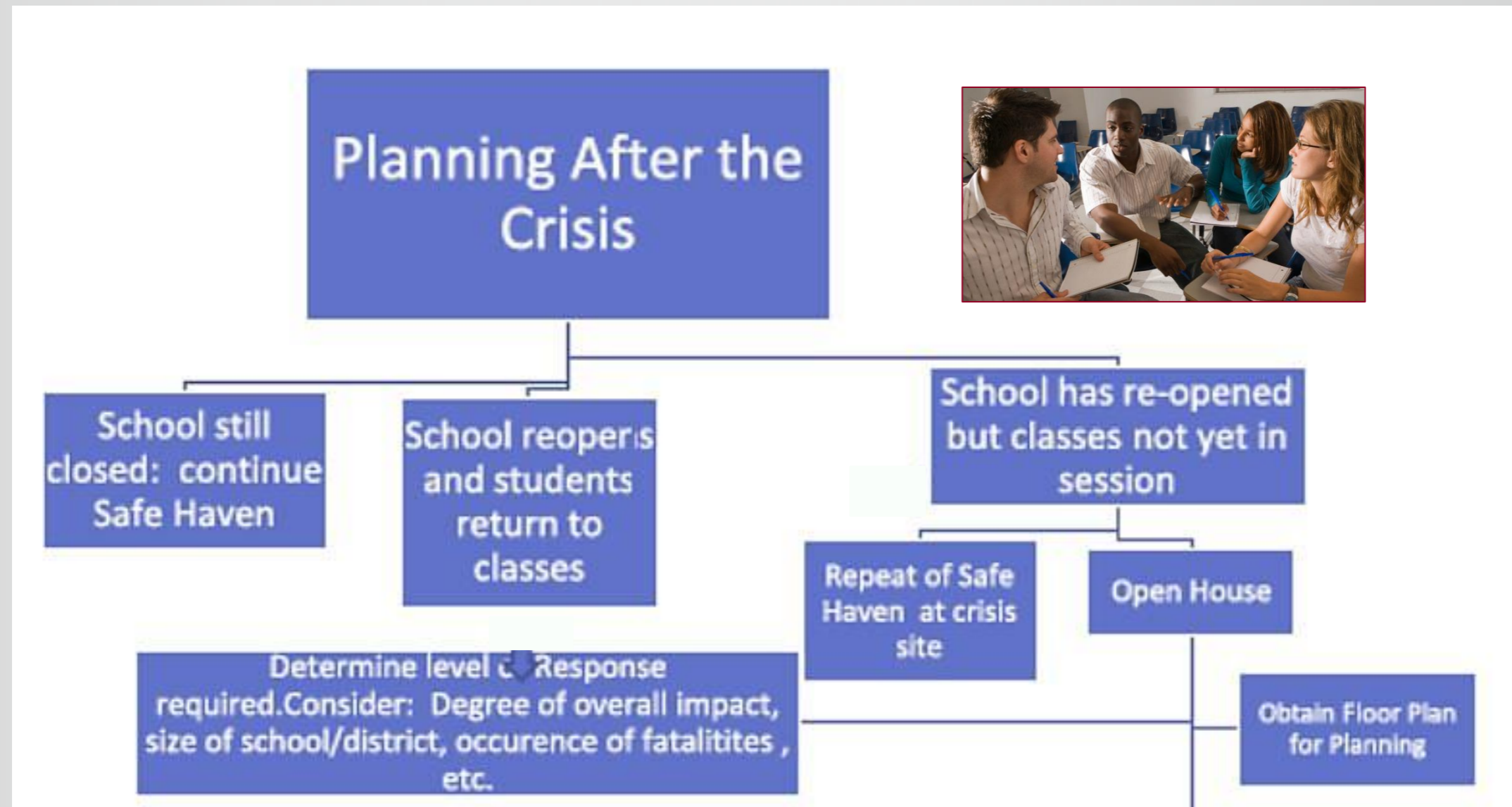


Figure 6

Crepeau-Hobson et al, 2020



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Plans for the Remainder of the Week

Be sure to have a solid plan in place for the remainder of the week.

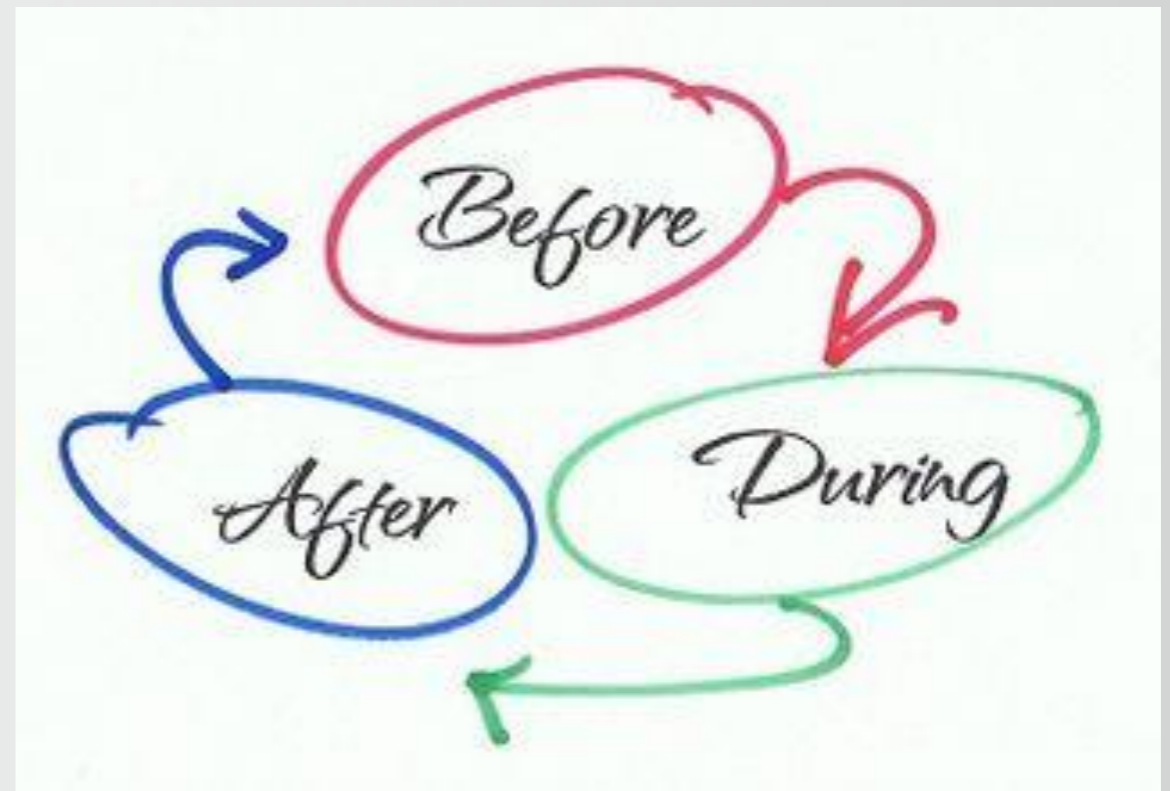
- The day of the funeral(s)
- Interventions necessary beyond the drop-in center
- Possible parent meeting
- Needs of at-risk students and general population
- Any supports necessary for staff



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Ongoing Crisis Support

- Debriefing of Responders, Crisis Team and Staff
- Lessons Learned
- Financial Resources
- Mental Health
- Safety



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When to Make Referrals:

Immediately:

- Potential harm to self or others
- Witnesses to the traumatic event
- Depressed student

Generally (days and weeks after):

- Students not returned to baseline
- Students you have concern (trust your gut)
- Students peers express concern



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Long term considerations

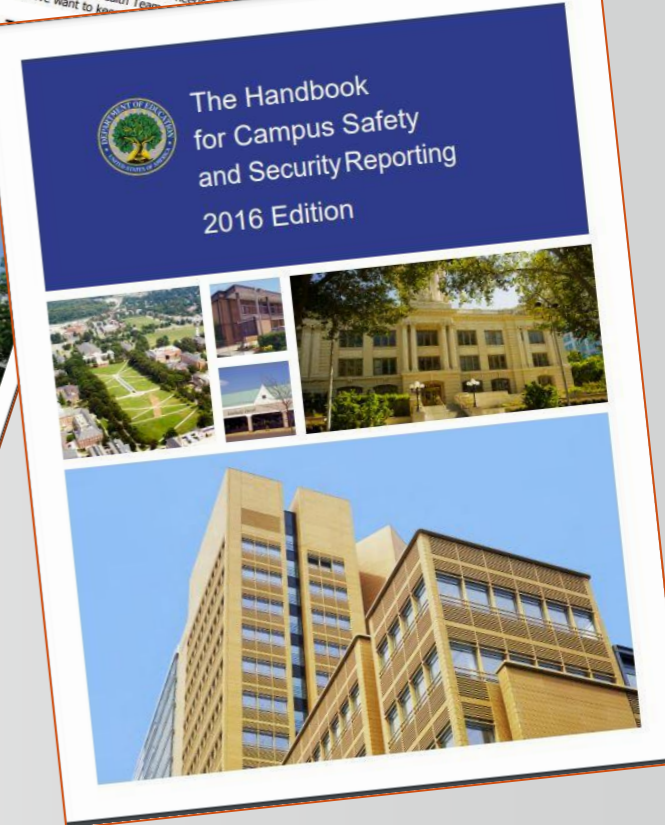
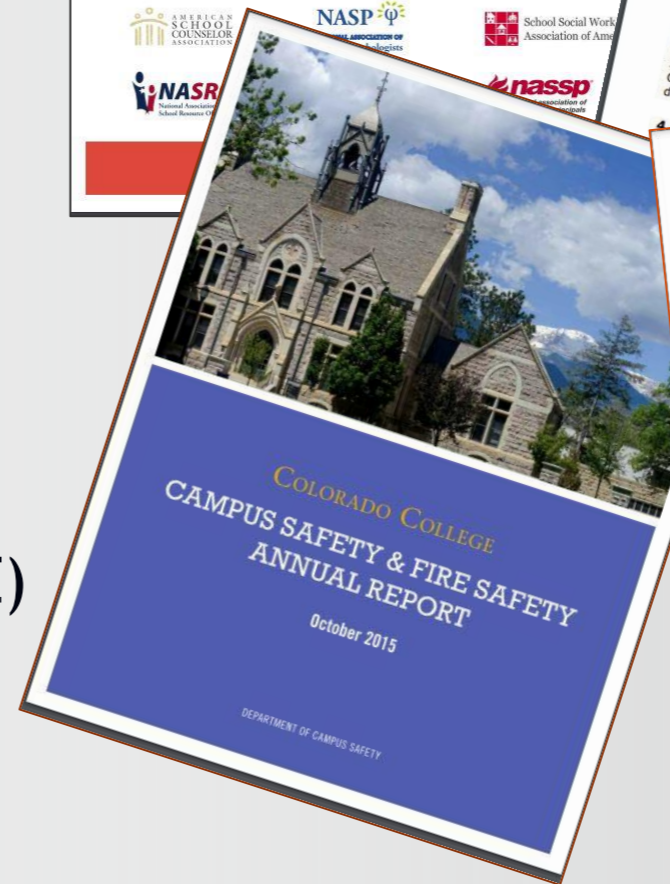
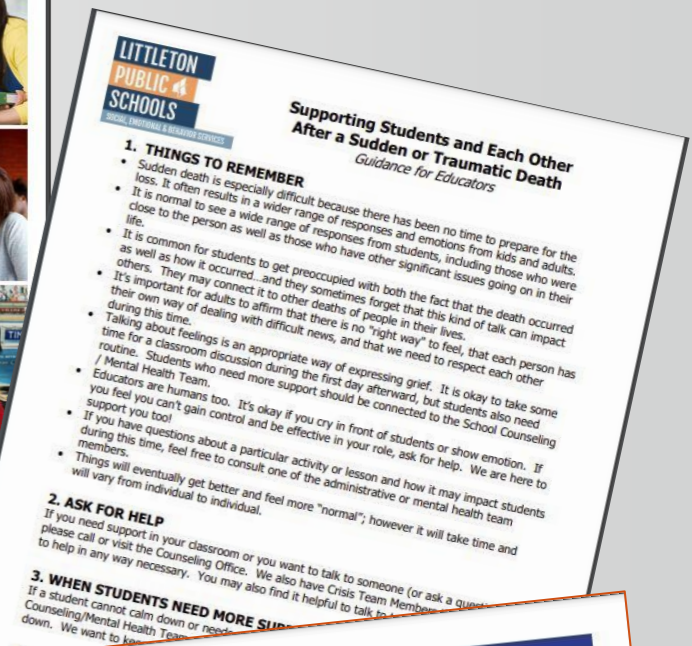
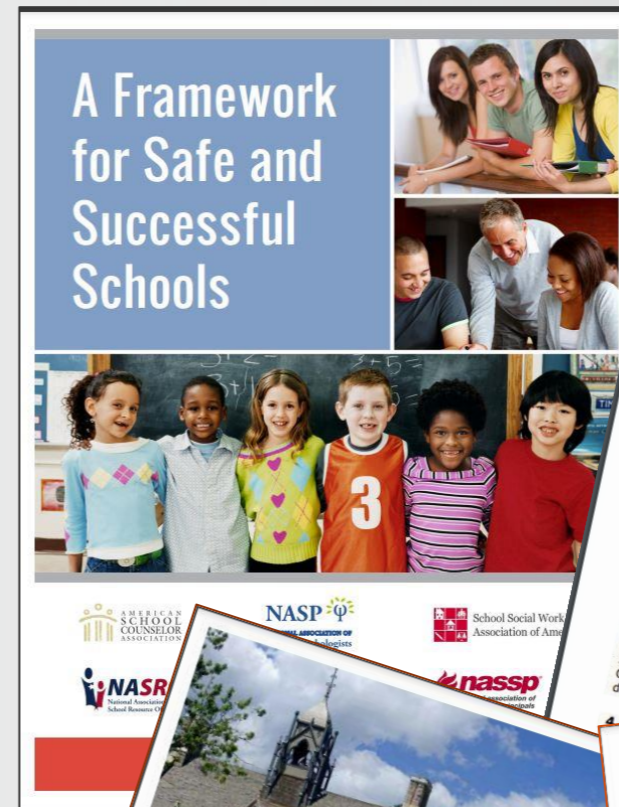
- Keep the Safe Haven open as long as necessary
- Plan supports: universal, targeted or indicated
- As students return to class, extra mental health providers on hand (follow deceased's schedule)
- Trauma support for staff (including the mental health staff!)
- Anniversaries



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Appendix

- Sample Templates
- Announcements
- Death of Student or Staff members
- Documents from Littleton schools
- For MH Professionals
- For Parents
- K-12 Resources
- IHE Resources
- FEMA Training Suggestions (K12 & IHE)
- NIMS-related online courses
- Additional Courses



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Kelly Addington, SE Regional Training Consultant

Kelly.Addington@state.co.us

(720) 908-5069

Kati Garner, Western Regional Training Consultant

Kati.Garner@state.co.us

303.909.3672

Ron Lee, School Outreach Consultant

Ron.Lee@state.co.us

720.498.9645

Brad Stiles, Emergency Response
Outreach Consultant

Brad.Stiles@state.co.us

303.239.4321



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