

ESC Region 11

Virtual Crisis Counseling Support

Virtual Crisis Counseling Norms From ASCA: Recognize and mitigate the limitation of school counselor confidentiality in a virtual setting, which may include unintended viewers or recipients. Emphasize these limits in communications with students and families and when establishing boundaries of virtual counseling.

Introduction:

“Thank you for being here. I’m sorry that...(name the event).”

“My name is _____ and my partner(s) today is/are _____ and _____. We will be providing counseling support during this difficult time.

CRT Team Member 1: My role is to help you process your feelings and I’m going to ask you all a few questions during our time together. I know it might feel weird at first but please remember this is a safe place and we are here to support you.

CRT Team Member 2: My role is to type or write down the things you say and account for everybody in today’s group processing activity.

CRT Team Member 3: My role is to support by helping and assisting the other team members today.

CRT Team Member 2: “I know this may be different than what you have done in the past, however, due to health concerns our only option to support you today is virtually. What we talk about today will remain confidential unless you say something that leads me to believe that you might hurt yourself or someone else. Keep in mind that although I will keep your information confidential, I cannot control the actions of those that may be listening around you.”

Establishing Technology Norms:

CRT Team Member 1: “Before we get started let’s talk about how to navigate the zoom platform we are working with today.” I’m going to share my screen and show you a few features. In order for everyone to hear each other let’s make sure our microphones are turned off. In order to participate in this

zoom I will need to see your face so please click on the camera in the lower left hand corner. When you are ready to say something you can click your microphone, like this, and speak. We must be careful to not over speak one another. We are all learning this together so let's all try to be patient and support each other.

CRT Team Member 1: “Now let's practice using the chat box. Typing here (demonstrate on screen) is just like sending a text message. Maybe you don't feel comfortable speaking aloud, you may also type your responses or ask questions through the chat box. Chats are for the group and should not be used to chat between each other. I would like everybody to type their first and last name into the chat box. Please only type it one time. After you type your name you will need to press “enter” on your keyboard. (CRT TEAM member 2 will use that to take attendance.)

CRT Team Member 1: “Does everyone see the hand symbol (demonstrate on screen) this symbol is just like raising your hand. As I'm asking questions if you'd like to respond you may press the hand symbol and it will notify us that you have something to say. We will call on you.”

CRT Team Member 1: Just like in a face-to-face discussion let's talk about the choices you have in today's session.

Defining Ground Rules

CRT Team Member 1:

- 1. Confidentiality- As I stated earlier, what we say in this group chat is confidential and should not be shared with others. However, there are limitations in a virtual setting and I can't control the actions of those around you. For example, if your younger sister or brother are in the room listening to this session, they may say things later about it.**
- 2. This chat is set up to help you cope, grieve, and be around your friends. However, if you feel like you can no longer participate you may select the “Leave meeting” button and your session will be ended. I hope that all of you consider staying until the end but we understand if something comes up.**
- 3. You are free to express your feelings, however, verbal violence is not acceptable. The use of bad words or inappropriate remarks directed at the counselor or towards other students will not be tolerated.**

4. **Not everyone is expected to speak up for every question. Do what feels comfortable for you. Use the microphone, chat box, or raise your hand as needed to participate. The more you participate the better the session becomes for everyone.**
5. **There is no need to ask permission to leave the chat for things like getting a drink of water or going to the bathroom. Feel free to make those decisions as necessary. Sometimes people who need a quick break turn off their camera while they are away and turn it back on upon their return. Remember you can control your camera by clicking it in the lower left hand corner.**

CRT Team Member 1:

Now we are ready to get started.

Thank you again for being here. I'm sorry that...(name the event).

Give brief facts regarding what we know (this will help clear up misconceptions and misinformation)

Ventilation and Validation

- "What would you like to share about (the event) and your experiences?"
- "How did you react?" or "What did you do then?"
- "What was the most difficult part?"
- "What did you or others do during or after the event that was helpful?"
- "What else would you like to share about the event?"

Virtual Modification Questions

- "Name one word or a few words that come to mind when you think about..."
- "How did you feel when you initially heard the news?"
- "Tell us something you wished you could have told...."

Predication and Preparation

- "What do you think will happen in the next few days or weeks?"
- "Is there anything that is bothering you about what might happen in the next few days?"
- "How do you think you will deal with these things?" (Explore coping strategies; provide information on follow up support.)

Virtual Modification Questions

- "What do you do when you feel sad or stressed out?"
- "Make a commitment to try something new for either yourself, your friends, or the "deceased friend."
- "Who are the people you can go to if you need to talk to someone about your feelings?"

Ideas for Virtual Group/Individual Processing

- Facetime with a friend or family member

- Journal/write about feelings (Poem)
- Create an art project/color/draw
- Create an uplifting/encouraging pinterest board
- Take a walk/do yoga
- Grades K-5 Grief Drawing: <http://www.scholastic.com/snp/childrenandgrief-9.htm>
- Grades 6-12 Grief Maps: <http://www.scholastic.com/snp/childrenandgrief-10.htm>
- “In My Control” activity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxacynVqWd8>
- The Grieving Process virtually: <https://youtu.be/gsYL4PC0hyk>

Conclusion and Education

- Review notes made by the scribe
- Normalize the thoughts and feelings of the group members.
- Again express, “I’m sorry. I’m glad you were here.”
- Take notes of those who may need follow up; talk one-on-one with any you have immediate concerns about.

If you get stuck here are some appropriate facilitator responses:

Appropriate Facilitator Responses (Examples)

- “I’m sorry that . . . (name event)”
- “I’m glad you’re here.”
- “I know it was upsetting to [see that; hear that etc.]”
- “Thanks for sharing.”
- “This is hard to understand.”
- “A lot of people feel like you do when something bad happens.”
- “It is not your fault that this happened.”
- “It sounds like you did everything you could.”
- “I’m sorry . . .”
- “I don’t know.”

Words that Can Hurt

- “You’re lucky that . . .”
- “It’ll take some time, but you’ll get over it.”
- “Don’t worry; it’s going to be all right.”
- “Be strong for your mom.”
- “Calm down and try to relax.”
- “You’ll feel better tomorrow.”

More Facilitator Responses

- “I can’t imagine what that would have been like.”
- “I can’t imagine how difficult that must have been for you.”

- “It’s understandable that you feel that way.”
- “You are not going crazy.”
- “You are not the first person to feel this way.”
- “That is not uncommon after a tragedy.”
- “Others have reported similar thoughts and feelings.”
- “After a tragedy, many people second guess themselves.”
- “You did the right thing by keeping yourself and/or students safe.”
- “I am sorry you had to (hear, see, feel) that.”
- “I’m glad that you are here talking with us now.”
- “Thank you for sharing.”
- “What you are describing is a very normal response to stress.”

CRT Team Member Action Steps and Timeline

Action Steps	CRT Team Member(s) Responsibility	CRT Leader
1. CRT Team is notified of request for crisis support.	CRT Team Members indicate their availability on google doc form.	Individuals are notified of their crisis support virtual hours. CRT Team members are made aware of their partner(s).
2. Gather needed materials. Chart paper if available or use google doc on shared screen setting (white board option), and “Overview of Group Crisis Intervention Process” sheet.	Take attendance. Ask each student to type their name in the chat box. One CRT Team member will type up the information in a google sheet. See example. Send attendance sheet and notes to CRT Leader upon conclusion of the session.	Share sign-in sheets with counseling director or LEA designated contact upon completion of the session.

<p>3. Establish norms. Begin Nova Group Processing</p>	<p>One CRT member will lead the questioning and processing, the other will write the students thoughts down. Review scripts to ensure which person is responsible for each section.</p>	<p>Available as much as possible throughout each group debrief.</p>
<p>4. Discuss ways to continue processing.</p>	<p>Add any notes to the attendance sheet.</p>	<p>Submit attendance and notes to Counseling Director or designated LEA contact.</p>