

## Responding to Grief/Tragedy in Our Schools

While we hope never to have to utilize them, grief/trauma response plans exist for each building in the Boyertown Area School District. These plans outline the process to be followed to support students and school personnel in the event of a tragedy affecting the building population. Should there be a death or traumatic event affecting a school in our district we are prepared to respond to the needs of our students and staff while respecting the privacy and wishes of the individuals and families involved. Public statements relative to private matters are made only at the discretion of the individuals/families involved.

A school district's primary responsibility is the education of its students. In the aftermath of a tragedy classes will proceed as usual to the extent possible. Recognizing that all students may not be affected by the events, it is of primary importance to maintain as normal a school day as possible. And, for some who are struggling with the situation, following a regular routine can have a calming effect.

Our district has a core group of individuals who have been specifically trained in crisis management. These individuals and our BASD School Counseling Department work with building personnel to provide comfort and support to individuals in need. The support provided is specific to the event and may vary from situation to situation. Supports may include such things as: a drop-in center for students who are too upset to attend to the daily schedule and lessons, a drop-in center for school personnel, resources for students and families to access services in the community, counselors to meet individually with those in extreme distress, contact with parents whose children are severely affected by the tragedy. Should the situation require additional support, BASD participates with the Berks County Flight Team which can send additional personnel to assist as needed.