

Responding to Traumatic Events in the School/Community

Traumatic events may have many profound short and long term negative emotional, social, cognitive, and physical effects on students. The immediate implementation of a crisis event response plan can significantly protect and ensure students' immediate safety and mitigate the long-term effects. *The Kansas School Counselor Association (KSCA) recognizes that professional school counselors are crucial members of district and school crisis event response teams related to the following emergency prevention/preparedness responses: direct student counseling services, student suicide/death prevention, intervention, and post-support of school crisis/critical incident responses (planning and implementation), intervention, crisis response, student safety advocacy, parent, faculty, and staff education programs, response team planning and drill practices.*

In Kansas, professional school counselors:

- Share leadership, expertise, and input into the development and implementation of a coordinated school community crisis response plan, and advocate and collaborate for students' and staff safety and well-being.
- Accept a primary role in recognizing, planning for, and facilitating a response that provides a continuum of emotional support for students, school staff and victims involved in the incident the emotional response to such crisis events.
- Advocate for the emotional needs of all persons affected by the crisis/critical incident including facilitating a network with other school and community resources for referral of victims of a crisis.
- Support and actively engage in crisis response situations by providing direct counseling service during and after the incident, screening students for inappropriate, unhealthy, or unsafe coping responses to current or past tragedies and making appropriate referrals.
- Help to coordinate debriefing after the response for students, staff, members of the school counseling department, and self-care for the school counselor and other mental health professionals directly involved in the response.