



ARKANSAS TRIS

Trauma Resource Initiative for Schools

tris-ar.org

CRISIS SUPPORT TOOLKIT

created in
partnership with

ARKANSAS
a.w.a.r.e.

ADVANCING WELLNESS AND
RESILIENCY IN EDUCATION

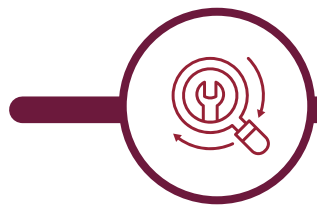


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TOOLKIT OVERVIEW



Acknowledgements

TRIS was established with a generous grant from the Blue and You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas and has received support from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).

What is TRIS?

TRIS is a collaboration between the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), the ADE, and other partners. The TRIS team at UAMS is made up of multidisciplinary professionals in areas of education, psychology, social work and media specialists. When a difficult event (e.g., the death of staff or student, act of violence, natural disaster, etc.) impacts your Arkansas school, our mental health experts in childhood trauma at TRIS can help you navigate the difficult time that follows. This is done through personalized consultation tailored to your school's unique circumstances. TRIS also provides trainings for school personnel on trauma-informed practices, works with school leaders to foster trauma-informed schools, and partners with the AR ConnectNow program to link students, families, and staff to mental health services when needed following a crisis. Information about TRIS and their services can be found on our [website](#). TRIS services are available at no cost to the schools thanks to generous support from our funders.

While TRIS remains available to walk alongside you should the unthinkable happen, proactive consideration of the steps your school or district takes in the wake of a tragedy can help you prepare. This toolkit equips school and district leaders with helpful information to consider when doing that. It does not replace individualized services available through TRIS.

If a difficult event impacts your school or district, we sincerely hope that you reach out to [TRIS](#) as one of your very first steps. Nobody should have to carry the weight of a crisis alone. We also encourage you to promptly review your school's crisis plan and related school and district policies. Although the information in this toolkit may help you think through certain aspects of crisis response plans, it does not direct the formulation of operational plans, other preparedness practices (e.g., drills), or related policies. [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools School Guide](#) is one example of a reliable resource, should you desire assistance with that.

Using This Toolkit

During a difficult event, it is challenging to find easy-to-read, reliable resources to assist you and your impacted community. Our team has written this toolkit to help school administrators and counselors with this struggle. It can be read straight through or used for quick reference. Links to resources and more in-depth information are provided throughout the toolkit. You may choose to read sections out of order, to read the entire resource at surface level and then click on links to explore additional information, or some combined approach. We want you to feel comfortable exploring the content in whatever manner suits you.

You will notice that [TRIS](#) availability for customized consultation following a school crisis is mentioned throughout the toolkit.

Trauma and Crises

In schools, the word *crisis* often refers to a natural disaster, an act of violence, or something else that immediately threatens the physical safety of a student or staff member. However, when using this toolkit, or when thinking of the consultative services available through [TRIS](#), the word *crisis* can be thought of as *any difficult event that affects your school or district*. This might be a natural disaster, a suicide, an accident, heightened violence in the surrounding community, death, school-based violence, a serious illness or injury of someone within the school, or any other event that is particularly difficult for your school or district. Because of this, the terms *difficult event* and *crisis* are used interchangeably in this resource.

The word *trauma* also means different things to different people; but experts commonly talk about three key factors when discussing a trauma: the event itself, the experiences of an individual during and after the event, and the effects that follow.

We want every school and every district in the state of Arkansas to know that, while this resource includes useful information, they never have to navigate the aftermath of a crisis alone. Instead, should a difficult event impact your school, you can reach out to the ADE Guidance and School Counseling Team to request a [TRIS consult](#).

In subsequent sections of this toolkit, you will find general information about trauma, crisis management, time-based considerations, and select, high-quality resources. We start by discussing what is meant by the word *crisis* and how that term refers to a wide array of situations.



1. The Event

This is the specific difficult incident, situation, or crisis (as described above). Throughout this toolkit when we say *difficult event*, this is what is meant.

2. The Experience

The thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations an individual has during and immediately after an event is their *experience* of the event.

3. The Effect

The effect refers to the lasting impact of the event and the person's experience of the event. The effect of an event can, and often does, vary widely.

Different people experience events in different ways. At times, the immediate response to an event helps to shape a person's experience of the event. This is why we recommend a *trauma-informed* approach when responding to a difficult event.

A *trauma-informed* approach emphasizes safety, trust, sensitivity, support, collaborative relationships, and understanding the potential wide-ranging impact of a difficult event (i.e., the effect). If a difficult event affects your school, some students and staff members may adjust very well, while others may need more intensive, individualized support services.

Resilience is the ability to adapt and recover in the face of adversity and difficult events. While most individuals naturally demonstrate resilience, it is also a skill that can be nurtured through supportive relationships, coping strategies, and a sense of control over one's environment. In the context of trauma, resilience does not mean avoiding distress but rather learning to process emotions, find meaning in experiences, and regain a sense of safety and empowerment. A trauma-informed approach to managing a difficult event includes steps we can take to nurture resilience.

Trauma-Informed Management of Your School or District Response to a Difficult Event



A trauma-informed response to a difficult event is essential because it promotes coping and adjustment, fosters resilience, and helps you identify and facilitate additional supports for those in need. This type of response appreciates that crises are experienced differently by individuals and that many factors—including factors beyond our control—contribute to the effect a difficult event can have on a person. Use of a trauma-informed approach requires you to consider how the event impacts students and staff—both as a whole *and* as individuals. When you use this type of approach, you recognize that changes in a person’s behavior, emotions, interactions, or academic functioning could be related to the difficult event. When you notice these changes, consider them within the context of the difficult event. These changes may indicate that someone needs additional, individualized support services.

Prioritize Physical and Emotional Safety

While your first step always is to ensure physical safety, you also should address any immediate emotional needs promptly. Remember that children and teens will have different emotional experiences. Misbehavior, change in behavior, or change in academic performance following a crisis may indicate a student is having difficulty managing their feelings related to the difficult event.

Be Consistent and Predictable

Maintain routines as much as possible. It can be difficult to maintain routines after a difficult event, but it is important to avoid altering schedules and routines when possible. Consistency often helps students and staff feel safe and secure. Also, consistency and predictability contribute to trusting relationships among staff, students, and family members.

Be Truthful and Transparent

Be open and honest with students, staff, and families about what is happening (or has happened) and what will happen next. Open communication promotes trust. This guide contains helpful tips and scripts about [communicating with students, staff, and families](#).



Allow Individual Choices

When a difficult event occurs, people often feel a loss of control. Allowing them to make simple choices—like where to sit, when they take a break, or how they express feelings—can help them feel more in control and empowered. Remember, both students and staff are likely to benefit from opportunities to make individual choices.

Validate Feelings

Use active listening and acknowledge expressed or observed emotions without adding judgments, offering solutions, minimizing, or being dismissing. Try to listen to understand as you validate feelings. Remind students, staff, *and yourself* that it is okay for someone to feel *whatever* they feel. Validating feelings helps individuals feel supported, connected, and like they (and their feelings) matter. As a result, it can help reduce feelings of isolation. However, it is important to note that while some students benefit from talking about the event repeatedly, repetitively hearing about an event may be distressing to others. Redirect conversations to counselors as needed.

Co-Regulate and Model Calmness

It can be difficult for students and staff to feel calm and regulated following a difficult event. Yet, we know that modeling calmness following a difficult event helps people regulate and feel more in control. Staff are encouraged to try to model calmness. They can also verbalize self-regulation strategies they use. For example, “I can feel my heart beating quickly, so I am going to close my eyes and take a few deep breaths.” “My mind knows we are safe; I need my body to feel that safe, calm feeling. This is how I do that.”



Teach and Promote Coping Skills

Students also can be directly taught strategies to help them manage their emotional reactions. For example, you might consider explicit teaching of deep breathing or mindfulness exercises. Check out the UAMS [AR ConnectNow Build Skills for Mental Health page](#) for a variety of strategies that promote coping, help with regulation, build resilience, and foster strong mental health.

Recognize Strengths

Recognize the strength and resilience of your school community. It is okay, and even advisable, to point out strengths and past successes. You can notice strengths and positives without diminishing the difficult circumstances surrounding you. It is appropriate to highlight resilience when you see it as this helps build resilience.

Connection and Relationships

Students should feel nurtured by the adults both within and outside of their school environment, particularly in the context of a difficult event. Foster relationships with families, outside helpers (e.g., counselors), and other community members to reinforce social connections and support.

Consider Differences

Avoid making assumptions about how someone experiences the difficult event and about the impact the crisis has on them. Several factors contribute to our experiences and the impact of a crisis. When you are sensitive to these differences, it helps you ensure your approach does not add to distress.

Take Care of Yourself

You are a member of your school and district communities. Because of this, if a difficult event affects your school or district, we encourage you to think about how the event impacts you and to take steps to take care of yourself. Remember, you do not have to do this alone. [TRIS](#) is available to walk alongside you if a difficult event impacts your school community.

Following a difficult event, you might recognize the need for more of your staff to be trained in trauma-informed practices.

Or perhaps you are reading through this toolkit and think that you would like to explore trauma-informed trainings for you and your staff *before* a difficult event occurs.

In either instance, we encourage you to check out the [current training opportunities](#) provided by TRIS. You also can reach out directly to the [TRIS team](#) to discuss your training needs.

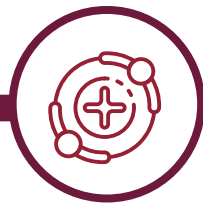
Building on these general principles, school leaders can take specific actions in response to a difficult event. These steps are described in the next section.

*To learn more about the impact of trauma on students, explore
[NCTSN Trauma Facts for Educators](#)*



FIRST ACTIONS

FOLLOWING THE DIFFICULT EVENT



School and district leaders are amongst the first responders when a crisis (e.g., student death, natural disaster, or traumatic event) impacts their school community. These administrators and leaders work directly with students, staff, and families, which can be emotionally draining and overwhelming. They may experience *vicarious trauma*, which means they absorb some of the emotional pain and stress of those they are helping. For these reasons, [TRIS](#) was created to support school leadership during these difficult times.

Request a Consultation

You never have to manage a difficult event impacting your school alone; let TRIS help you [think through the next steps](#) with clarity and care.

Gather Current Accurate Information

After you have requested a TRIS consult, consider how you have learned and are continuing to learn information. Ensure that information is accurate and factual. Consider family preferences if the difficult event is related to an individual child or teacher (e.g., death of a child). Also, make sure that you refer to your school or district crisis response plans and related policies if the event is covered by those documents.

Communicate Clearly and Transparently

Notify Staff

Consider meeting first with staff most likely to be impacted. If possible, hold a meeting before school to share information, note students needing extra support, monitor staff well-being, and review the process for identifying students who may need a higher level of care. Ideally, designate a space monitored by counselors or mental health staff for ongoing support in the days that follow.

Create a Centralized Information Hub

Establish a single point of contact (e.g., a designated phone line, website, or email) for parents, staff, and community members to get updates.

Notify Caregivers

Let caregivers know about the event so that they are prepared to support students outside of school. Prepare resources to share with caregivers, such as the [NCTSN Tips for Parents and Caregivers on Media Coverage of Traumatic Events](#) and [NCTSN Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#).





Deliver Developmentally Appropriate Communication to Students

Consider How to Deliver News

Share information with students in an [age and developmentally appropriate manner](#). Use direct, concrete words. For example, in the event of a death, use terms like *died* or *death* instead of *lost* or *not here anymore*, especially with younger children. Difficult news is often best received from a trusting adult they know. Also, consider delivery to small groups rather than to the entire school. Read more about [age and development considerations](#).

Consider Who Should Deliver the Information

The best person to deliver difficult news to students is a combination of people who can provide support and guidance, such as teachers, administrators, counselors, and mental health professionals. Approach these conversations with empathy, honesty, and a focus on the child's well-being.

Provide Only Essential Information

When students have questions, be thoughtful to answer only with the information they are seeking. Be transparent and remember it is okay to say, "I don't know." Explore our [sample scripts and communication resources](#).

Provide Immediate Emotional Support

Support Students and Staff in the Immediate Aftermath

In addition to information, students and staff benefit from the availability of emotional support immediately following the difficult event.

- It is important to have staff and counselors available to listen and offer comfort. Consider involving community mental health partners and faith leaders. Remember, staff may also be experiencing emotional stress and should be offered support, as well.
- Students and staff both need safe spaces to express emotions. It is important for students and staff to have their own safe spaces to talk about the complicated emotions surrounding a difficult event.
- Provide structured activities for students to process their feelings in their own way. Some may need more physical activities (e.g., playing catch) and others may need a quieter, still activity (e.g., sitting in a quiet room). Some may want to be alone, and others may desire companionship.

Assess High-Risk Individuals

Monitor Students and Staff

Identify students and staff who might be at higher risk for severe emotional reactions (e.g., those with a history of trauma) and provide additional support. Use known risk factors for psychological trauma to identify those who may be at risk for psychological trauma and initiate mental health crisis interventions. Remember that a person's background and exposure to previous trauma should be considered when assessing levels of trauma.

NCTSN provides more information about how [certain populations experience a higher risk of trauma](#).

Need more Help? Contact [TRIS](#) for further support on how to identify high-risk individuals and offer thoughtful, trauma-informed help.

Maintain Normalcy and Structure

Provide Routine and Stability

After a traumatic event, try to restore as much routine and structure as possible. Normalcy can be a powerful coping mechanism for students and staff.

Create Opportunities for Social Support

Encourage students to connect with trusted peers and adults. Maintain or establish peer groups where they can talk or engage in normal school activities.

Additional Information

Access additional resources related to supporting students using a trauma-informed lens at [NCTSN Helping Youth after Community Trauma: Tips for Educators](#)

Considerations for Age, Development, and Disability



One of your initial tasks when planning a response to a difficult event is to consider the ages and developmental levels of students. You also want to think about how to tailor your response to meet the needs of students with disabilities, particularly if a disability significantly impacts a student's thinking, emotional awareness, behavioral regulation, or sensory processing. A student might need additional mental health support services if changes feel significant, persistent, or drastically different from before the difficult event. The [ARBEST Clinician Directory](#) lists Arkansas providers with specialized, [evidence-based training](#). [Contact the TRIS team](#) or the [AR ConnectNow](#) program for help with identifying appropriate referrals.

Younger Children (Elementary School)

Following a difficult event, younger students may struggle to verbally express their thoughts and emotions. They also could have a hard time separating from their parents, caregivers, or trusted adults. You might notice changes in their overall behavior, and their play may become less imaginative, more repetitive, or include themes related to the event. Younger students' academic performance and developmental skills also may regress, and toileting accidents could occur.

Teachers and school staff are essential in helping younger students regain their sense of security and safety following a difficult event. Here are general recommendations for use with this age group:

Remind Students That They Are Safe

Offer simple, reassuring statements. Read more about [communicating with students, staff, and families](#).

Maintain Routines

Continue with classroom rituals that were in place prior to the difficult event. Consider incorporating new routines that foster calmness, such as these [Instructional videos to build mindfulness skills at AR ConnectNow](#).

Answer Questions Truthfully and Succinctly

Try to answer just the question(s) posed without adding elaboration. Remember, it is appropriate and advisable to say, "I don't know" at times.

Give Students a Place to Process

Play or art activities may help these young students process their thoughts and feelings. However, a student *should not* be forced to participate in such activities if doing so does not feel comfortable to them.

Provide Students Choices When You Can

Even small choices can help them feel more in control following a difficult event.

Expect Changes in Behavior or Mood

Try to remember that a student's behavioral problems may be driven by their feelings related to the difficult event. Although you should continue to set clear, firm limits for inappropriate behaviors and use logical consequences, it also is very important to try to avoid being punitive.

Seek Guidance From Mental Health Professionals

Rely upon guidance from your school's counselor or mental health team (if available in your school/district).

Reach Out for Support

Remember, [TRIS](#) is available to help support you as you support your school.

Older Students (Middle and High School)

As with younger students, you may observe changes in academic performance or behavior (e.g., irritability or increased absenteeism) among older students following a difficult event. Yet, additional considerations exist related to the support of middle- and high-school students.

These students often understand a difficult event more fully than younger students; however, adolescence is a vulnerable time. Students are becoming more independent and figuring out who they are and who they want to be. Some of them may have trouble incorporating their thoughts and feelings about the event with their emerging sense of self. They may experience increased anger or anxiety, or they may begin to socially isolate from others. Older students also may begin to engage in or to increase use of risky behaviors as a coping mechanism.

The following are general recommendations for schools to consider when supporting this age group:

Maintain Routines

You should try to maintain the normal school and classroom routines as much as possible. Doing this can help students feel safe.

Answer Questions Truthfully and Succinctly

If students ask questions, answer them truthfully with simple, direct language that isn't overly elaborate. Remember, it is always okay to say, "I don't know." If it is an inappropriate time to address the question, tell the student when and where they can talk and ask questions.

Give Students a Place to Process

Middle- and high-school students may benefit from small, well-managed spaces for open dialogue and peer support—but, ensuring that firm boundaries and expectations are maintained is essential.

Expect Changes in Behavior or Mood

Remember that changes you see in a student's mood or behavior may be significantly impacted by their feelings related to the difficult event. While setting clear, firm limits for inappropriate behaviors and using logical consequences remains important, you should also avoid being punitive.



Provide Students Choices When You Can

Give middle and high school students choices, if possible. Even small choices can help them feel more in control following a difficult event.

Provide Support for Difficult Times

Students may experience difficulties around certain times, such as a reminder of the event. Be sensitive to this and offer additional support when able.

Monitor Dynamics

Remain aware of peer dynamics and the potential for increased bullying or social pressures.

Seek Guidance From Mental Health Professionals

Rely upon guidance from your school's counselor or mental health team (if available in your school/district).

Reach Out for Support

Remember, [TRIS](#) is available to help support you as you support your school.

Students With Disabilities

Following a difficult event, school leaders must tailor their response to account for the varying needs of students, including those with intellectual or developmental delays or disabilities. Trauma can have a unique effect on students with cognitive, sensory, or emotional difficulties. While some students may adjust well, others may have difficulty understanding the emotional impact of the event. Some may experience increased anxiety or difficulties regulating their emotions and behaviors, and others may respond in a manner that is typical of students much younger than they are. Environment and routine changes may present as even more difficult for these children when compared to others within the school.

Special education staff should help guide the plan for supporting students with disabilities, as they are likely to be more closely aware of the individualized needs of these children. The following section describes additional considerations for school staff when supporting students with disabilities in the aftermath of a difficult event.

Address Immediate Needs

Ensure medical and physical needs are promptly addressed.

Answer Questions Truthfully and Succinctly

Answer questions honestly, succinctly, and with concrete language. Remember, it is okay to say, “I don’t know.”

Maintain Routines

Maintain schedules, routines, and interactions with familiar people as much as possible.

Provide Appropriate Ways to Talk About the Event

Some students may need plans or information to be repeated or presented in a visual format. Some students may need options for how to express their needs (e.g., use cards to point to emotion faces or other specific needs).

Give Students a Place to Process

Some students may experience heightened sensitivity to noise, light, or crowded spaces following a difficult event. Providing quiet spaces or sensory breaks can help them self-regulate.

Adhere to Support Plans

Ensure accommodations and individualized support plans remain in place, are referenced, and incorporated into support plans following a difficult event. Some schools find it useful to create and annually update brief individualized emergency plans for students with significant disabilities. These brief plans can be easily referenced should the unthinkable happen.

Provide Coping Tools

Many students with disabilities benefit from structured coping tools (e.g., breathing exercises, fidget items, movement breaks, or access to a designated *calm space*). Reinforcing these strategies can support emotional regulation.

Seek Guidance From Mental Health Professionals

Rely upon guidance from your school’s counselor or mental health team (if available in your school or district).

Reach Out for Support

Remember, [TRIS](#) is available to help support you as you support your school.

Additional Information

Access additional resources related to age-related reactions to trauma, supporting students experiencing grief, and how trauma impacts students with disabilities.

Supporting Age-Specific Students During Grief

- [NCTSN Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#)
- [NASP Grief Tips to Support Students of All Ages](#)

Handling Difficult Events While Serving Children With Disabilities

- [NCTSN Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and When to Seek Help](#)
- [NASP Natural Disasters and Relocated Students With Special Needs](#)
- [Supporting Students With Disabilities During School Crises: A Teacher’s Guide](#)

As educators, administrators, and school leaders, we know that meeting the needs of the students you serve is always a high priority. We admire and commend the wonderful work you do molding the future! In the next section, we encourage you to consider the vital importance of also checking in with yourself and your colleagues following a difficult event.

Supporting Staff Wellness in School Personnel



School personnel play a critical role in helping students and families recover from traumatic events, crises, and daily stressors. Whether responding to natural disasters, community violence, serious illness, or the loss of a student or staff member, educators and school mental health professionals often serve as front-line responders. However, the emotional weight of this role can take a toll on staff well-being.

To sustain their ability to support students and families effectively, school personnel must also prioritize their own wellness. The guidance offered in this toolkit provides structured strategies, rooted in the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) and the Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT) framework, to help school staff maintain emotional resilience and professional fulfillment. A well-supported staff creates a stronger, more resilient school community—one that is better equipped to respond to trauma and foster healing.

Proactive Approaches to Staff Wellness

Building A Culture of Wellness

- Establish *Wellness Committees* that focus on staff well-being and resilience.
- Sustain workplace satisfaction through community-building activities, such as staff appreciation, social events, relaxation spaces, or enriching break areas.
- Recognize school staff as key figures in student recovery, while acknowledging their own experiences of grief, distress, or trauma.

Prioritizing Staff Self-Care and Mental Health

- Monitor signs of emotional distress among staff (e.g., changes in performance, demeanor, or attendance).
- Consider implementing flexible work arrangements or rotating schedules after school-wide crises to prevent burnout.
- Provide temporary workload adjustments following high-stress periods.
- Encourage structured opportunities for staff to process their experiences, including peer support groups and mental health resources.

Providing Access to Mental Health Support

- Ensure awareness of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services.
- Create safe spaces for open discussions on staff mental health and coping strategies.
- Offer wellness-focused professional development. See our [mental health re-source guide](#) for more information about trainings.

Taking Care of Yourself: Strategies for School Personnel

School personnel—whether teachers, counselors, administrators, or support staff—face unique emotional challenges. Below are evidence-based ways to take care of yourself by managing stress and promoting resilience both during the workday and after hours. These skills, aligned with the CE-CERT framework, support one another: practicing one skill helps strengthen skills in other domains.

This information is drawn from the publication:

Miller, B. C. (2021). Reducing secondary traumatic stress: Skills for sustaining a career in the helping professions (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003049043>

Feeling the Feels (Experiential Engagement)

- Acknowledge and validate emotions rather than suppressing them.
- Recognize that avoiding or ignoring emotional experiences can lead to more distress.

Getting Out of Your Head (Reducing Rumination)

- Recognize the difference between productive problem-solving and unhelpful overthinking.
- Engage in activities that redirect attention and break the mental spin, such as physical movement, social connections, or creative hobbies.

Paying Attention to Your Story (Conscious Narrative)

- Be mindful of how you interpret daily challenges and stressors.
- Shift the narrative by focusing on resilience and problem-solving rather than self-doubt.
- Reflect on the meaning of a stressful experience and ways to grow from the experience.

Compassion Without Burnout (Reducing Emotional Labor)

- Recognize opportunities to surface feelings in a way that does not damage relationships.
- Practice activating compassion for everyone and eliminating conditions to compassion.
- Learn how to make dreadful tasks more efficient or more enjoyable.

Recharging and Rest (Parasympathetic Recovery)

- Take intentional breaks throughout the day to reset.
- Engage in a relaxing activity for 20 minutes after work to incorporate pleasurable activity and reduce likelihood of thinking about stressors from the day.

Additional Information

Access additional resources related to school personnel wellness, trauma-informed care, and crisis response in the school setting.

Trauma-Informed Care and Educator Wellness

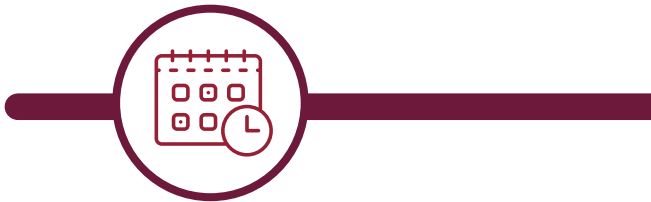
- [Self-Care for Educators](#)
- [Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals](#)

Burnout and Fostering Resilience

- [Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma \(CE-CERT\)](#)

Adjustment and adaptation to life after a difficult event can be unpredictable. Someone may seem to adjust and cope well initially, showing little to no signs of difficulty in the days following an even yet have needs arise weeks or even months later. In the next section, we discuss the importance of ongoing monitoring, continued emotional support, and additional follow-up.

ACTIONS
IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS
AND MONTHS



Monitor for Ongoing Needs and Support

Continue Emotional Support

Offer counseling services in the days and weeks following the event. Recognize that the trauma may not immediately show, and stress reactions can manifest later.

Monitor Potential Signs of Trauma

Look for signs of distress in students and staff (e.g., withdrawal, changes in behavior, or difficulty concentrating). It is important to address these issues promptly, and if needed, seek a mental health evaluation for those impacted. This toolkit provides basic information about potential signs of trauma. Resources to read more about continuing signs of trauma include [Trauma-Informed Support for Children](#) and [Tips for Educators on Helping Youth after Community Trauma](#).





Follow Up With Families

Communicate With Caregivers for Continued Support

Maintain communication with families to ensure continued support at home. Offer information on community resources or additional mental health services if needed. Examples of good resources and services can be found in our [Mental Health Resource Guide](#).

Provide Professional Development for Staff

Offer Training

Create opportunities for staff members to attending trainings of trauma-informed practices, stress management, and self-care for school personnel. TRIS is able to help staff through [our trauma-informed training series](#).

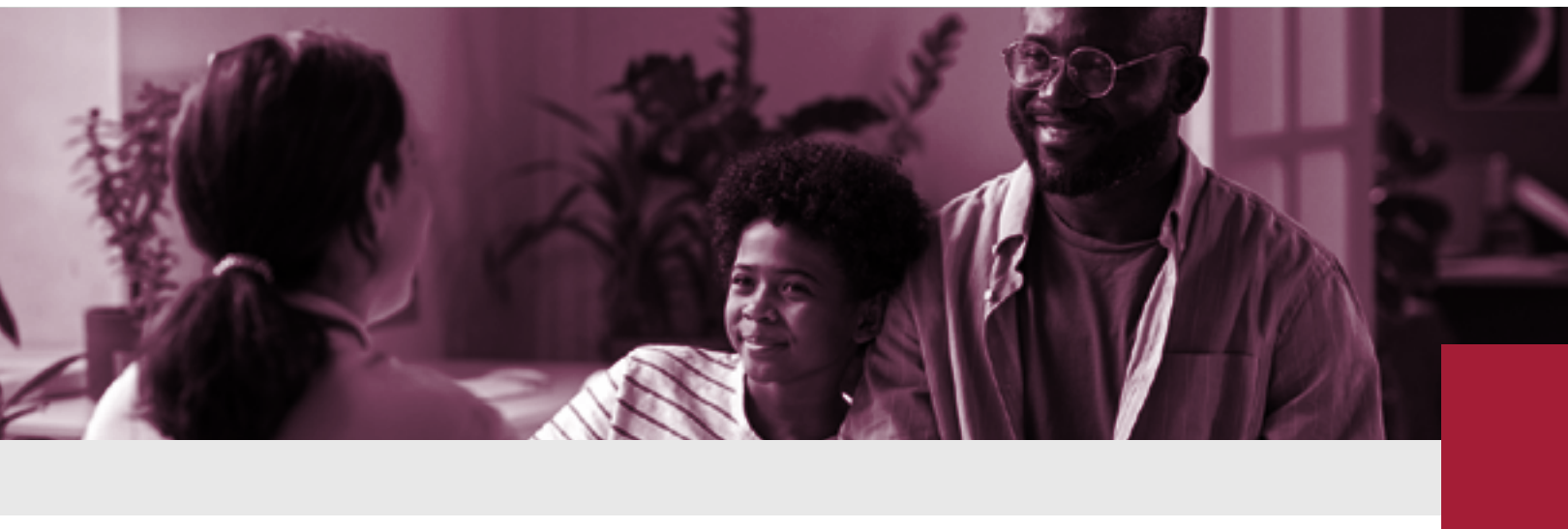
Incorporate Community Resources

Find Partnerships

Connect with local agencies, mental health providers, and community organizations that can assist with recovery and provide additional resources.

Build Resilience

Developing coping skills can help build resilience against the effects of trauma. This can be done in small ways by taking moments to practice mindfulness and relaxation. AR ConnectNow has [mindful videos for kids and adults](#) to build skills that help with resilience.



LONG-TERM STEPS FOLLOWING THE EVENT



Create a Long-Term Mental Health Plan

Develop a Plan for Ongoing Support

This may involve continued counseling or working with external agencies, such as outpatient clinics (if necessary) and ensuring students have a check-in plan for continued mental health care. [The ARBEST Clinician Directory](#) offers contact information of trauma-trained clinicians in Arkansas.

Maintain Ways to Communicate

Keep the lines of communication open between students, parents, and school staff to ensure that the student's emotional and academic needs continue to be met.

Commemorate and Honor the Trauma's Impact

Memorials or Reflection Spaces

If appropriate, create spaces or opportunities for students and staff to reflect on the trauma, honor those affected, and celebrate resilience. Always check with families before making plans. Consider scheduling memorials outside of school hours and off school grounds.

Anniversaries or Remembrances

Recognize significant dates related to the trauma in ways that foster reflection, collective healing, and remembrance. Be mindful of how major school events (e.g., graduation, parent-invited lunches, prom) may evoke emotions tied to the loss and ensure a consistent approach in how the school acknowledges different losses. Consistency helps prevent any one loss from appearing more important or impactful than another, which can unintentionally contribute to feelings of exclusion or hierarchy in grief (e.g., if a tree is planted in remembrance, schools should ensure they can sustain this type of response for all deaths).

At the same time, recognize that death by suicide may require special considerations due to their unique impact on students, staff, and the broader school community. While it is important to address these situations thoughtfully, ensure that responses do not unintentionally glorify or romanticize suicide, as this can increase risk for vulnerable students (e.g., naming an event after individual or creating a permanent memorial). Strive for a balanced approach that acknowledges the loss while promoting healthy coping, access to support, and prevention efforts.

CRISIS RESOURCE GUIDE



In the midst of a school crisis, administrators are faced with urgent decisions that impact the safety, well-being, and stability of their school community. This resource guide is designed to provide clear, reliable support during these critical moments, offering carefully selected tools to help navigate complex situations. Whether addressing immediate concerns, coordinating with community partners, or planning for long-term recovery, these resources are here to assist you in making informed, compassionate decisions.

Communicating with Caregivers, Staff, and Students Post-Crisis

This section provides guidance for school administrators on effectively communicating and supporting students, staff, and families in the aftermath of a traumatic event. Schools play a vital role in helping communities process and heal after crises, such as natural disasters, incidents of violence, serious accidents, or the loss of a student or staff member due to illness or suicide. A trauma-informed approach ensures that responses are compassionate, coordinated, and tailored to the unique needs of those affected.

Things to Consider When Communicating During a Crisis

Honesty

Be honest when sharing difficult information. When adults are honest, it helps children develop trust in their caregivers and role models. Children rely on adults for guidance, and being truthful reinforces that they can count on the adult to be open and reliable, even in tough situations.

Environment and Group Size

The right environment can make the child feel safe and supported. Being in a familiar or comforting space can help the child feel more secure and open to hearing difficult news.

Sensitivity to Those Most Impacted

Difficult conversations can trigger strong emotions in youth, such as sadness, confusion, or fear. A calm, controlled environment allows for emotional space where the child can process their feelings, ask questions, or even cry without feeling exposed or embarrassed.

Group Versus Individual Discussions

When sharing difficult information, be thoughtful about people most impacted, such as close friends or specific classes of students, versus those who may not have a direct connection.

Discipline

The impact of hearing difficult information may vary greatly among students. Though sticking to routine and schedule is important, it is important to be thoughtful about what behaviors may be an outward response to an inward struggle.

Using Stigmatizing Language

Do not use phrases that may increase shame, guilt, or misunderstanding. For example, use the term *died by suicide* rather than *committed suicide* or *successful suicide*.

Making Assumptions About How the Family Feels or What They Need

Do not assume the family wants or needs specific support without asking.

Announcing Details Without Family Permission

Some families might not want the community to know specific details about the event. Be sure to ask for permission and specify who would receive that information.

Over-promising or Committing to Long-Term Support Without a Clear Plan

Do not promise resources or accommodations the school may not be able to sustain.

Please Note: The Trauma Resource Initiative for Schools (TRIS) team can help support schools in tailoring communication to fit the needs of the school and the specific incident. Our team is adept at helping refine communications and resources for a specific crisis. The information in this section does not include specifics and nuances often needed in moments of crisis.

Reaching Out to Families Following a Crisis

Guidelines for Initial Contact

- Express care and support while respecting the family's privacy.
- Offer help without pressuring the family to share details about the event.
- Align school communication with the family's preferences on how information is shared.
- Use open-ended questions to understand their needs and concerns (e.g., "What would be most helpful for you right now?")
- Inform the family that school can remain a resource for them.

Actions to Avoid

Pressuring Families for Details

Do not ask intrusive questions about the crisis or expect families to disclose personal details. Instead, allow the family to share at their own comfort level and respect their privacy.

Speculation or Spreading Unverified Information

Do not share unverified details about the crisis, as misinformation can cause harm and increase distress. Instead, ensure all communication is factual, aligned with what the family is comfortable sharing, and avoids sensationalizing the situation.



Sample Script for Outreach to Families

My name is [name], and I'm the [role] at [school]. [Express condolences and acknowledge awareness of the situation.] I wanted to reach out to let you know that our school community is thinking of you and your family during this difficult time. [Make family aware that others know about what has happened if this is true.] How has your family been holding up?

We recognize that some students and staff may be aware of what happened, while others may not. [Express desire to communicate to school community in ways that best fit with family preferences and values.] We want to ensure that any messaging at school aligns with what feels best for your family.

We also want to offer support to [friends, teachers, and peers] who may be experiencing more difficulty with this situation. Do you have any preferences for how we describe what happened, or any messages you would like us to share? [Ensure family knows that the school is a resource for support.] Please know that our school community is here for you, and we encourage you to reach out if there is anything we can do to support you.



Classroom-Based Discussions After a Traumatic Event

Discussion Preparation and Facilitation

- Hold discussions in familiar settings (e.g., homeroom or advisory period) where students feel safe.
- Notify families beforehand, if possible, that these discussions will be taking place. Otherwise, be prepared to notify families via other means following classroom-based discussions.
- Acknowledge that different students will process trauma in different ways.
- Provide clear, developmentally appropriate explanations using language approved by the family.
- Use honest and direct terms rather than euphemisms when discussing serious events.
- Expect a wide range of emotions based on students’ developmental levels, personal experiences, and relationships with those involved.
- Share information you have permission to share. Default to *not* sharing when unsure of answers or unsure whether it is okay to share (e.g., “Out of respect for the family and our community, we are not sharing/not able to share details at this time”).
- Be prepared to say “I don’t know” instead of sharing speculations.
- Provide opportunities for students to ask or write down questions.
- Encourage students to seek support privately with a trusted adult if needed.

Actions to Avoid

Broadcasting Events

Avoid scheduling general assemblies, pep rallies, or intercom announcements to share sensitive information or to facilitate processing of a situation.

Mandating Participation

Do not force students to participate in discussions or share their thoughts or feelings.

Sharing Incorrect Information

Refrain from speculating about the event or providing unverified information.

Using Dramatic Language

Avoid using language that may unintentionally sensationalize the situation (e.g., “*This is the worst tragedy our school has experienced*”).

Minimizing Feelings

Always try to avoid dismissing students' reactions, even if they seem minor.

Making Assumptions

It is better not to assume how a student should feel or respond.

Unstructured Conversations

Prevent discussions from becoming unstructured or dominated by misinformation.



Sample Script for Classroom Discussion

Today, I want to talk to you about something very important. Our school community has been affected by **[provide a brief, factual statement about the event that school has permission to share]**. Some of you may already know about this, and others may just be learning about it.

[Acknowledge that everyone will have different reactions to the situation, and nothing is "right" or "wrong".] It is completely normal to have different emotions—some may feel sad, others confused, worried, or even angry. All of these feelings are okay.

[Make sure students know where they can go if they need space, have questions, or want to talk in private.] If you have questions, you can come talk to me, and I'll help connect you with our counselor. If you have questions at home, we encourage you to speak with your parents or caregivers. Let's remember to have these conversations privately with trusted adults rather than in public spaces at school.

Communication to Staff and Families

This section provides pre-drafted communications for school personnel to use when responding to traumatic events in the school community. These letters help ensure clear, compassionate, and trauma-informed communication with staff and families while maintaining consistency in messaging. The letters are adaptable to various crises, including natural disasters, community violence, accidents, serious illness, and loss due to suicide or other causes.

Letter/Email to School Staff

Subject: Supporting Our School Community Through Crisis

Dear Staff,

Our school community has recently experienced a difficult event involving **[brief factual statement about the crisis, for example, "a natural disaster," "an act of violence in our community," or "the loss of a student"]**. We understand that this situation impacts our students, staff, and families in different ways, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to resources and support.

In this email, we have included resources to help you support students as they process this experience. We also encourage you to prioritize your own well-being and review information on coping with this situation.

Resources for Supporting Students and Staff

[Insert links to relevant resources here.]

If you find that this event is affecting your well-being, we encourage you to seek support. One available resource is UAMS AR-CONNECT, which offers 24/7 mental health support and referrals for counseling. You can access AR-CONNECT services at 501-526-3563 or 800-482-9921.

As we continue to develop a response plan, we welcome your feedback. Thank you for your commitment to supporting our students and each other during this time.

Sincerely,
[Name]



Letter/Email to Families

Subject: Our School's Support Plan Following a Crisis

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our school community has recently been affected by **[brief factual statement about the crisis]**. We know that parents and students may have questions, concerns, or strong emotions in response to this situation, and we are committed to supporting them in every way possible.

We have been in communication with affected families and will share updates as appropriate. At this time, our focus is on ensuring that students have access to mental health resources and support services. Teachers will be facilitating classroom discussions to provide accurate information, address student concerns, and offer space for emotional expression.

Resources for Parents & Caregivers

We understand that many parents are looking for guidance on how to help their children process difficult events. Below are resources that provide information on how children and teens respond to trauma and strategies for offering support:

[Insert relevant resources here.]

If your child is struggling and may need additional support, UAMS AR-CONNECT is a 24/7 mental health resource providing short-term support and referrals for counseling. AR-CONNECT can be reached at 501-526-3563 or 800-482-9921.

Please reach out if you have suggestions for how we can best support your family. Our thoughts are with all those impacted by this event.

Sincerely,
[Name]

Event-Specific Resources



Different crises require unique considerations. Whether dealing with natural disasters, acts of violence, student deaths, or community-wide trauma, these resources can help school administrators, educators, and others understand the distinct challenges each situation presents.

Please note, these topics are not inclusive of every difficult event a school or community might experience. TRIS can help with finding reliable, event-specific resources that pertain to your current crisis.

Acts of Violence

Acts of violence, such as school shootings, physical assaults, or threats, can create fear, instability, and long-term emotional distress within a school community. In the aftermath, students and staff may struggle with feelings of insecurity, grief, or anger, and responses will need to balance immediate safety measures with ongoing emotional support. Administrators should consider the importance of clear and consistent communication, ensuring that both students and staff feel informed and supported. Counselors should be prepared for a wide range of emotional responses, including anxiety, hypervigilance, and traumatization. Below, you will find well-vetted resources to assist in responding to incidents of violence in schools.

Resources

- [NASP Mitigating the Effects of a Lockdown](#)
- [NASP Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Families and Educators](#)



The Role of Schools in Student Recovery



Natural Disasters

Natural disasters—such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and wildfires—can lead to displacement, property loss, and significant emotional distress. Schools should be prepared to address both immediate logistical concerns—such as structural damage, schedule disruptions, and displaced families—and the long-term emotional toll on students and staff. Administrators should consider how to re-establish routines as soon as possible while providing flexibility for those who need time to recover. Counselors should be aware that students may experience increased anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and heightened emotional reactions long after the event has passed. Below, you will find well-vetted resources to support schools in responding to natural disasters.

Resources

- [NCTSN After the Tornado](#)
- [NASP Natural Disasters: Brief Facts and Tips](#)
- [NASP Large-Scale Natural Disasters: Helping Children Cope](#)
- [NASP Natural Disasters and Relocated Students with Special Needs: Recommendations for Receiving Schools](#)

Suicide

The loss of a student or staff member to suicide is an especially complex and heartbreaking crisis that can deeply impact the school community. Administrators should consider how to communicate the loss in a way that is honest yet avoids language that could contribute to suicide contagion. Schools must also be prepared to address a wide range of grief responses, including anger, guilt, and fear, and to provide spaces for students and staff to process their emotions. Counselors should monitor at-risk students who may be struggling with their own mental health and ensure that ongoing support is available. Below, you will find well-vetted resources to guide schools in responding to a suicide in the community.

Resources

- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center: The Role of High School Teachers](#)
- [SAMHSA Preventing Suicide - High Schools](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center: A Toolkit for Schools](#)
- [Childmind: Supporting Students after the Suicide of a Classmate](#)

Children are resilient, and with the support of caring and responsive adults, they can recover from traumatic experiences. However, some children may require additional interventions beyond natural recovery. Recognizing when a student needs more support is critical to ensuring their emotional well-being and academic success.

Connecting Schools With Community Resources for Basic Needs

In the aftermath of a crisis, many staff or family members may experience financial strain, food insecurity, or difficulties maintaining housing and utilities. Schools can play a key role in connecting families with local resources by partnering with community organizations, food banks, utility assistance programs, and social services. Establishing relationships with these agencies in advance allows for a quicker and more coordinated response when needs arise. Schools can also provide families with a list of available resources, host community support events, or designate a staff member to help families navigate assistance programs. Ensuring students’ basic needs are met is essential for their well-being and ability to engage in learning.

One resource available in Arkansas is the AR Connect Now Case Management service, which can be utilized [here](#).

Mental Health Support for Students and Staff

Once basic needs are met, addressing the emotional impact of a crisis is critical for students and staff. Traumatic events can lead to heightened anxiety, grief, or distress, making it essential for schools to offer accessible mental health support. Schools can provide on-site counseling, establish peer support groups, and collaborate with community mental health agencies to ensure ongoing care. Creating a trauma-informed school environment—where emotional responses are validated, coping strategies are taught, and staff receive training on recognizing signs of distress—helps foster resilience and recovery for the entire school community.

When Mental Health Professionals Provide Services in Schools

When mental health professionals provide services in schools, it is essential to prioritize confidentiality, ensuring that only those who need to know are aware of a student's participation. Designating private spaces for therapy sessions helps maintain discretion and fosters a safe environment for students to engage in counseling. Encouraging parental involvement can strengthen the therapeutic process, while collaboration between providers and school staff ensures students receive comprehensive support. Additionally, planning for transition periods before and after therapy sessions can help students reintegrate smoothly into their school day, minimizing disruptions and promoting continued academic engagement.

Understanding Evidence-Based Mental Health Treatment

Schools and mental health providers should prioritize evidence-based approaches to ensure that students receive interventions that are proven to be safe, effective, and responsive to their unique experiences.

What Makes Treatment Evidence-Based?

Not all mental health treatments are equally effective. Evidence-based treatments (EBTs) are approaches that have been scientifically tested and shown to improve children's mental health. These treatments follow structured, research-backed methods that address specific mental health concerns, such as trauma, anxiety, depression, and behavioral challenges.

The following are examples of evidence-based treatments. However, this list is not inclusive of every evidence-based treatment used for children and adolescents exposed to trauma. The [ARBEST Clinician Directory](#) contains Arkansas providers who have trained in these treatment types.

Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)

CPP is an effective evidence-based treatment designed for children under 5 years old who have experienced trauma. The treatment has been proven effective at reducing emotional and behavioral difficulties associated with trauma, enhancing safe caregiving practices, and strengthening the parent-child relationship. For more information, watch a [video about CPP](#) or visit this [CPP information sheet](#).

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

PCIT is an effective, evidence-based treatment for young children ages 2-6 displaying disruptive behaviors with a possible trauma exposure. The treatment has been shown to reduce behavior problems, strengthen parent-child attachment, and improve child trauma symptoms. For more information about PCIT, watch this [video](#) or visit this [PCIT information sheet](#).

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

TF-CBT is an evidence-based mental health treatment for children and adolescents who have experienced potential traumatic events, such as abuse. The treatment has been evaluated and has demonstrated success in reducing trauma symptoms and strengthening the parent-child relationship. For more information, watch this [TF-CBT video](#) or visit this [TF-CBT resource](#).



Selecting the Right Mental Health Provider

While many professionals offer mental health services, not all providers are trained in or regularly deliver evidence-based treatments, nor are all providers trained to provide services specific to traumatic stress. When referring students for mental health support, school administrators should ensure that providers are using interventions backed by research. Partnering with knowledgeable providers can lead to better student outcomes.



What to Ask When Seeking Mental Health Services

When selecting a mental health partner for a school or helping parents find appropriate services for their child, administrators should consider the following factors:

Referral Process and Logistics

- Determine if a referral from a child's primary care provider (PCP) is required.
- Verify accepted insurance plans and any out-of-pocket costs.
- Ask about waitlists and estimated timeframes for scheduling an appointment.
- Confirm available appointment times. Some providers offer evening and weekend options.
- Identify bilingual providers or those with access to translation services.

Provider Education, Training, and Expertise

- Mental health providers have different backgrounds and approaches to therapy based on their education and training.
- Consider the provider's specialized training and experience with specific concerns, as well as their credential and certifications.
- Differentiate between therapists and psychiatrists. Psychiatrists prescribe medication, while therapists focus on behavioral interventions.
- Medication and therapy together can be effective, but medication is not always necessary, especially for young children.

Ages and Populations Served

Some providers work across all age groups, while others specialize in particular developmental stages (e.g., early childhood or adolescence).

Family and Caregiver Involvement

- Treatment models vary in their inclusion of caregivers and family members. Inclusion of caregivers is especially emphasized in most treatment models for younger children.
- Some treatments allow participation from caregivers with a history of abuse or neglect, while others do not.

Treatment Expectations and Outcomes

- Clarify what treatment aims to address, how goals are set, and how progress is measured.
- Ask about expected timelines and whether the provider offers communication between sessions.

Family-Centered Approaches

- Providers should demonstrate openness and sensitivity to family values, experiences, and needs.
- Ask how they create a physically and emotionally safe space for children and caregivers.

Ways Schools Can Navigate Conversations About Mental Health Support With Caregivers

When discussing mental health support with caregivers, schools can facilitate thoughtful and supportive conversations by considering the following reflective questions:

Understanding Concerns and Readiness for Services

- Have others (teachers, school staff, family members) noticed changes in the child's mood, sleep, eating, or developmental tasks (e.g., toileting in young children) that raise concerns?
- Are there any worries the caregiver or child has about seeking mental health treatment?

Aligning Support With Family Needs

- What does it mean to the caregiver for their child or family to be involved in mental health services?
- What key information would the family like a mental health provider to understand about their values, culture, or experiences?

Logistics and Accessibility

- Can the family incorporate regular appointments into their schedule?
- Does the family have any specific preferences for a mental health provider (e.g., gender, religious background, language accessibility)?

When to Consider a Mental Health Evaluation

Early identification of mental health concerns is essential. A mental health evaluation may be beneficial if a student exhibits:

Academic Decline

Noticeable drop in grades, disengagement from learning, or difficulty concentrating.

Emotional Distress

Persistent sadness, excessive worry, frequent mood swings, or increased irritability.

Physical Symptoms

Recurring stomachaches, headaches, or other unexplained physical complaints.

Behavioral Changes

Increased aggression, hyperactivity, withdrawal from peers, or defiance.

Sleep Disruptions

Difficulty falling asleep, frequent nightmares, or excessive fatigue during the day.

If a student displays any of these signs, school administrators and support staff should collaborate with families and mental health professionals to determine appropriate next steps. Schools can play a key role in ensuring that students receive timely and effective support.



Caregiver Involvement in Children's Mental Health Treatment

Involvement Is Essential for Effective Treatment

For mental health interventions to be effective—especially for young children—caregiver participation is not optional; it is essential. Children rely on their caregivers for emotional regulation, reinforcement of skills, and consistent support. Evidence-based treatments for children require caregivers to be actively engaged in the therapeutic process to ensure that progress made in sessions translates into real-world improvements.

School administrators and counselors can play an important role in helping caregivers understand the need for their involvement in their children's treatment. They can also help caregivers explore ways to remove barriers to that involvement (e.g., work schedules or transportation). Administrators can also explore how school-based mental health providers plan to engage caregivers in the treatment process.

The Role of Caregivers and School Personnel in a Child's Daily Life

Compared to outpatient mental health providers, caregivers and school personnel spend exponentially more time with children. A therapist may see a child for one hour per week, while caregivers and teachers interact with them for dozens of hours. This means that meaningful change happens outside of therapy—in the home, at school, and in daily interactions. Mental health treatment should equip caregivers and educators with the tools to support a child's emotional and behavioral growth in real time.

Risks of Treatment Without Caregiver Involvement

When caregivers do not participate in treatment or do not maintain communication with the mental health provider, children often:

Do Not Receive the Appropriate Type or Level of Service

The provider may lack a full understanding of the child's environment, needs, and progress.

Show Minimal or No Improvement

Without reinforcement at home and school, therapy alone is unlikely to create lasting change.

Miss Out on Critical Skill-Building

Caregivers need to learn strategies to reinforce coping skills, manage behaviors, and create a supportive environment.

Individual Therapy for Children: A Limited but Strategic Approach

While there may be situations where a child spends brief, individual time with a therapist, this should not be the regular or primary approach. Unlike therapy for adults, where individual sessions are standard, children—particularly younger children—benefit most when therapy focuses on strengthening caregiver-child interactions and equipping caregivers with effective strategies.

The Younger the Child, the More Caregiver Involvement Is Needed

Developmentally, younger children have less ability to process and apply therapeutic concepts on their own. The general rule is:

For very young children (ages 0-6)

Therapy should be almost entirely caregiver driven.

For school-aged children (ages 7-12)

Caregivers should still be actively involved, learning and reinforcing therapeutic skills.

For adolescents (ages 13+)

There is more room for individual therapy, but caregiver engagement remains important for overall family functioning and support.

Collaboration Between Mental Health Providers and Schools Is Key

When schools remain in touch with mental health providers (with appropriate permissions), they have greater success:

- Aligning strategies and interventions.
- Reinforcing coping skills and behavioral strategies in the school environment.
- Recognizing signs of progress or challenges and sharing insights with caregivers and providers.



Regular and Consistent Mental Health Treatment for Children

Frequent Sessions Lead to More Effective Treatment

For mental health treatment to be effective, sessions should occur regularly, typically on a weekly basis. When appointments are spaced too far apart—such as every few weeks or once a month—progress is often slow, and skills introduced in therapy may not be reinforced effectively.

Why Regular Sessions Matter

Reinforcement of Coping Skills – Many therapy sessions introduce new coping strategies, such as deep breathing, problem-solving, or emotion regulation techniques. Regular sessions allow children to practice these skills with guidance and support, making it more likely they will use them in real-life situations.

Consistency in Parenting Strategies – Parents and caregivers play a key role in reinforcing what is learned in therapy. Weekly sessions help parents implement strategies effectively and receive timely feedback, leading to more efficient progress for the child.

Stronger Support System – Frequent sessions allow therapists to monitor progress closely and adjust strategies as needed, ensuring the child gets the right level of support at the right time.

Arkansas Mental Health Resources



This section includes references to resources available within Arkansas for administrators, educators, and families.

State Employee Programs

Employee Assistance Program

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services offer employees and their families access to short-term counseling. This resource might be useful for staff who need help after a difficult event. Make sure that information about EAP is accessible to employees.

- Phone: 877-300-9103
- Website: eap.ndbh.com (Code: ARBenefits)

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)

ARBEST Clinician Directory

ARBEST hosts a directory of Arkansas clinicians trained in evidence-based trauma treatment within the state, including CPP, PCIT, TF-CBT, and others. Visit the [clinician directory](#) to search for clinicians by county, city, or therapy type. Please note, this list does not provide full details, such as insurance coverage or clinician's availability. Contact the provider's office for complete information.

AR ConnectNow

AR ConnectNow is a UAMS program that offers education, resources, and assistance with mental health access for Arkansans. Check out their website for [education about mental health](#), information about mental health providers across the state, use their Care Guide to [request access to mental health services or other resources](#) in communities across the state, watch videos about building resilience through mindfulness or call their virtual clinic to [find short-term, individual mental health services](#). These resources are not crisis support, but they can be used to help access resources that can provide further support.

Specialty Clinics

UAMS has many specialty clinics to help children, teens, and adults with different mental health needs. Consider sharing these resources if you know someone in need of additional support.

- [Child Diagnostic Unit \(treats children ages 2-12 years old\)](#)
- [Child Study Center Outpatient Therapy Clinic \(treats ages preschool through 13 years old\)](#)
- [Seeking to Reinforce my Identify and Values Every Day \(STRIVE\) Clinic \(treats youth and adolescents with behavioral issues\)](#)
- [Walker Family Clinic \(treats adults\)](#)



ARKANSAS TRIS

CRISIS SUPPORT TOOLKIT

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