The overall purpose for responding to critical incidents is to help with the emotional impact that will undoubtedly follow. In situations of high intensity, staying focused can be a challenge, but it can prove helpful to have a checklist to refer to. The following is such a checklist.

Please note that not all points listed here are relevant to every situation. Also, some items may be tabled for a second or third meeting rather than at the initial gathering of the team. For the purpose of our discussion, the Crisis Response Checklist has been categorized into three sections: the initial response, responding to the emotional needs of those impacted, and what to do after the initial crisis response.

**INITIAL RESPONSE**

**VERIFY FACTS**
- Have facts been confirmed with family and/or police?

**WRITE STATEMENT FOR PHONE INQUIRIES**
- What will the receptionist tell people who phone with questions?

**CONSIDER ACCESSING OUTSTANDING AGENCIES FOR MORE ASSISTANCE**
- Do you need more help?
- Who have you made prior arrangements with?
- How will you deal with unfamiliar people entering the school/community/organization?

**DEAL WITH MEDIA ISSUES**
- If the event will bring media attention, how will this be managed?

**CONTACT RELEVANT PARTIES**
- Who else needs to be informed – family, school, police, etc.?

**STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**
- Which staff need to be relieved of responsibilities in order to help?
- Which staff may not be in the position to carry on with their normal duties?

**ORGANIZE STAFF MEETING**
- What will staff be told? What will their role be?
- What about those not present at the staff meeting?
- Possible agenda: media policy, debriefing/counselling procedures, critical incident group debriefing plans, what to watch for in people, etc.

**DETERMINE IF LEGAL COUNSEL IS NEEDED**
- Do you have questions about what you should or shouldn’t say in order to minimize the risk of litigation?

**ENSURE BUILDING SECURITY**
- Is a presence needed? If so, when and where?
CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

OTHER HELPERS
- How will you respond to local helpers (e.g., staff from agencies, clergy) who show up to “help”?

TECHNOLOGY
- Should networking websites be monitored? Recognize the impact of the “rumour mill” that can be exacerbated with cell phones, text messages, Facebook, etc.

DETERMINE WHEN THE TEAM WILL MEET AGAIN
- Will you meet again throughout the day? Is it even possible?

SECURE LOCKER/DESK & MATERIALS OF DECEASED
- What are the family’s wishes? What will students/friends/co-workers do with their locker, etc.?

CONSIDER BUILDING CLOSURE
- Will the building be closed? If the building is a school, how will parent notification and child care be handled?

REVIEW WHO IS MISSING THAT DAY
- Why aren’t they there? Who will connect with them?

RESPONDING TO THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THOSE IMPACTED

CONTACT WITH FAMILY
- Will a school/community/organization representative visit or send food or flowers?
- In the case of suicide, does the family want it publicly identified as a suicide?
- What are the family’s wishes for funeral and memorial activities?

IDENTIFY HIGH-RISK PEOPLE
- Who is closely connected and may need immediate support?
- Who is at risk of violence, suicide, etc.?

CARRY OUT INDIVIDUAL DEBRIEFING
- Meet with those who have been identified as high risk.

OFFER INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING
- Trained counsellors should be available to meet with people individually who require more in-depth and long-term support.

WRITE STATEMENT FOR SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION MEMBERS
- Will people simply be informed or will the statement be followed by a debriefing? The statement should be clear and give facts, but not go into unnecessary detail. Handouts on reactions and tips are often helpful.

CONSIDER A LARGE GROUP (E.G. TOWN HALL) INFORMATION SESSION
- Would it be beneficial? What are the potential problems that may arise?
CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

ORGANIZE CRITICAL INCIDENT GROUP DEBRIEFING (CIGD)
- Would some groups benefit from CIGD? Who will lead the groups?

PREPARE ANY PRINT MATERIAL
- Handouts regarding what to expect, what might be helpful, etc.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

PREPARE PARENT LETTER & HANDOUTS
- In most cases, parents should know what happened and what the response of the school was. Contact information should be provided.
- Will a letter be sent home with students or mailed out?
- Parents may find handouts of issues related to the incident helpful.

ORGANIZE SAFE ROOM/GRIEF ROOM
- Who will staff the room? Where will it be located? What will be there?

CONSIDER A PARENT INFORMATION SESSION
- Will parents ask for this? Would it be beneficial?

AFTER THE INITIAL RESPONSE

CONSIDER MEMORIAL OPTIONS
- Will a permanent or temporary memorial be formed?

EVALUATE & DEBRIEF RESPONSE
- Spend time evaluating the team’s response and debriefing the experience

ASSESS THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO BE AFFECTED
- Refer to specialized resources if trained counsellors are not available.

PLAN FOLLOW-UP
- Who will follow-up with at-risk people?

CONSIDER ANNIVERSARIES
- How will anniversaries be handled? Will the CIGD team need to be involved?

MANAGE ADDITIONAL ISSUES
- Unexpected issues may arise for the team.

Consider what additional considerations you would add to the Crisis Response Checklist that relate specifically to your context.