



## **FACULTY & STAFF**

### *Responding to School Violence in Secondary Schools*

We know that children and adolescents will experience and bear witness to traumatic events, and violent acts that are replayed in the news and on social media. As faculty and staff, you play an **essential role** in responding to and supporting the students you work with when an **indirect traumatic event occurs**.

In these moments you have an opportunity to establish a **sense of safety, security, and normalcy**.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**...can have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society.** Students may share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent future tragedies in society.

**The dialogue helps provide students a sense of control.**



**Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools** by communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, accessing support for emotional needs, and following school safety guidelines such as:

- \* Not providing building access to strangers
- \* Reporting strangers on campus
- \* Reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members



# TIPS...

## HOW TO RESPOND & TALKING POINTS

### ADDRESS THE “ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM”

- \* Senseless violence is difficult to understand and sometimes people do things to hurt others. There are many people out there trying to help those who are struggling get the support they need before they harm others.



### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO TALK

- \* **ALLOW SPACE** for students to ask questions and respond to each other
- \* **OBSERVE** student responses
- \* There are **NO RIGHT OR WRONG** reactions, feelings, or responses (these are normal reactions to abnormal events)
- \* Listening without trying to fix it is a powerful tool
- \* **BE MINDFUL** of projection (not assuming your reactions are your students' reactions)
- \* **BE TRUTHFUL**
- \* Maintain routine while allowing for modifications
- \* **EMPHASIZE** that schools are safe places. School staff work with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep students safe.
- \* **SHARE** how to access additional mental health supports in the building
- \* **COMMUNICATE** any concern to your school's mental health team.
- \* **Violence should never be used to solve personal problems.** Students' role in a positive solution can be as simple as being kind, improving conflict mediation, and seeking help from a safe adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other uncontrollable emotions.

#### EVERYONE PLAYS A ROLE IN SCHOOL SAFETY...

- \* Review different ways to report an incident or suspicious behavior
- \* Anonymous Reporting System
- \* There is a difference between reporting and tattling, gossip, and snitching.
- \* Reinforce the difference between possibility and probability

### SELF-CARE/STRESS MANAGEMENT

- \* **KNOW YOUR LIMITS...**  
**Kids and adults are both more vulnerable after crisis events**
  - o Be mindful of your feelings
  - o Control media consumption
- \* **SEEK SUPPORT** from your school's mental health team when discussing difficult topics
- \* **ENGAGE** in productive activities or community service



Sources: APA Managing your distress Infographic | NASP - Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for parents and teachers.



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