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Educational Psychology Service support for schools following a Critical Incident

**EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE**



AIMS

- To enable schools to deal with the initial impact of a critical incident
- To support the senior management of the school with the re-establishment of normal routines
- To mobilise individual and collective resources for dealing with trauma
- To use psychological support to reduce the impact of the event
- To identify vulnerable individuals who may need more support

OBJECTIVES

Normalisation - helping those involved to realise that their physical, mental and emotional reactions are entirely normal and that it is the incident which is abnormal.

Exploration of the event - through the airing of feelings and sharing of information.

Understanding the event - making sense of the experience and putting it into context.

Confirming and supporting existing ways of coping.

Mobilisation of resources to develop new ways of coping.

WHEN WILL EPS BE INVOLVED?

A critical incident can be defined as a sudden, unexpected event that is distressing to pupils and/or staff. It may involve violence against members of the school, a serious accident or the sudden death of a colleague or child, or it could be that the school is subjected to major vandalism or attack, or child abduction.

In the event of a critical incident being reported to the Educational Psychology Service, an EP will contact the school(s) whose pupils have been affected, or who are likely to be affected by the event to explore what support is appropriate.

WHAT SORT OF THINGS WILL THE SUPPORT INCLUDE?

- Discussion of the needs of the children and staff
- Review of the skills and resources available in the school
- Advice or information for parents and staff on supporting children who have experienced a critical incident
- Advice or information for teachers on strategies which are helpful to colleagues who have been affected
- Advice on the management of grief and loss in school, including coping with strong emotions such as anger, and providing sympathetic and effective pastoral care
- Support for senior staff who are dealing directly with distressed pupils, parents or staff

- Arrangements to support children and staff
- Links with other agencies who may carry out longer term support
- In the case of a large scale incident the EPS will work closely with other agencies.

WHAT ACTIONS DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO TAKE?

- Schools can contact the EPS for advice during working hours
- The person first contacted will need to advise the EPS of the following:
 1. Your name and position
 2. Which school you are from
 3. The nature of the incident
 4. Where the incident happened
 5. The people involved
 6. Contact details for return calls
- Telephone contact will be established by an EP on the same day, when possible, to agree with the school the support to be implemented
- The school link EP may not be part of the team that works directly on the critical incident, but he/she will always be kept informed and will usually be involved in planning the response with the school