

GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICTS ON DISASTER AND TRAUMA MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Incidences of trauma and disaster that affect schools, more often than not, require a system wide response with regards to its management and support. This guideline document is intended to provide schools with a protocol on the management of trauma and disaster.

1. Terminology / Definition:

1.1 Disaster:

“.. Extraordinary event, natural or man-made, which takes place at a specific time and place, resulting in damage to property and loss of life and health: (New Dictionary of Social Work)

It is important to differentiate between different types of disasters, e.g.

- Natural disasters
- Accidental disasters
- Disasters caused by intend to harm others, i.e. terrorist attacks
- Business or Industrial Disasters, i.e. explosions, gas leakages
- Incidental Disasters, i.e. stabbing at school, shootings on school premises

1.2 Trauma associated with disaster:

Trauma is the emotional result of experiencing the disasters and normally lies outside the range of human experience and are so powerful that they are capable of overwhelming any persons normal coping capabilities and causes severe stress reactions. It includes the follow:

- Difficulty in continuing with daily routines
- Fear / anxiety
- Lack of belief
- Difficulty with / inability to make a decision
- Disruptions of sleep pattern
- Headaches
- Anger and suspicion. Depression
- Attempted suicide

1.3 Disaster Management:

This refers to any external intervention and involvement to minimize risks, maximise resources and to streamline administrative processes.

2. MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Management

- To manage trauma and disaster within a school setting requires an integrated and collaborative approach. No one Directorate or section should manage it on its own
- Core Directorates or sections that need to be involved are Special Needs Education Services, Governance and Management, Employees Assistance Programme and Communications. Depending on the type of trauma, other Directorates could also be involved

- In co-ordinating and managing the intervention and support the lead person at Cluster level should be the Cluster Manager and at District level the District Manager .
- In incidents where a Disaster occurs that cuts across Districts or have a greater Provincial wide impact, Head Office would be the co-ordinating structure and will call upon Districts to assist.
- Depending on the type of disaster, other State Departments are likely to be involved, e.g. Dept of Social Welfare, Dept of Health, Dept. of Transport, Dept of Water Affairs, Office of the Premier, etc. Decisions of such collaboration should be co-ordinated by the lead manager

2.2. Support

2.2.1 Role of Special Needs Education Service (SNES) / Service Delivery Support Services (SDSS) :

In line with its core mandate, SNES/SDSS will offer **psycho-emotional support** to **learners** who were victims of the disaster and/or are traumatised as a result of the disaster. SNES/SDSS will work with educators to assist and support traumatised learners. In the initial stages SNES/SDSS officials assist as **members of a team** working at stabilising the situation at school level.

2.2.2 Role of Governance and Management (G&M):

Governance and Management should offer logistical support to the **School & Cluster Management Team and SGB**. They would offer assistance with regards to developing an overall intervention strategy to minimize risks, to streamline administrative processes and maximise resources to attend to issues such as funerals, services etc. In the initial stages G & M officials will assist as **members of a team** working at stabilising the situation at school level.

2.2.3 Role of Employees Assistance Programme (EAP):

The Employee Assistance Programme will offer psycho-emotional/ psycho-social support to **educators and other staff members**. In the initial stages EAP officials will assist as **members of a team** working at stabilising the situation at school level.

2.2.4 Role of the Communications Directorate

The Communications Directorate will in collaboration with all intervention, support and management teams, manage all media reports on behalf of the Department.

3. **PROTOCOL:**

- Once the trauma / disaster is known, the District Director should be informed immediately.
- Head Office, DDG: Service Delivery Management should be informed by the respective District Manager of any trauma / disaster that occurs in the Province within 6 hours of the incident

- The District Director calls an urgent meeting of the relevant officials **and a core team for trauma management** to gather more information with regard to **What** has happened, **Where** it has happened, **When** it has happened, **Who** is involved / affected, **What** are the implications for all involved. **Who else** need to be involved?
- The District and Cluster Management Team must develop an Action Plan for immediate implementation – **Who** is doing **what where, when** and **how**, looking at available resources. It is important to set time frames for all actions to be taken
- An initial status and intervention strategy report must be forwarded to the G&M, EAP, SNES & Communications Directorates at Provincial level within 24 hours. This is to assist the respective Directorates to provide the any necessary support to their respective sections at District level (See attached guideline of report).
- The Cluster Manager must co-ordinate and monitor the support and intervention plan
- On-going Evaluation and reporting of the process must be made from the Cluster to District and Provincial offices.
- An evaluation at District and Cluster level, of the impact of support services must be conducted on completion of intervention plan with the view of improving service delivery.
- A follow-up support plan to improve service delivery should be planned and effected
- A final report to be forwarded to District and Provincial Offices (See attached guideline for report)

Networking and Co-ordination of services is of crucial importance.

4. District Based Disaster Management Team:

Each District will take the responsibility of establishing a core Disaster Management Team that will be fully conversant with the contents of this guideline document and have the necessary skills to provide support in situations of trauma and disasters. The composition of this team must include members from Special Needs Education Services / Service Delivery Support Services, Governance and Management, Cluster/Ward Managers and Employees Assistance Programme. Due to the differing contexts among Districts which has impact on support needs, the number of members constituting this team would be a District decision.

Districts must submit the names of their core Disaster Management Team members to the Provincial G&M, SNES and EAP sections, so that these Directorates can provide support programmes for members of the team that belong to their respective Directorates.

ATTACHMENT "A"

REPORT ON TRAUMA / DISASTER INCIDENT

1. DISTRICT

2. LOCATION

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

What happened
When did it happen
Where did it happen
Who was affected
How were they affected

4. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:

Who took charge of the situation
What is the plan of action
Who else is involved with intervention
Who does what for whom
What is the expected outcomes / results of the intervention
What follow-up strategies are planned

5. EVALUATION: (part of final report)

How successful was the intervention
Can a similar incident be prevented and how

6. RECOMMENDATION: (part of final report)

Who needs to do what to assist further
Who needs to do what to avoid a similar incident
What should be done to ensure emotional security / sustainable coping skills