

Helpful Tips for School Staff and Parents/Guardians

Depending on the age of the child, the following steps may be used to alleviate some of the stress of a traumatic event:

- Allow for more physical activity.
- Allow students to express their feelings and retelling of the event.
- Consider not requiring any test completion for at least one week.
- Do not allow “hate feelings” to be generalized. If they are angry with someone for the event, staff should discuss their feelings toward specific people, but not generalize these feelings to a larger group.
- Encourage the students to help in the recovery efforts.
- Give physical comfort.
- If a child becomes angry, take them aside to help them calm down.
- Lessen the requirements in and out of the classroom.
- Reassure students that their responses are normal and it will get better with time.
- Re-establish comfortable routines.
- Rehearse safety plans for future traumatic events.
- Reinforce the idea that they are safe.
- Repetition – student may need to hear things multiple times before being able to understand it.
- Staff should monitor students’ reactions and communicate with each other about what they are witnessing.
- Stop rumors and give actual facts when asked and help them understand the event. Simple terms should be used when discussing the facts.

Source: “All-Hazards” School Safety Planning Toolkit; Safe Schools Planning Sub-Committee of the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Advisory Committee; June, 2009.