RISE Permian Basin

MISSION STATEMENT:

to create a framework that supports a long-term commitment to promote healing and growth for the whole community.
Families and school personnel play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and security for children after an act of violence occurs. Follow these key reminders and visit www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence to learn more.

**Reaffirm Safety**
Emphasize that schools are very safe. Let children speak about their feelings and validate all reactions to the event. Support the appropriate expression of their feelings and help to put them in perspective.

**Make Time to Talk**
Let children’s questions guide the information provided. Be patient and look for clues that a child wants to talk. Young children may need concrete activities (e.g., imaginative play) and some older children may prefer writing or playing music.

**Keep Explanations Developmentally Appropriate**
- **Early Elementary**
  Provide simple information balanced by assurance of safety.
- **Upper Elementary & Early Middle**
  Answer questions and assist in separating reality from fantasy.
- **Upper Middle & High**
  Emphasize student role in safety & how to access support.

**Review Safety Procedures**
Help children identify one adult at school and in the community that they can go to if they feel threatened or at risk. Review procedures and safeguards in school and home settings.

**Observe Children’s Emotional State**
Some will not express themselves verbally but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress. Seek help from a mental health professional for those with more intense reactions.

**Maintain a Normal Routine**
Keep a regular schedule to assure and promote physical and mental health. Encourage maintenance of school work and extracurricular activities but do not push children if they seem overwhelmed. Limit TV exposure.
Talking to Kids about Violence and Tragedy

If your child seems reluctant to talk, but you believe she is upset, you can do any of the following depending on what you think she would respond best to:

- Older children can keep a journal. If they seem very upset, suggest that they record their reactions and feelings about what happened. They can then talk to you about what they wrote, if they want to.
- Younger children can draw pictures. They can talk about what they drew or they can act out how they are feeling with puppets. You can read aloud from children’s books about difficult situations that the main characters have dealt with and survived.
- Find ways to become involved in helping activities. For example, you and your children can provide aid to victims or do fundraising to lessen feelings of isolation, helplessness and powerlessness.
- Talk to other adults about your feelings. Do not burden or overwhelm your children. When you get your needs met, then you can be available to care for your children’s needs.

Tips

- Do not minimize your child’s fears and concerns. The anxiety and any symptoms expressing it is a way for him to tell you that he feels sad, scared, helpless, etc.
- It is okay if your children get upset. When they talk about scary or disturbing things, you can then reassure them and help them to feel safe and secure.
- Use physical contact, embracing, hugging, talking to him, and accept regressive behaviors. This behavior will subside when he feels safe again.
- Help your child talk about the crisis. Let her know it is normal to feel worried or upset. Listen carefully to understand what she is really trying to say. Help her use words to describe her feelings, like “angry,” “sad,” “scared, etc. Putting their thoughts and experiences into words give children a sense of control.

If your Children Ask Questions about Safety

- Provide reassurance Often they want to know that their immediate world of family and friends are safe now. The amount of detail about security in the broader world that children will find useful will depend on their age.
- Before responding, ask what your children’s ideas are. Then you can address the details of their concerns.

Take any comments about suicide or wishing to die seriously—even those said by children and adolescents. Even if you do not believe your family member or friend will attempt suicide, the person is in distress and can benefit from your help in finding treatment.
Common Responses to Trauma For Children

Children age five and younger may:
• Cling to parents or caregivers.
• Cry and be tearful.
• Have tantrums and be irritable.
• Complain of physical problems such as stomachaches or headaches.
• Suddenly return to behaviors such as bed-wetting and thumb-sucking.
• Show increased fearfulness (for example, of the dark, monsters, or being alone).
• Incorporate aspects of the traumatic event into imaginary play.

Children age six to 11 may:
• Have problems in school.
• Isolate themselves from family and friends.
• Have nightmares, refuse to go to bed, or experience other sleep problems.
• Become irritable, angry, or disruptive.
• Be unable to concentrate.
• Complain of physical problems such as stomachaches and headaches.
• Develop unfounded fears.
• Lose interest in fun activities.

Adolescents age 12 to 17 may:
• Have nightmares or other sleep problems.
• Avoid reminders of the event.
• Use or abuse drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
• Be disruptive or disrespectful or behave destructively.
• Complain of physical problems such as stomachaches and headaches.
• Become isolated from friends and family.
• Be angry or resentful.
• Lose interest in fun activities.

In addition, children and adolescents may feel guilty for not preventing injury or deaths. They also may have thoughts of revenge. Many of these are normal and expected early responses, which for most people will lessen with time. If they last for more than a month, contact a mental health professional.

Some symptoms require immediate emergency care. If you or someone you know is thinking about harming themselves or attempting suicide, seek help right away:
• Call your doctor.
• Call 911 for emergency services or go to the nearest emergency room.
• Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a 24-hour toll-free hotline, at 800-273-TALK (8255). The Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Disaster Distress Helpline provides crisis counseling (24 hours a day, 365 days a year) for those experiencing emotional distress due to natural or human-made disasters. This service is provided in more than 100 languages and is confidential. To contact the helpline:
• Call 800-985-5990. Spanish speakers can call 800-985-5990 and press 2.
• Text “TalkWithUs” to 66746. Spanish speakers in the continental United States can text “Hablanos” to 66746.
• Visit Disaster Distress Helpline’s website.

LOCAL RESOURCES:

www.unitedpermianbasin.net/services

Centers for Children and Families 432-580-7006
Harmony Home  432-333-5233
Odessa College 432-335-6121
PermiaCare  1-844-620-3964
Samaritan Counseling Center  432-563-4144
UTPB Counseling Center 432-552-2150
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT:</th>
<th>YOU CAN HELP ME WHEN YOU:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I may feel sad, scared, empty, or numb but be embarrassed to show my true feelings. Yet, I may say too much on social media.</td>
<td>1. Say that it is painful when someone you care about dies. Talk about your own feelings and invite me to talk about mine once I’m ready. Discuss sharing things on social media. Offer to find me a counselor if it seems easier for me to talk to someone outside the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I might have behavior problems that are new or worse than before the trauma (angry outbursts, irritability, rule breaking, revenge seeking). I may be doing serious, unsafe, or harmful behaviors (self-injury, risky sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use).</td>
<td>2. Have patience and try to remain calm while setting appropriate limits on behaviors. Encourage me to get back to routines and activities with friends. For serious, risky, or harmful behaviors, get professional help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have trouble concentrating and paying attention or have a change in sleep patterns, such as staying up later or sleeping in all day.</td>
<td>3. Realize that I may be having scary thoughts about the trauma and not tell you. Talk with me about ways to cope with these, like getting back to enjoyable activities or listening to calming music. Taking a technology break at night will help me to sleep better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have physical reactions like jumpiness, stomach aches, headaches, a pounding heart, or body aches. These may be worse after being around people, places, sounds, situations or other things that remind him of the trauma or the person who died</td>
<td>4. Recognize that I may minimize these physical reactions—or do the opposite—exaggerate a minor ailment or injury. Encourage me to use physical activities to release tension or try relaxing things, like deep breathing or gentle stretching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I may think that life is meaningless, feel guilty for being okay, or withdraw from family and friends—yet retreat to social media or gaming.</td>
<td>5. Discuss solutions for feeling sad and mention that, while social media can be helpful, I may feel better seeing friends in person. Check with other adults I may confide in to discuss ways to support me. If I seem very sad or guilty, seek professional help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Sometimes I wonder if something bad will happen to me or that other important people in my life. I may express this by appearing anxious or worried or seeming not to care about the future (not studying, skipping school), or risk-taking behavior.</td>
<td>6. Help me develop a realistic picture of the dangers in life. Talk about ways for me to take control of my safety and future (e.g. driving carefully, eating well and exercising, asking others for help).</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I may talk about feeling responsible for the death.</td>
<td>7. Give honest, accurate, and age-appropriate information. Teens get information from all kinds of media, so let me know you will always tell me the truth. If I feel responsible, reassure me to not worry; that I did the best I could at the time.</td>
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<td>8. Sometimes I might not want to talk about the person who died. I may try to change or reject the topic (“leave me alone”), or shrug it off. I may hide my discomfort and act as if nothing bothers me or as if I’m doing fine.</td>
<td>8. Realize that I may think that talking about the trauma or the person who died will upset you. Even if you feel rejected, do stay involved with me and know where I am and what I’m doing. I need your presence more than ever.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I might refuse to go places or do things that remind me of the person who died, or of how my life has changed since the person died.</td>
<td>9. Understand that I may be overwhelmed by upsetting feelings, but want to look strong or act as if nothing is wrong. This may be a sign of traumatic grief, and a professional can help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I may not want to talk about or remember good things about the person who died because it brings up reminders of the traumatic death.</td>
<td>10. Keep pictures of the person who died around for me to see. Tell me stories about the person and make me a memory book so I can keep the person in my mind and my heart.</td>
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If any of these problems get in the way of your teen’s functioning at school or home, or continue more than 1-2 months, get help from a mental health professional who has experience treating children and teens with trauma or traumatic grief.
Common Responses to Trauma

Initial reactions to trauma can include exhaustion, confusion, sadness, anxiety, agitation, numbness, dissociation, confusion, physical arousal, and blunted affect. Most responses are normal in that they affect most survivors and are socially acceptable, psychologically effective, and self-limited. Indicators of more severe responses include continuous distress without periods of relative calm or rest, severe dissociation symptoms, and intense intrusive recollections that continue despite a return to safety. Delayed responses to trauma can include persistent fatigue, sleep disorders, nightmares, fear of recurrence, anxiety focused on flashbacks, depression, and avoidance of emotions, sensations, or activities that are associated with the trauma, even remotely.

The emotional toll from a traumatic event can cause intense, confusing, and frightening emotions. And these emotions aren’t limited to the people who experienced the event. Round-the-clock news coverage means that we’re all bombarded with horrific images from natural disasters, violent crimes, and terrorist attacks almost the instant they occur anywhere in the world. Repeated exposure can trigger traumatic stress and leave you feeling hopeless and helpless. Whether you were directly involved in the traumatic event or exposed to it after the fact, there are steps you can take to recover your emotional equilibrium and regain control of your life.

What is traumatic stress?

Traumatic stress is a normal reaction to a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, motor vehicle accident, plane crash, violent crime, or terrorist attack. Such events are extraordinarily stressful—not just for survivors, but also witnesses and even those repeatedly exposed to the horrific images of the traumatic event circulated on social media and news sources.

Resilient Responses to Trauma

Many people find healthy ways to cope with, respond to, and heal from trauma. Often, people automatically reevaluate their values and redefine what is important after a trauma. Such resilient responses include:

- Increased bonding with family and community.
- Redefined or increased sense of purpose and meaning.
- Increased commitment to a personal mission.
- Revised priorities.
- Increased charitable giving and volunteerism.

Some symptoms require immediate emergency care. If you or someone you know is thinking about harming themselves or attempting suicide, seek help right away:

- Call your doctor.
- Call 911 for emergency services or go to the nearest emergency room.
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- Visit Disaster Distress Helpline’s website.

For local resources, visit www.unitedpermianbasin.net/services
How to deal with traumatic stress

Usually, the unsettling thoughts and feelings of traumatic stress—as well as any unpleasant physical symptoms—start to fade as life returns to normal over the days or weeks following a traumatic event. However, it’s important to remember that people react in different ways to trauma.

**There is no “right” or “wrong” way to respond.** We’re all different, so don’t tell yourself (or anyone else) what you should be thinking, feeling, or doing.

**Avoid obsessively reliving the traumatic event.** Repetitious thinking or viewing horrific images over and over can overwhelm your nervous system, making it harder to think clearly. Partake in activities that keep your mind occupied (read, watch a movie, cook, play with your kids), so you’re not dedicating all your energy and attention to the traumatic event.

**Ignoring your feelings will slow recovery.** It may seem better in the moment to avoid experiencing your emotions, but they exist whether you’re paying attention to them or not. Even intense feelings will pass if you simply allow yourself to feel what you feel.

**Reestablish routine.** There is comfort in the familiar. After a disaster, getting back—as much as possible—to your normal routine, will help you minimize traumatic stress, anxiety, and hopelessness. Even if your work or school routine is disrupted, you can structure your day with regular times for eating, sleeping, spending time with family, and relaxing.

**Recognize when traumatic stress becomes PTSD.** If your traumatic stress symptoms don’t ease up and your nervous system remains “stuck,” unable to move on from the event for a prolonged period of time, you may be experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

While symptoms of traumatic stress often naturally fade with time, the following tips can assist in the process and help you better come to terms with the traumatic experience.

**Tip 1: Minimize media exposure**  Limit your media exposure to the traumatic event. Try to avoid distressing images and video clips. If coverage makes you feel overwhelmed, take a complete break.

**Tip 2: Accept your feelings**  Don’t try to force the healing process. Be patient with the pace of recovery. Be prepared for difficult and volatile emotions. Allow yourself to feel whatever you’re feeling without judgment or guilt.

**Tip 3: Challenge your sense of helplessness**  Volunteer your time, give blood, donate to a favorite charity, or comfort others. If simply being helpful and friendly to others Connect with others affected by the traumatic event or participate in memorials, events, and other public rituals.

**Tip 4: Get moving**  Exercising can burn off adrenaline and release feel-good endorphins to boost your mood. Add a mindful element by focusing on your body and how it feels as you move. Boost your energy and motivation. Shorter bursts of activity are as beneficial as one longer session.

**Tip 5: Reach out to others**  You don’t have to talk about your traumatic experiences. Expand your social network.

**Tip 6: Make stress reduction a priority**  Relieve stress in the moment. To quickly calm yourself in any situation, simply take 60 breaths, focusing your attention on each “out” breath. Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, or deep breathing to reduce stress, ease anxiety and depression, and improve your sleep. Schedule time for activities that bring you joy. Use your downtime to relax. Get plenty of sleep.

**Tip 7: Eat a healthy diet**

**When to seek treatment for traumatic stress**

Usually, feelings of anxiety, numbness, confusion, guilt, and despair following a disaster or traumatic event will start to fade within a relatively short time. However, if your traumatic stress reaction is so intense and persistent that it’s getting in the way of your ability to function, you may need help from a mental health professional—preferably a trauma specialist.

Traumatic stress red flags include:

- It’s been six weeks, and you’re not feeling any better
- You’ve having trouble functioning at home and work
- You’re experiencing terrifying memories, nightmares, or flashbacks
- You’re having an increasingly difficult time connecting and relating to others
- You’re experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings
- You’re avoiding more and more things that remind you of the disaster or traumatic event

**LOCAL RESOURCES:**

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Secondary Traumatic Stress

Coping with the effects of others’ trauma can be draining and can have lasting negative effects. It is not uncommon for educators who deal with traumatized children to develop their own symptoms of traumatic stress. This is known as secondary traumatic stress.

In order to best serve their students and maintain their own health, educators must be alert to the signs of secondary traumatic stress in themselves and their coworkers. In a trauma-informed school, staff should be encouraged to practice self-care along with other strategies to guard against or heal from the effects of secondary traumatic stress.

Risk Factors & Causes of Secondary Traumatic Stress

Certain circumstances can cause you to be more susceptible to secondary traumatic stress. Seek support and practice self-care to manage the possible effects of these experiences:

- Personal exposure to a traumatic event(s) or to individuals who are coping with their own reactions to trauma
- Direct contact with children’s traumatic stories
- Helping others and neglecting yourself

Signs of Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress can impact all areas of your life. The effects can range from mild to debilitating. If you think you might be at risk, be alert for any of the following symptoms:

- **Emotional** — feeling numb or detached; feeling overwhelmed or maybe even hopeless.
- **Physical** — having low energy or feeling fatigued.
- **Behavioral** — changing your routine or engaging in self-destructive coping mechanisms.
- **Professional** — experiencing low performance of job tasks and responsibilities; feeling low job morale.
- **Cognitive** — experiencing confusion, diminished concentration, and difficulty with decision making; experiencing trauma imagery, which is seeing events over and over again.
- **Spiritual** — questioning the meaning of life or lacking self-satisfaction.
- **Interpersonal** — physically withdrawing or becoming emotionally unavailable to your co-workers or your family.

If you experience any of these symptoms, take steps to manage your secondary traumatic stress.

Managing Secondary Traumatic Stress

Awareness is the key to managing secondary traumatic stress for the organization and for individuals. A school community can share information about the signs of secondary traumatic stress so staff members recognize the signs in themselves and in others.
Regular small group checkins can be an outlet for feelings of frustration and stress. Acknowledgement of the stressful conditions by administration can help educators feel heard.

Individuals can protect against and manage secondary traumatic stress by practicing self-care through regular exercise, a healthy diet, and sufficient sleep. Activities such as yoga or meditation can be helpful in reducing general stress. It is important for staff to take time away from the stress-inducing situation. Spending time with family or friends, or focusing on a project or hobby can help.

Secondary traumatic stress goes beyond regular stress. A counselor can be a resource for strategies to cope with the symptoms and to heal.

**Essential Resources**

- Symptoms of Secondary Traumatic Stress in Staff [quick tip]
- Supporting the Staff at a Trauma-Informed School [quick tip]
- Teachers Helping Teachers With PFA—LPC [quick tip]
- Self Care for Educators [pdf]

**Additional Resources**
Don’t Neglect Your Spiritual Needs.

Our Spiritual beliefs and habits can play a major part in helping our families, communities and ourselves recover from trauma and acts of violence.

The Permian Basin has a wide variety of faith communities that are available. Find one and “Plug-In”.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR SPIRITUAL NEED(S)
   Take a good long look at yourself and your reactions to trauma. How can a faith community help in your healing?

2. SEEK
   Find a faith group that welcomes you and will help you in your journey.

3. PLUG-IN
   Get active, learn, apply and participate. Remember Spiritual healing takes regular, consistent spiritual “exercise”.

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Odessa Ministerial Alliance
Rev. Greg Morris
432-366-5971

Ministerial Alliance of Odessa
Rev. Windsor Archie
903-495-9897

African American Fellowship West Texas
Rev. Quincy Randall
432-210-1990
Contact these agencies for help:

**PermiaCare**
401 East Illinois; Midland TX 79701  
www.permiacare.org  
1-844-420-3964

**Rays of Hope**
900 West Wall Street; Midland TX 79701  
hospiceofmidland.org/rays-of-hope/  
432-684-5437

**Crisis Center of West Texas**
910-B S. Grant; Odessa TX 79761  
ccwtx.org  
Main Phone: 866-627-4747 (Toll Free)

**Centers for Children and Families**
3701 Andrews Hwy; Midland TX 79703  
www.centerstx.org  
Main Phone: 432-580-7006

**Samaritan Counseling (Faith Based)**
10008 Pilot Avenue; Midland Tx 79706  
www.samaritancwtx.org  
Main Phone: 432-563-4144

**Agape Counseling Services of West Texas**
3500 N A St #2400, Midland, TX 79705  
agapewesttexas.org  
432-550-5683

**Midland Rape Crisis & Children’s Advocacy Center**
1700 N Big Spring St, Midland, TX 79701  
www.mrccac.org  
432-682-7273

**Texas Tech Physicians**
701 W. 5th Street; Odessa TX 79763  
www.texastechphysicians.com  
Main Phone: 432-335-2222

**Red Cross**
9601 Wright Dr; Midland TX 79711  
www.redcross.org  
Main Phone: 432-563-2267

**UTPB Counseling Center**
Mesa Building 4171; Odessa Tx  
www.utpb.edu  
432-552-3365

**Oceans Behavioral Health**
3300 FM 1788; Midland TX 79706  
oceanshealthcare.com/permian-basin  
432-561-5915

**High Sky Children’s Ranch**
8613 W County Rd 60; Midland TX 79707  
www.highsky.org  
432-694-7728

**Odessa College**
201 W. University; Odessa, TX 79764  
www.odessa.edu  
432-335-6121

**2-1-1 Texas Permian Basin**
www.211texas.org  
or dial 211

**United Way of Odessa**
128 E. 2nd Street; Odessa TX  
www.unitedwayodessa.org  
432-332-0941

**United Way of Midland**
1209 W. Wall Street; Midland TX  
www.uwmidland.org  
432-685-7700
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
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<td>Temple Beth-El (Jewish)</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Texas Hindu Association</td>
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<td>432-520-4290</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basin Baptist Network</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-210-1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-362-3212</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beit HaDerekh (Messianic Jews)</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-268-3438</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic Diocese of San Angelo Holy Redeemer Parish</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-580-4295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unitarian Universalist Church of Odessa</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-366-7337</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslim Association of West Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-262-6226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jehovah’s Witness Churches</td>
<td></td>
<td>432-363-1914</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahá’ís of Odessa</td>
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<td>1-800-228-6483</td>
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