

Top Things To Consider in a Crisis

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THINK PREVENTION

- Know the leading causes of death for children and create prevention programs
- Know the real statistics about school violence
- Create school safety task forces and include students
- Recognize school safety is an inside job!

Have Correct Information

Verify details with more than one adult and/or police. Contact the affected family.

Triple-check details with sources before taking any action or making any statements. Tell the truth.

What if you are unsure if the death was a suicide?

Administration in a Crisis

- Avoiding an underestimate
- Example (death over the summer)
- Tell the truth and share information
- Hold your emotions example
- Support from the top is important
- Get involved quickly—cell phone numbers and calling tree
- Have crisis materials ready and accessible

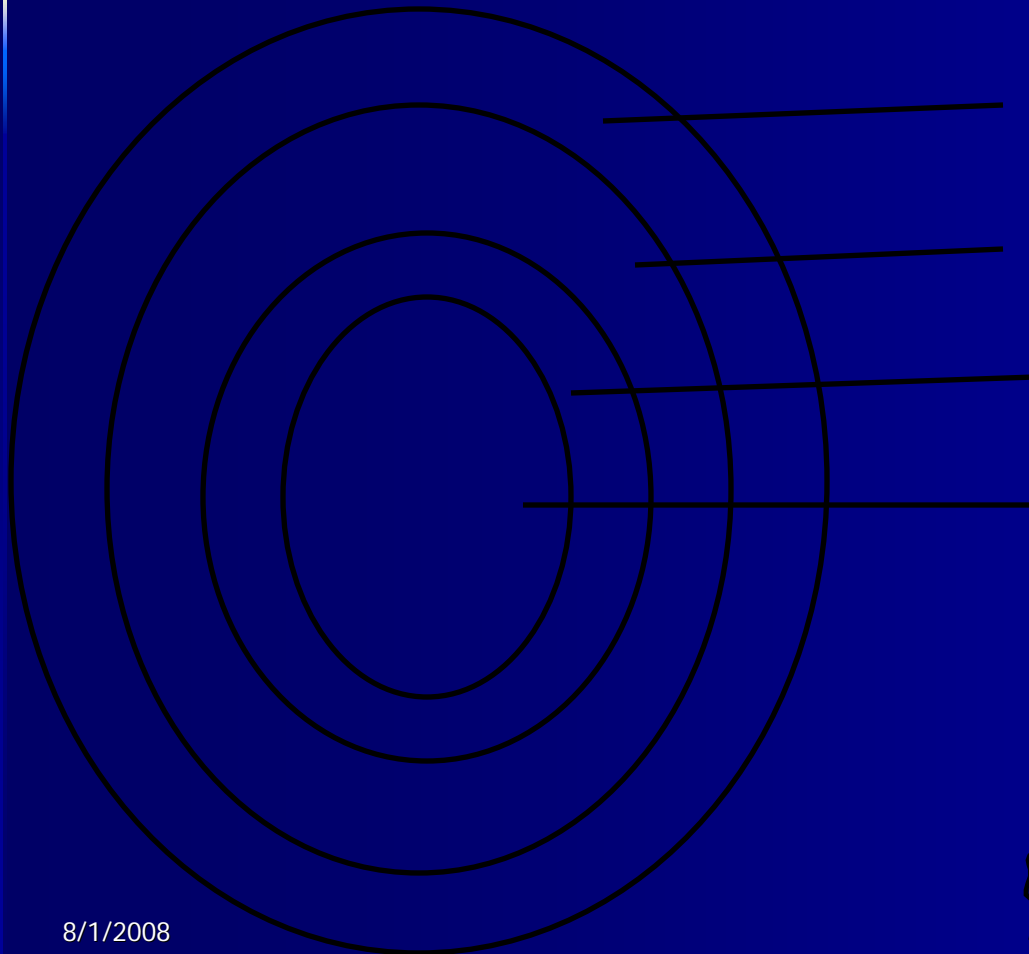
Crisis Team

Make decisions *as a group*.

Experience has found that the wisest crisis response decisions are made in a group.

- Review crisis plan together.
- Assign responsibilities, (e.g., who will communicate with whom).
- Empower crisis team members.

Geographical Proximity



Outside the disaster area

Within hearing distance

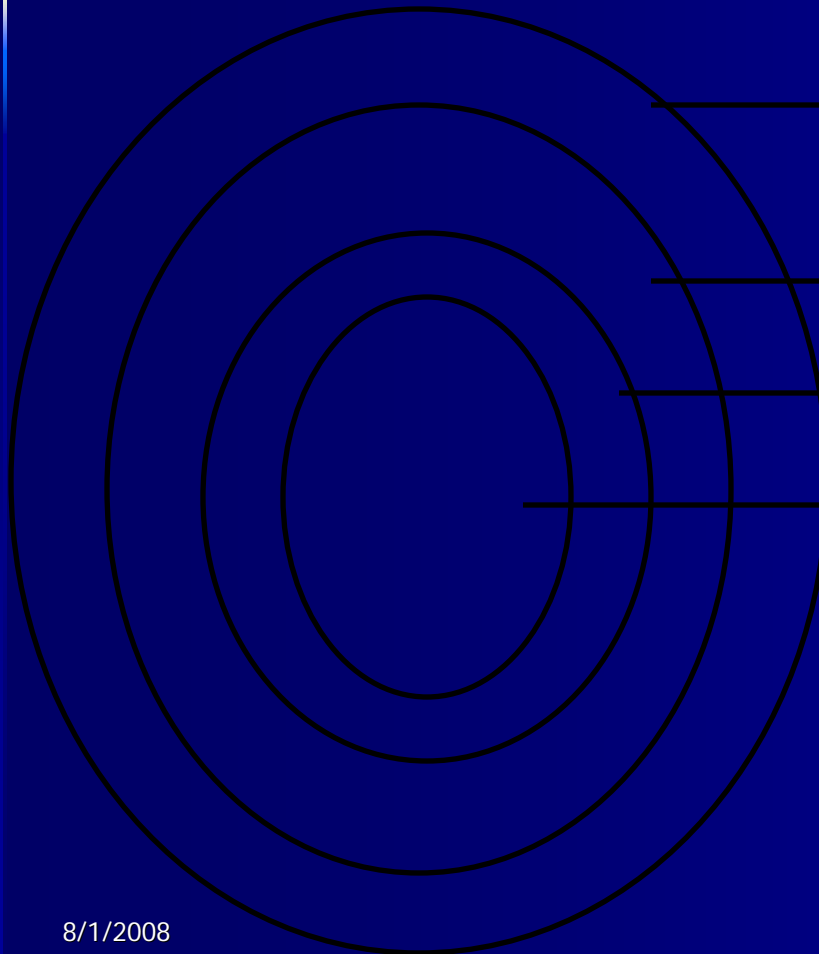
Near the disaster area

Direct exposure

8/1/2008



Psychosocial Proximity

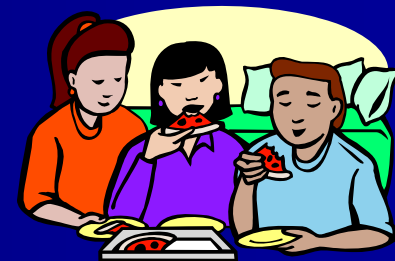


Identification with or similarity to victims

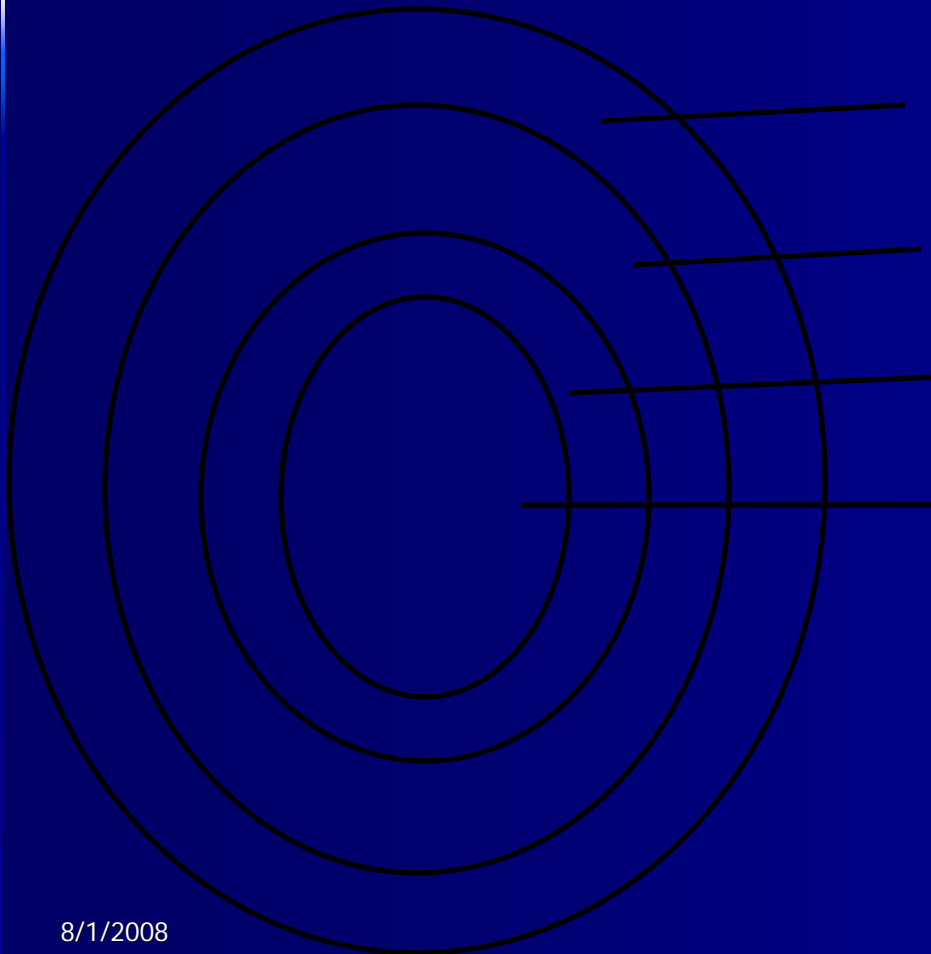
Acquaintance

Near family or close friend

Immediate family



Population at Risk



Oversensitive

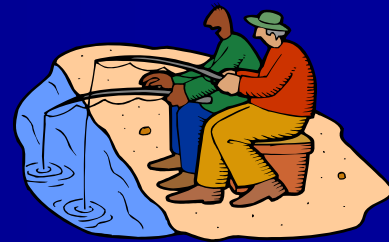
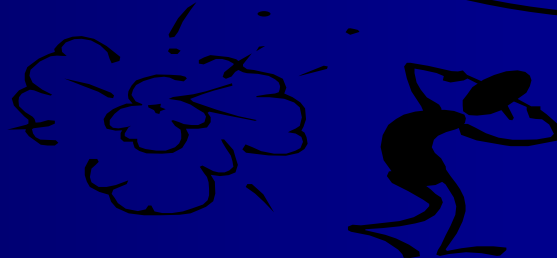
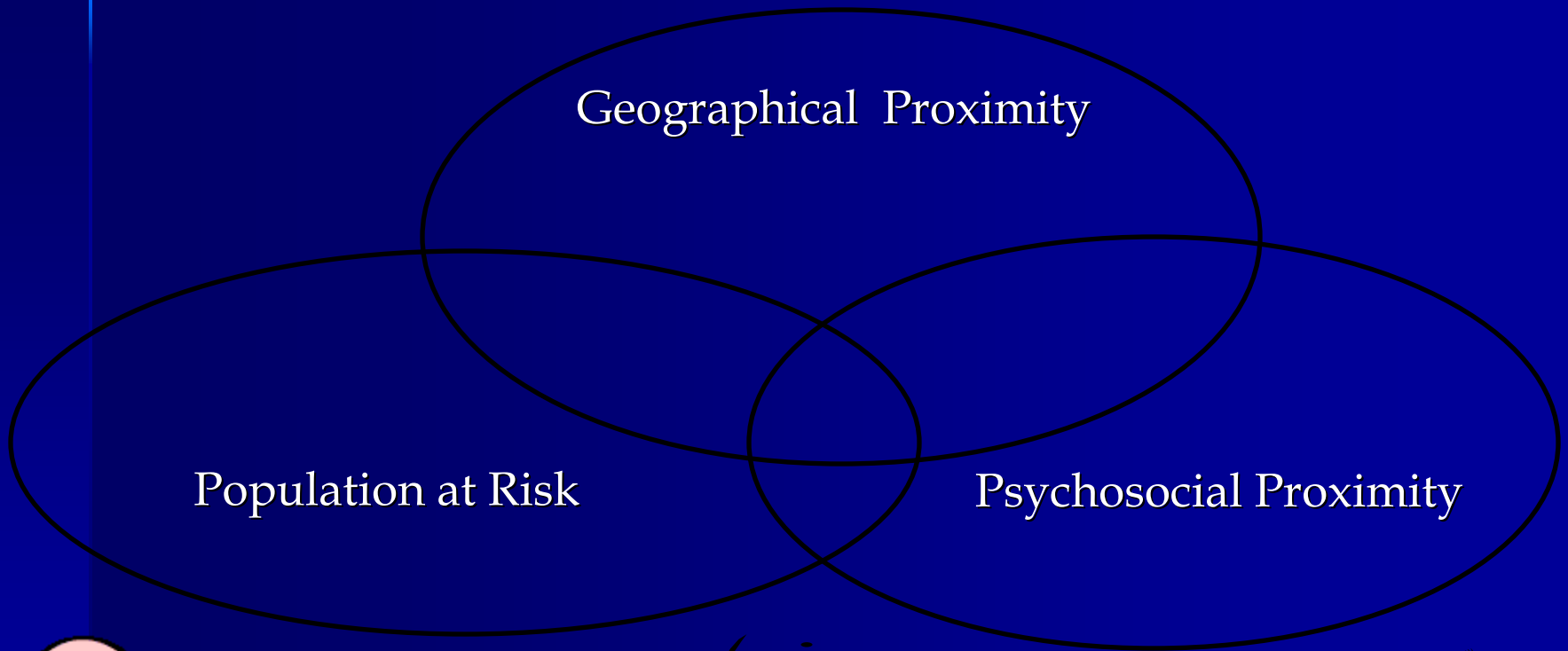
Difficult personal or social crisis

Significant loss in the past year

Recent or similar trauma



Circles of Vulnerability



Managing waves that descend on a school in crisis

- Police
- Parents
- Media

Communication Ideas

Send out an all staff e-mail with details and what to say to students.

NASP has much of this information already prepared and downloadable.

Teachable Moment Lesson Plan
(Poland&Poland) www.nasponline.org

Community

Inform parents of the situation.

Unite students with family as soon as possible.

Have sign-out procedures in place to keep records.

Utilize media to get out important messages

Meetings for parents

Community

Use phone messages and/or e-mail to keep parents consistently apprised of details and plans.

- Post information on the school web site
- Utilize school television stations
- Reopen school as soon as possible
- Accept volunteer help but keep records of their recommendations.

Tips for helping students

Share information in developmentally appropriate ways

No one should be lied to or misled about the circumstances. Recognize all the connections around the school system.

Students need to hear sad or tragic news from trusted adults and should be able to ask questions.

Turn off TVs and gather students in a circle and talk about the event and their perceptions, safety concerns and sources of help.

Help everyone identify previous and current sources of support

More Recommendations

Re-establishing routines is helpful to all. Initial support is often high but wanes at a much faster rate than the need for support.

Resiliency---the ability to bounce back has several key factors.

Follow Up Services

Identify and seek help for most affected students and staff.

- Some will need more support due to past traumas and/or mental health issues.
- Seek extra help for those struggling more than *normal*.

More Recommendations

Don't underestimate the long term impact of a crisis and be aware of anniversary dates.

Accept help from outside as your professionals may need help.

- Community mental health services.
- State crisis team.
- NOVA and the Red Cross.
- NASP NEAT Team

Recovery

Be careful with memorials. Allow for a spectrum of cultural beliefs.

Recognize that students often need a project or activity to channel their emotions and to make a difference...

Memorials: Do...

Prepare for the needs of students both preceding and following memorial activities.

Inform staff about memorial activities; help them understand emotions and behaviors that students *may* show.

Establish assistance plans and a referral system for students in need.

Emphasize signs of recovery and hope during memorial activities.

Memorial Scenarios: Your Thoughts

- Two granite memorials in front of the school to honor homicide victims
- Permanently closing off and labeling lockers for deceased students
- A memorial service on the steps of the school where the student shot himself
- A cabinet in the counselor reception area with a plaque in memory of a suicide victim

Recovery

Remember that meeting the social-emotional needs of students will affect their long-term academic success.

Remember the 60—20—20 rule!

- Prevention programs.
- Caring faculty.
- School connectedness.

In Conclusion

Help is available.

Work as a team.

Take care of yourself.

Think prevention and preparation.

Crisis creates lasting change and a *new normal and an opportunity to do things differently in the future.*

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