

"The most effective, timely information on helping young people. Intended for schools, institutions and home."

Dr. Mayer's Memo

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The Newtown Tragedy—What to tell the kids

(This applies to young people age 5 thru 18)

FEEL FREE TO PASS THIS MEMO TO ANOTHER IN ITS ENTIRETY.

New Reader?

To get on the email list for these Memos, send Dr.Mayer an email. There is no charge for this resource.

Caring and commitment through excellence.

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Please visit my web site for more information and back copies of Mayer's Memo:

www.DrJohnMayer.com

Dr. Mayer is available to personally care for troubled youth and families, crisis calls, consultations, and presentations.

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Don't Ignore the Incident

Not mentioning this national tragedy implies a message to them that you are afraid of it-therefore they are unsafe. I suggest a simple statement in the daily announcements stating your sympathy, ask for a moment of silence or if a religious based school, lead a prayer.

All Staff~Don't Spin Theories, Speculate or State Anything that isn't FACT.

It is Ok to talk about this in the classrooms or your home, but instruct your staff to stick only to facts you may know. (Distribute this Memo to all of your staff.) Theories, speculations and exaggerations stir up emotions and lead to wild rumors that will spread fear, even in places far away from the incident. Safety and respect from young people comes more from saying, "I don't have the facts on that." than trying to be a pseudo expert on the tragedy.

Don't Flood Your School with Outside Professionals~Counselors~Therapists, etc.

Unless you are in the immediate area of the incident, bringing in outside counselor teams stirs up more hysteria than calm. Your own counselors, faculty and staff are the most important agents of help. *The only utility to ever bring in outside counselors, crisis teams, is when the number of students to attend to is so overwhelming that your staff can't handle the numbers.* Keeping all help coming from your school's staff is the most therapeutic message of safety and calm that you can provide for your school. Keeping resources for the students internal is a strong message that this school is in control and safe, you can handle your own problems. This is a message of safety to the kids. If you staff needs supervision on how to conduct themselves, let outside professionals be advisors to your staff, but the faces your students should see should be the people they live and work with everyday. There are no better helpers. (I am also here to advise you and your staff. My email/phone is on this Memo.)

Define Terms that Kids will Hear in the Media

Young people will be hearing terms thrown around in the media such as Psychopathic, Asperger's, Autism, Dissociative Disorder, Sociopathic, etc. You can help kids by explaining these terms and again not speculating or stating anything but the facts. There are students in you schools that have been labeled with these terms it can be devastating to be compared to a murderer.

Keep up with Normal School and Home Activities

Departing from normal activities shouts that there is something wrong = unsafe.

Make Sure You Announce that Your Counseling Office is Available to Students

Students should be allowed to visit the counseling offices when they need, but be patient. Young people defend themselves from pain and anxiety by our old friend~Denial~and that's Ok. If your student body doesn't talk about this, don't increase the visits to the counselors, don't press them to talk and face fears. Poorly trained, inexperienced advisors will try to tell you that kids "need to talk about this." That is advice is wrong as long as you are doing all of the above.

Need Advice

Need advice contact me. I'll help direct your efforts as you face the kids.

Pass this Memo along to Parents, it not only applies, but lets them know you are prepared.