



etb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Mhaigh Eo, Shligigh agus Liatroma
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board

MSLETB

CRITICAL INCIDENT

MANAGEMENT PLAN

(Adopted by North Connaught College)

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Abbreviations:

CIP = Critical Incident Plan

CIMT = Critical Incident Management Team

Introduction

Introduction to the Plan

This plan has been developed by MSLETB Adult Education Services. The policy is intended to be a summary. This is a working document and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Definitions

A Critical Incident is an occurrence which is outside a person's normal range of experiences. The objective of the Critical Incident Plan is to provide support to the centre community and to restore the centre to normal functioning. It identifies the steps that must be undertaken in the event of a Critical Incident in the centre or connected community.

Examples of Incidents that could affect centres

- The death of learners or members of staff through natural causes such as illness, an accident, by a deliberate act of violence, or by suicide
- A fire or explosion in a centre
- Deaths or injuries on centre outings
- Outbreak of a communicable illness or disease
- Threats of harm to learners, personnel or facilities
- An accident/ tragedy in the wider community

Many of these incidents will require an interagency response involving law enforcement and/or emergency services agencies.

Knowing what to do in the case of an incident will minimise the chaos, rumours, and the impact of the event on the centre community.

Dealing with the aftermath of a sudden death, suicide or suspected suicide

The term 'suicide' should not be used until it has been "established categorically that the learner's or tutor's death was as a result of suicide". The phrases such as 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead.

1. The Team Leader or designated staff member should contact the family and acknowledge grief and loss. Two staff members should visit the home and consult regarding support from the centre.

2. Brief all staff and help tutors deal with telling learners. Have copies of the ***Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools*** available. Ensure there is a quiet place available for learners/staff.
3. Give learners facts as they are known, advise them of support available and take any talk of suicide seriously.
4. Note indicators of High Risk Learners.

Pre-Incident Planning

Pre-incident education is vital; this gives staff a resource to draw upon in the aftermath of a critical incident.

Setting up the CIMT

- Set up a Critical Incident Management Team. (CIMT)
- Roles must be assigned to each member of the CIMT. Responsibilities attached to the various roles should be clearly outlined. Staff members need to be comfortable with their designated tasks. ***See Appendix A.***
- Make plans for the team to meet annually to update and review the plan.

Administrative Tasks

- Maintain an up-to-date list of contact telephone numbers. Agreement should be reached about where lists will be kept. All lists should be dated and responsibility for updating at agreed intervals should be clearly assigned. Telephone numbers should be available for:
 - Learners
 - Parents/guardians
 - Staff members
 - Emergency Contact List This should be displayed in the staff room, the centre office and the Team Leader's office. ***See Appendix B.***
- Identify a dedicated telephone line, which will be kept free for important outgoing and incoming calls.
- Designate a point where a log of events and telephone calls made and received will be kept.
- Prepare templates for letters to parents (where applicable) and templates for press releases. These should be 'ready-to-go' and on the centre computer system so that they can be adapted quickly when an incident occurs. ***See Appendix C and Appendix D.***
- A single page information sheet on normal reactions to an abnormal event should be referred to. ***See Appendix E.***
- Establish contact with a senior member of the local Garda. This will provide a source of verifiable accurate information.
- Ensure that there is an updated list of learners who may need assistance during an evacuation. ***See Appendix F.***

Communication of the Plan

- Once prepared, all staff and the Adult Education Board ETB should be made aware of the centre's Critical Incident Plan.

Designated Specific Locations

- Specific locations must be designated to include:
 - Place/s of assembly
 - Counselling room
 - Quiet room
 - Co-ordination room *See Appendix G*
- A co-ordination room for the core Critical Incident Team which will act as a single point of contact for visiting agencies
- Consideration should be given to the possibility that an alternative temporary location for the centre may be necessary in the event that the centre was damaged or was being investigated by authorities as a "scene" of "interest"

Response Level

A classification of response levels is proposed, which is linked to a number of factors impacting on the situation. *This classification in no way diminishes the seriousness of any particular event.*

Step 1: What type of response is needed?

Response Level 1: the death of a learner or staff member who was terminally ill, the death of parent/sibling; a fire in centre not resulting in serious injury/serious damage to centre property

Response Level 2: the sudden death of a learner or staff member

Response Level 3: incident: an accident/event involving a number of learners; a violent death; an incident with a high media profile or involving a number of centres

Step 2: Should a psychologist/counsellor be involved?

Consider the nature of the event and how your centre is coping. Consider what support is needed from psychologists/counsellors and/or other agencies.

Step 3: How do we assess the needs of the centre?

- Is there a feeling of being overwhelmed by this event?
- Has there been a previous incident? How recent, what kind of incident? If more than one, how many? (If the centre has experienced a recent incident or a number of incidents staff may be exhausted or distressed. On the other hand, they may feel more experienced and better able to deal with the situation).

- Is there a critical incident plan/management team in place?
- Is there significant media interest in the incident?
- Are other agencies already involved?

Step 4: What action do we take?

- For an incident requiring a Level 1 response it may be appropriate to contact counselling/psychological services on the phone. Refer to your *Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools*. The psychologist will refer to these and talk the relevant people through relevant sections.
- Access the guidelines on College Intranet. (Sharepoint)
- In the case of an incident requiring a Level 2 and Level 3 Response, make contact with psychological/counselling services.
- Consider calling the emergency services, e.g. Gardaí, etc.

Roles of the members of the CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team)

Role of the Team Leader/Adult Education Officer

- Determine whether it is necessary to activate the Critical Incident Plan.
- Gather accurate information:
 - What happened?
 - Where did it happen?
 - When did it happen?
 - What is the extent of injuries?
 - How many were involved?
 - What agencies have been contacted already?
- Convene and chair a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).
- Contact and inform BOM and MSLETB.
- Contact outside agencies as required.
- Brief staff on a need to know basis at the earliest opportunity and keep them informed of developments as appropriate.
- Make contact with the bereaved family (respect wishes of family).
- Agree a specific time and location for media briefings (if required). The Critical Incident Management Team Leader/Adult Education Director will deliver all statements to the news and media

- Ensure that the centre runs as normally as possible.
- Access relevant training for the CIMT on an ongoing basis.
- Allow time for the CIMT to review and update the Plan.
- In the absence of The Team Leader, The Deputy Team Leader carries out the role of The Team Leader. The Deputy Team Leader's role is delegated to a Senior Staff Member. *See Appendix H.*

Role of the Deputy Team Leader

- See that the centre is running as normally as possible.
- Make rooms available for counsellors, chaplains, parents, public and others. *See Appendix G.*
- Free up tutors who are:
 - Members of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)
 - Assisting with the work of the CIMT
 - Directly affected by the situation
- Know what is happening.
- Know where it is happening.
- Follow normal centre routine as much as possible.
- Organise for supervision of learners, where applicable.
- Contact parents of all learners, where applicable.
- Carry out regular Critical Incident Drills and Evacuation Drills.
- In the absence of The Deputy Team Leader, a Senior Staff Member carries out the role of the Deputy Team Leader. *See Appendix H.*

Role of the Critical Incident Administrator

- The Critical Incident Administrator works closely with the tutors in order to identify specific needs within the centre.
- The Administrator liaises with the Deputy Team Leader to relay information to all staff regarding:

- Extra classrooms
 - Changes in classrooms
 - Changes in tutors
 - Extra classroom support e.g. additional staff classroom or suspension of normal class activities.
- The Administrator meets with the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to assess the extent of the initial /immediate centre response.
 - The Administrator meets with the relevant tutors throughout the day, keeping them informed of all decisions that affect them.
 - Staff queries, concerns and suggestions are communicated to the CIMT through the Administrator.

The Administrator, under direction from the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader, is responsible for organising and overseeing communications to learners regarding the Critical Incident.

Role of the Psychological/Counselling Services (where applicable)

- Provide advice and guidance on the best way to implement the CIP in relation to the specific incidents.
- Assist the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader in informing and providing assistance to the tutors and Centre heads in the case of an incident.
- Work with the other members of the CIMT to ensure all staff are aware of the Critical Incident Plan.
- Attend meetings of the CIMT to ensure all team members are fully informed and clear about their responsibilities in implementation the Crisis Management Plan.
- Contact and liaise with the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader.

Role of the Pastoral Care Representatives (Care Team)

- Provide advice and guidance on the best way to implement the CIP in relation to the specific incidents.
- Assist the Administrator in informing and providing assistance to the tutors and centre heads in the case of an incident.
- Engage in ongoing research and evaluation to identify best practice in Critical Incident Response Strategies within the centre.

- Work with the other members of the CIMT to ensure all staff are aware of the Critical Incident Plan.
- Attend meetings of the CIMT to ensure all team members are fully informed and clear about their responsibilities in implementation the Plan.
- Assist in accessing support / guidance from outside agencies.
- Liaise and meet with Student Council (where applicable) to assess learners' needs.

Role of the Centre Secretary

- Deal with enquiries from parents/family members and public and forward all relevant information to the Team Leader.
- Accommodate parents and public who arrive at centre. (where applicable)
- The CIMT team will prepare script for the secretary to handle enquiries from parents/family members and the general public.
- Inform the Deputy Team Leader of all people arriving at the centre.
- Log all phone calls to the centre.
- Log all callers to the centre.

Role of the Caretaker

- In an emergency, survey damage and structural stability of the building and utilities and report to the Team Leader.
- Work with members of the CIMT, opening and locking rooms as required.
- Be aware of all utility lines in or near the centre.
- Turn off utility mains if necessary.

Role of the Board of Management

- Members of the Board of Management will be kept informed of all developments related to the Critical Incident.
- Roles will include:
 - Offering condolences to family on behalf of the centre

- Attending the funeral services on behalf of the centre

What To Do

First 24 Hours

- Inform the Principal/Adult Education Officer immediately in the event of a Critical Incident.
- Convene a meeting with key staff/Critical Incident Management Team. Depending on the incident, it is advisable to arrange an evening or early morning meeting to ensure that the team is well prepared and has a plan in place for the centre day ahead.
- Contact appropriate agencies. (see centre's Emergency Contact List – **See Appendix B**)
- Establish the facts - What has happened, when it happened, how it happened; the number and names of learners and staff involved, are there other centres involved; the extent of the injuries; and the location of those injured.
- Refer to **Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools** (available on College Sharepoint in Forms & Templates – Useful Documents (folder))
- Contact parents/guardians, where applicable.
- Brief all staff, giving necessary information relating to the Critical Incident.
- As applicable, inform all learners.
- Make contact with the bereaved family.
- Deal with learners as they arrive to the centre.
- Telephone parents, where applicable.
- Assess whether the centre remains open for anyone wishing to attend and be with their friends especially over weekend period.
- The Care Team Leader will call the Care Team.
- In the event of the Critical Incident occurring in the centre, the Staff Care team members/members of the CIMT will be allocated to direct all learners to a designated assembly point and to remain there until told otherwise. Every effort must be made to ensure that learners are kept calm and informed truthfully about what is happening. Learners are to be kept away from the incident area above all else.
- Emphasise to learners and parents (where applicable) the sensitive nature of the incident and the importance of not discussing the incident until family members of the victim have been informed.

- Arrange phone duties. Phone duties should be rotated, a maximum of one hour is ideal. This is one of the most stressful and difficult tasks and should not be undertaken lightly.

First 48 Hours

The following actions are advisable:

- Meeting with the CIMT and other agencies
- The Team Leader usually conducts the meeting.

Suggested Agenda:

- Review what has been done to date.
- Review the schedule for the day. List tasks for the day and assign roles, media, contact with bereaved family, attendance and participation in the funeral service.
- Make a decision about centre closure. Plan for the reintegration for learners and staff (e.g. absentees, injured, siblings, close relatives, etc.)
- Agree arrangements for dealing with normal centre business.
- The Team Leader outlines the schedule for the day and updates staff on any information from the family, funeral arrangements, etc.
- List points to be addressed by the Team Leader at the staff meeting.
- Go through the list of learners and staff who may be vulnerable and review how they are doing.
- Develop a plan for monitoring learners over the next few weeks, especially those identified as vulnerable.
- Arrange support for individual students, groups of students and parents if necessary.
- Where applicable, consult psychological/counselling services. Use the template for requesting consent for Involvement of Outside Professionals. *See Appendix I.*
- Inform all staff.
- A representative from another agency may address the staff if appropriate.
- Plan visits for the injured.

- Liaise with family regarding any funeral/memorial service, including attendance and participation.
- Ensure that specific locations are designated and available, e.g. places of assembly, counselling rooms, quiet rooms and a co-ordination room. **See Appendix G.**
- Ensure that all members of the CIMT, staff and learners are aware that all media queries should be referred to the Team Leader/Adult Education Officer.
- The Care Team will meet (where applicable) and assign roles and duties as applicable. *See Appendix J for suggestions for Care Team steps.*

Agendas and minutes of meetings must be recorded, including specified actions and decisions made.

Longer term actions

- Monitor learners for signs of continuing distress.
- Evaluate response to the incident and amend the Critical Incidents Management Plan appropriately.
- Review the Critical Incident Plan for the future.
- Inform new staff/new learners affected by Critical Incidents where appropriate.
- Devise a system to diarise anniversaries, epical days, events, etc.

Medias Do's & Don'ts

The Team Leader/Adult education officer is the Designated Person to deal with all Media enquiries. All media enquiries should be referred to the Centre Office for the attention of the Team Leader/Adult Education Officer/Director. The template for a press release can be used. *See Appendix D.*

Tips for Working with the Media:

DON'T

- DON'T try to keep the media out or "kill" a story.
- DON'T say "no comment".
- DON'T adlib.
- DON'T speak "off the record".
- DON'T speculate.

- DON'T try to cover-up or blame anyone for anything.
- DON'T repeat negative/misleading words.
- DON'T play favourites among media.

DO

- Emphasise your good record.
- Be accurate and co-operate as best you can.
- Be prepared for and prepare in advance a response to questions which might:
 - violate confidentiality
 - hinder any police investigation.
- Insist that reporters respect the privacy rights of your learners and staff.
- Speak to reporters in plain English.
- When asked a question and you don't know the answer, say so, then offer to find out and call the reporter back.

Debriefing

Dealing with a critical incident can cause a great deal of stress. Members of the Critical Incident Management Team and other staff affected by an incident will be given the opportunity to debrief. Debriefing is an opportunity for staff to express feelings and receive professional emotional support, where applicable.

Signed Dara Mulvey

Date 14/10/2021

Chairperson, Board of Management

Review Date Academic Year 2023-2024

Appendices

Appendix A - Critical Incident Response Team & Replacements of absent CIMT members

Critical Incident Response Team		Replacements
Team Leader / Centre Head	James Hardiman (086) 4611905	
Deputy Team Leader / Deputy Centre Head	Deirdre O'Connor (086) 1272627 (087) 3538636	
Critical Incident Administrator	Fiona Morrisroe (087) 2223148	Patricia O'Reilly (086) 3043842 Patricia Hurley (086) 8062406
Board of Management Reps	Patricia O'Reilly (086)3043842	Maura Brennan (085) 1027431
Guidance Counsellors	Hugh Ward (086) 8268807	
Care Team Leader	Deirdre O'Connor	
Pastoral Care / Care Team	Laura Rainey (087) 7834352	Maura Brennan (085)1027431 Gabrielle McSharry (087) 9523777
Centre Secretary	Dolores Hannon – not on team (Administration team to assist)	
Centre Caretaker	Michael Kellegher – not on team (Team Leader & Deputy Team Leader to assist)	

Appendix B - North Connaught College Emergency Contact List Sept 2021

Name / Title	Phone number 1	Phone Number 2
Gardaí:		
Sligo (Pearse Road)	071-9157000	
Easkey	096-49002	
Tubbercurry	071-9185002	
Ballymote	071-9183333	
Grange	071-9163144	
Riverstown	071-9165122	
Ambulance / Fire brigade	999 or 112	
MSLETB Quay St.	071-9194800	
Sligo General Hospital	071-9171111	
Chairman of the Board of Management	087 6885050 Cllr. Dara Mulvey	
Local Clergy	071-9185049 Fr. Vincent Sherlock 087 2424253	
DES – Communications Unit	094-9286620 Tom Grady	
Psychologist/Counsellor	076-1108701 NEPS Alan Gregory	
TUI	01-4922588	
<u>Local Counselling Services</u>		
Aware	1800-804848	
The Samaritans	116123	
Barnardos	01-4530355	
Childline	1800-666666	
Parentline	1890-927277	
Suicide Resource Officer	087-3680423 Tomas McBride 071-9135098	
Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officer	085-2538638 Leanne Brennan	
www.bereavementireland.org		
Pieta House Outreach Centre	0818111126 Text HELP 51444 Freephone 1800247247	

Counselling Services

Private Practice

Jenny Deane, The Quay, Westport	085-1532284
Mary McHugh, Spencer St., Castlebar and Achill	086-0709843
Laura Coleman, Claremorris	0872073885
Castlebar Counselling & Therapy Centre	0949028746
Knock Counselling & Support Service for Young People	094-9375032

Other Supports

Mary Kilroy Community Development Outreach Officer Tubbercurry FRC	0719186926
HSE Psychology, Castlebar	094-9042281
The Family Life Centre, Castlebar	094-9025900
The Woman's Support Service, Castlebar	094-9025409 094-9027517 087-6569672

Mayo Well-being and Mental Health Support Services – website
www.mayobewell.ie

Mayo Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service, Family Centre, Chapel St.,
Castlebar, Co. Mayo –
Tel. 0949025900 Mobile: 087217286

Appendix C - Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians (Youthreach centres)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

North Connaught College of Further Education has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our learners/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help your son/daughter cope with this tragedy. We have a Pastoral Care Team in the College who are available to meet with you at any time and we also have access to support services in Sligo.

It is possible that your son/daughter may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your son/daughter by taking time to listen to him/her and encouraging him/her to express his/her feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at the College: James Hardiman, Principal (086) 4611905, Deirdre O'Connor, Deputy Principal (086) 1272627, Dolores Hannon, College secretary (071) 9185035

James Hardiman
Principal
North Connaught College of Further Education
Tubbercurry
Co. Sligo F91X883

Appendix C - Sample Letter to Students

Dear Students,

North Connaught College of Further Education has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our learners/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost)

We have support structures in place to help you cope with this tragedy. We have a Pastoral Care Team in the College who are available to meet with you at any time and we also have access to support services in Sligo.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at the College: James Hardiman , Principal (086) 4611905, Deirdre O'Connor, Deputy Principal (086) 1272627, Dolores Hannon, College secretary (071) 9185035

James Hardiman
Principal
North Connaught College of Further Education
Tubbercurry
Co. Sligo F91X883

Appendix D Template for press release

My name is _____ and I am the Principal of North Connaught College of Further Education. We learned this morning of the death of (*one of our students or Name of student*). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family(ies), our College and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with (*Name*) family and friends.

Name of student/students was a (?????) and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our school have implemented our Critical Incident Management Plan.

The teachers have been helping students to deal with the tragic event.

The school has been open to students, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance.

We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

Appendix E – Normal Reactions to a Critical Incident

Each individual has his/her own way of dealing with feelings, loss and tragedy. There is no right or wrong way to react to an incident and any or all of the following can be experienced.

Feelings:

- Fear
- Guilt
- Shame
- Anger
- Regret
- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Shock
- Yearning
- Numbness
- Isolation
- Disbelief
- Denial

Possible reactions to these feelings:

- Physical tiredness
- Sleeplessness
- Headaches
- Bowel/Bladder problems
- Loss or increase in appetite
- Nightmares
- Over dependency
- Social withdrawal
- Different behavior
- Mood swings
- Forgetfulness
- Irritability
- Tearfulness
- Insecure feelings
- Separation anxiety
- Absenteeism
- Physical/verbal aggression
- Misuse of drugs, alcohol
- Sense of unreality
- Preoccupation with images of the event

Appendix F Learners needing assistance during an evacuation (N/A 2019-2020) (N/A 2020-2021) (N/A 2021 – 2022)

Name	Class/Group	Type of assistance needed

Appendix G –Designated specific locations

Specific Locations	
Place of assembly	Canteen Teach Laighne
Counselling room	Principals Office Deputy Principals Office Room beside Canteen
Quiet room	Room 5
Co-ordination room	Secretarys Office Principals Office

Appendix H Sample letter requesting consent for Involvement of Outside Professionals

(Address of centre)

Letter to Parents.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Following the recent (illness, tragedy, death of X) we have arranged professional support for learners who need particular help. (Y) is available to help us with this work.

This support will usually consist of talking to learners, whether in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son/daughter has been identified as one the learners who would benefit from meeting with the counsellor or psychologist.

If you would like your son/daughter to receive this support, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by.....

Yours sincerely.

.....
I/We consent to having our son/daughter meet with

I understand that my son/daughter may meet in an individual/or group session, depending on the arrangements that are thought most appropriate.

Name of Learner: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix I – Suggestions for Care Team Steps

Day 1

Care Team Leader to inform all Care Team Members

Day 2

Staff Care Team Meeting

Assist the CMIT with the following:

- Providing any updated information.
- Planning the day
- Dealing with issues such as transport, arrangements etc.
- Printing out any decisions and tasks and distributing to the staff team
- Providing on-going support to staff, learners and their families
- Meeting with the counsellor at the end of day

Day 3

Staff Care Team Meeting

Assist the CMIT with the following:

- Planning the day
- Reintroducing the routine
- Providing on-going support and monitor all learners for the weeks/months ahead
- Being aware of the four-week timeframe and keeping watch for learners still displaying a need for help and referring all such learners to the CMIT.

