

# Coping with Crisis

## High School Advocacy Lessons

### Broader Themes: Social and Emotional Learning

#### 5 Lessons, 1 Project

## Coping with Crisis

### Introduction

We often use the word **crisis** to describe an event that creates emotional stress, trauma, difficulty, instability, and/or danger. A person's response to a **crisis** is influenced by many personal and situational factors, which may determine the degree of psychological and emotional impact the **crisis** has on those involved. Students may present a wide array of emotional, social, cognitive, and psychological reactions after experiencing or witnessing natural disasters, accidents, cyberbullying, neglect, or acts of violence. In the aftermath of a **crisis** children may demonstrate one or more common responses to trauma including detachment, depression, guilt, anger, risky behavior, disillusionment, fatigue, headaches, or other physical ailments.

Regardless of our age, traumatic events shake our sense of safety and can fuel chronic anxiety and recurring thoughts that the event may happen again. Resulting stress in the aftermath of a **crisis** impacts physical health, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Children are typically not as equipped as adults to process traumatic events independently and are highly influenced by the reaction of the adults around them. Adults supporting students in times of **crisis** can mitigate the intensity of a student's response by managing their own emotions and thoughts, by responding proactively to protect students from actual dangers that may exist while giving clear directions, and by avoiding intense emotional displays that might increase the likelihood of a panic response from others.

In the aftermath of a **crisis**, caring adults can provide meaningful support and even impact the duration and intensity of a student's response through active listening. Active, empathetic listening where listeners non-verbally and verbally communicate understanding and concern for the student's experience reduces feelings of isolation and counters the withdrawal response. In active listening, adults build trust and provide non-judgmental feedback to help students acknowledge and label their feelings. Active listening and then paraphrasing student language demonstrate that the listener is connecting to the student's experience. Allowing for times of silence can also be a valuable strategy for increasing student awareness of their own thoughts and feelings and allowing space for students to continue talking about their experience.

Many who experience a **crisis** may recover significantly within a few weeks after the traumatic event, especially if they are supported by a caring circle of family and friends, given the opportunity to express their feelings, and are protected from other intense stressors immediately following the **crisis**. However, it is important to remember that intense grief and emotional distress following a **crisis** may overload our natural coping mechanisms, and, in many cases, may require professional, clinical support or intensive interventions to support long-term recovery. A formal school process for identifying and referring students who need additional support following trauma is key to

ensuring all students get the help they need. As schools prepare and plan for this unit, it is recommended that school leaders ensure that all staff members have adequate training to recognize the warning signs of high risk and have access to, and clearly understand, the district and school student referral process and policies.

During this unit, students will explore potential short- and long-term effects of a **crisis**, discuss recovery strategies, consider common reactions to internal and external crises, and brainstorm recovery activities that can be implemented after a troubling event. At the end of the unit, students will collaborate with school administrators and guidance counselors to create an informational Facebook, Slack, or other online learning group as a resource for classmates who may be experiencing or who have experienced a crisis.

An event that is universally experienced is the death of a loved one. According to the National Emergency Response and **Crisis** Management Technical Assistance Center, most children will experience the death of a relative or friend before high school graduation, and five percent of young people will experience the death of a parent by sixteen.<sup>1</sup> These losses and other difficult life events can have a dramatic impact on the direction of a child's life by having a significant and long-term influence on a student's school performance, behavior, social and emotional wellness, physical health, and relationships. Educators have the opportunity to mitigate the negative effects of students' potentially traumatic experiences, and, through caring and personalized support, can contribute to a student's recovery process.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Huston and DiPietro found that most students perceived even the smallest effort by their professors as beneficial to their recovery.<sup>2</sup> The only response that engendered consistently negative feedback from students was when teachers barely acknowledged the occurrence of the event and urged the class to move on without offering strategies for coping or opportunities for discussion. Informed by the research and best practices developed by organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for PTSD, and the American Counseling Association (Links to resources are found on the following page.), teachers can positively impact student's recovery from a **crisis**.

## **Recommendations for Starting Strong**

### **1. Establish a Safe Space**

Because discussions about **crisis** and trauma may serve as emotional triggers for some of your students, it is recommended that you proactively take the following steps to make your classroom a comfortable sharing space:

- Ensure that a high level of familiarity and trust is already established in your Advocacy class. Consider introducing other unit topics before teaching Coping with **Crisis**.
- Inform guidance counselors, school psychologists, and parents/guardians that you will be engaging students in this unit topic. Invite the participation of counselors and psychologists in the lessons.
- Be sensitive to ethnic, racial, and cultural differences when engaging your students in specific case studies.
- Collaboratively draft a set of ground rules or norms with your students to define appropriate behavior

expectations and communication protocols. (Note: this activity is included in the first lesson.)

- Allow students time to reflect and process after each lesson. (Note: time for this is offered through **Reflection Questions** included after each lesson.)
- Be aware that some students may find certain conversations or activities in this unit to be difficult or uncomfortable. Be prepared to support those students with an alternative related task, such as journaling, practicing mindfulness, creating art, playing or listening to music, writing a private letter. Consider making arrangements with another teacher ahead of time in case working in a different classroom is necessary for any student during specific components of this Unit.

## 2. Plan Ahead

The final project of this unit requires your students to develop a Facebook, Slack, or other online learning group for their fellow students who are experiencing a **crisis** or helping others through a **crisis**. Coordinate with the school's administrators and IT team to allow your students access to online platforms during the end-of-unit project.

### Additional Resources

Below are additional resources that teachers can use to expand their understanding of the unit topic.

- "Psychological First Aid Manual - Appendix E: Handouts"  
[http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/manuals/manual-pdf/pfa/PFA\\_Appx\\_E\\_handouts.pdf](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/manuals/manual-pdf/pfa/PFA_Appx_E_handouts.pdf)
- "Skills for Psychological Recovery: Field Operations Guide"  
[http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/manuals/manual-pdf/SPR\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/manuals/manual-pdf/SPR_Manual.pdf)
- "Trauma and Disaster Mental Health"  
<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/trauma-disaster>
- "In the Eye of the Storm: Students' Perceptions of Helpful Faculty Actions Following a Collective Tragedy"  
[https://podnetwork.org/content/uploads/In\\_the\\_Eye.pdf](https://podnetwork.org/content/uploads/In_the_Eye.pdf) "Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters: What Parents Can Do"  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-parents-trifold/index.shtml#pub1>
- "Teaching in Times of **Crisis** "  
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/crisis/>

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Education's Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Assistance Center (2007). Coping with the death of a student or staff member. *Emergency Response and Crisis Management Express*, 3(2), 1-12.

<sup>2</sup>Huston, T. A. & DiPietro, M. (2007). In the eye of the storm: Students' perceptions of helpful faculty actions following a collective tragedy. *To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*, 25, 207-224.

## Lesson 1: Exploring Crisis

**Lesson Focus:** Students will begin this lesson by setting ground rules for classroom engagement during this unit. Then, they will learn about man-made and **natural** crises and discuss responses that people may experience when directly or indirectly facing a **crisis**.

### CASEL Competencies

- **Social awareness:** specifically, *perspective-taking and empathy*
- **Responsible decision-making:** specifically, *identifying problems, evaluating, and reflecting*

### Learning Standards

Students will:

- Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills (ASCA B-SS 1)
- Demonstrate empathy (ASCA B-SS 4)
- Use effectively collaboration and cooperation skills (ASCA B-SS 6)

### Essential Questions

- Is **crisis** a universal human experience?
- Does a **crisis** affect people in the same way?
- How does a **crisis** have the potential to affect people psychologically, physically, emotionally, and behaviorally?

### Key Vocabulary Terms for Students

- **crisis:** An event, time, or condition characterized by emotional stress, trauma, difficulty, instability, and/or danger
- **resilience:** The ability to recover, adapt, and bounce back from adversity, **crisis**, or trauma
- **human-generated crisis:** An intentional or non-intentional **crisis** caused by humans. (e.g., industrial accidents, human conflict, hacking)
- **natural crisis:** A **crisis** happening in nature, that can lead to financial, human, and/or environmental losses. (e.g., floods, landslides, monsoons, forest fires, pandemics)

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define what constitutes a **crisis**.
- List potential psychological effects of experiencing a **crisis**.

### Materials

- Enough whiteboard markers for each student
- A poster or piece of chart paper ready to be taped to the whiteboard

### Time Frame

*Preparation: 3 minutes*

*Instruction: 30 minutes*

### Lesson Preparation (3 minutes)

1. Obtain enough whiteboard markers for every student.
2. Obtain a posterboard or piece of chart paper.



### **Lesson Activator** (10 minutes)

Introduce the unit topic to your students. Inform your class that this unit will delve into potentially traumatic experiences that can be emotionally stressful to talk about, especially for those who have experienced similar events or who are currently recovering from a recent crisis. Tell students that to increase our collective safety and to allow us to speak honestly about difficult situations, they will generate a list of ground rules to ensure everyone is treating each other with kindness, respect, and understanding.

Give students a few minutes to write at least two original ground rules anywhere on the whiteboard (e.g., listen respectfully to one another, don't judge other's stories or reactions, conversations that happen in the classroom stay in the classroom).

Ask each student to vote on three ground rules that he or she finds most appropriate. Have students write one tick mark next to each of their three favorite suggestions.

As two students are calculating and circling the five highest-rated suggestions, tape a poster or piece of chart paper on the whiteboard.

Ask a volunteer with good handwriting to record each elected guideline on the chart paper or poster.

After the top-rated guidelines are recorded, erase the whiteboard. Have a student tape the list somewhere visible within the room.

### **Lesson Procedure** (20 minutes)

#### **1. Write the following definition of 'crisis' on the whiteboard:**

An event, time, or condition characterized by emotional stress, trauma, difficulty, instability, and/or danger (Oxford Dictionary). Read out loud as a class.

#### **2. Write 'Human-Generated Crisis' and 'Natural Crisis' on the board. Write or discuss the following definitions:**

- **Human-generated crisis:** An intentional or non-intentional **crisis** caused by humans (e.g., industrial accidents, human conflict, hacking).
- **Natural crisis:** A **crisis** happening in nature, that can lead to financial, human, and/or environmental losses (e.g., floods, landslides, monsoons, forest fires, pandemics).

#### **3. Write 'Human Responses to Crises' at the top of the board.**

Ask students to name different ways that people might respond to **crisis**. As they share, write their answers on the board (or ask a student volunteer to do so). Responses may include 'negative' things like fear, anxiety, sadness, worry, withdrawal, acting out, decline in academic performance, questioning beliefs, self-harm, extreme anger, drug and alcohol abuse, over- or under-eating, and depression, as well as 'positive' things like developing stronger bonds with loved ones, discovering strengths you didn't know you had, an increase in kindness, generosity, and community care

for one another, a greater capacity for compassion, more clarity on what's most important to you and a realignment of your life based on these priorities, etc.

- 4. Prompt students to think of people indirectly affected by a crisis situation** (e.g., the family and friends of the people impacted by the **crisis**, people who watch an event on the news, individuals who see a connection between themselves and the victims).

Ask students if people who were not present for a **crisis** event can be affected by that event in the same ways as the class just listed. Why or why not? Potential answer: Yes. Even when we have not experienced a **crisis** directly, it's normal to still "feel it" and to have it affect our thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

- 5. Ask students:**

- Is it normal for the same person to experience a mix of responses that may be both positive and negative? *Answer: yes.*
- Do you think your regular coping mechanisms are enough to help you through a time of extreme emotional distress? Explain. *Students may have different opinions on this. Allow and validate all opinions while also communicating that when facing times of extreme emotional distress, it may be wise to seek professional help. While our usual coping mechanisms may help to some extent, crises are not ordinary stressors, so we will often need more than just our usual coping mechanisms in the recovery process. As you discuss this, take care to ensure your words and tone communicate that it's normal and healthy to need and seek mental health support; it's no different from going to a doctor when facing a physical issue.*
- Of the potential responses to **crisis** we listed on the board, which ones might be a sign that recovery might require help from a counselor, physician, or another professional? *Answer: any of the 'negative' responses, especially if they are ongoing, may be a sign that it would be a good idea to seek extra support.*

- 6. Write the following definition of 'resilience' on the board:**

The ability to recover, adapt, and bounce back from adversity, **crisis**, or trauma (Adapted from the APA Dictionary of Psychology). Read out loud as a class.

- 7. Tell students that each of us has a remarkable capacity for resilience, that we can increase our capacity to bounce back from difficulty, and that we can help others to become more resilient too. Cultivating hope, talking through difficult thoughts and feelings with trusted friends and family, avoiding added stressors, and taking good care of your needs for extra sleep and good nutrition can help.**
- 8. Tell students that in an upcoming lesson, strategies for coping with a crisis and helping others through a crisis will be discussed.**

9. Give students the opportunity to process today's lesson by responding to the Reflection Questions below. Have students either stand in a circle facing each other or take turns responding from their seats.

#### Assessment

- While not an **Assessment** per se, each student is responsible for contributing to the whole-class and small-group questions and activities, as well as for answering the **Reflection Questions** at the end. Their responses will constitute how they are assessed on their participation for the lesson.

#### Reflection Questions

- Give a one sentence descriptor of your feelings after today's lesson.
- Give a one sentence answer: Where would you turn for help during or after a **crisis**?

#### Variations/Extensions

- Have students respond to the **Reflection Questions** in writing as an exit slip or journaling activity instead of out loud to the class.

“Fall seven times, stand up eight.”  
- Japanese Proverb



## Lesson 2: Recovery is a Process

**Lesson Focus:** In this lesson, students will learn about the recovery phases people commonly go through after a **crisis**. They will also discuss healthy and unhealthy ways to cope after a **crisis**, as well as helpful and unhelpful ways to offer support to others who are going through or recovering from a **crisis**.

### CASEL Competencies

- **Self-awareness:** specifically, *identifying emotions*
- **Self-management:** specifically, *stress management*
- **Social awareness:** specifically, *empathy and respect for others*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *relationship-building*

### Learning Standards

Students will:

- Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem (ASCA B-SMS 7)
- Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (ASCA B-SMS 10)
- Create positive and supportive relationships with other students (ASCA B-SS 2)
- Demonstrate empathy (ASCA B-SS 4)
- Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment (ASCA B-SS 9)

### Essential Questions

- What is **crisis** recovery?
- How can we support others affected by a **crisis**?

### Key Vocabulary Terms for Students

- **immediate impact:** The time period and experiences directly following a **crisis** event.
- **evaluation:** The stage characterized by **Assessment**.
- **solidarity:** Depending on the **crisis**, this stage is marked by cohesion and potentially community outpouring.
- **feeling fractionated:** The stage in which individuals may examine their values, reevaluate their realities, and search for deeper meaning.
- **anniversary:** A significant moment in time following the crisis event (i.e., the first time you drive after an accident, the first birthday of a person following their death, the one-year **anniversary** of a flood).
- **segregation:** The stage in which people cannot actively participate in their relationships and/or interests,

nor continue to work towards personal goals.

- **integration:** The stage in which people begin again to actively participate in their relationships and/or interests or continue to work towards personal goals.

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand that **crisis** recovery is a process that typically happens in stages.
- Identify common post-**crisis** coping mechanisms.
- Offer appropriate support to others after a **crisis**.

### Materials

- Tape
- Whiteboard markers
- Projector or interactive whiteboard to display **Recovery Stages** document

### Time Frame

*Preparation: 10 minutes*

*Instruction: 30 minutes* (plus 15 minutes for **Assessment**, with option to do **Assessment** as homework).

### Lesson Preparation (10 minutes)

1. Draw a long horizontal timeline on the whiteboard, labeled "**Recovery Stages and Responses**".
2. At the left-most point on the line, write: "An event, time, or condition".
3. In large lettering, write these words/phrases on half-sheets of paper or notecards (one word per notecard): **immediate impact, evaluation, solidarity, integration, anniversary, segregation, feeling fractioned**.
4. Print one copy each of the **Coping Strategy** and **Giving Support** tables at the end of this lesson. Cut each table into strips (one "should" or "shouldn't" per strip).

### Lesson Activator (10 minutes)

Ask students if they think that everyone's coping or recovery process after a **crisis** looks the same or takes the same amount of time. Direct students' attention to the horizontal line you drew on the board. Explain to students that the line represents a timeline for a possible **crisis** recovery process.

Divide students into seven groups by having them count off from one to seven.

Have students gather with their groups. Give each group one of the seven **Recovery Stages**.

Project **Recovery Stages** phases and definitions onto the board. Review and discuss the stages.

**Immediate impact:** The time period and experiences directly following a **crisis** event.

**Evaluation:** The stage characterized by **Assessment**.

**Solidarity:** Depending on the crisis, this stage is marked by cohesion and potentially community outpouring.

**Feeling fractionated:** The stage in which individuals may examine their values, reevaluate their realities, and search for deeper meaning.

**Anniversary:** A significant moment in time following the crisis event (i.e., the first time you drive after an accident, the first birthday of a person following their death, the one-year anniversary of a flood).

**Segregation:** The stage in which people cannot actively participate in their relationships and/or interests, nor continue to work towards personal goals.

**Integration:** The stage in which people begin again to actively participate in their relationships and/or interests or continue to work towards personal goals.

Ask groups to decide together where their given stage card should go on the recovery spectrum. Remind students that each person's recovery process may be different. Give each group a few minutes to tape their stage on the board along the horizontal line, while noticing the placement of other groups' cards. (Note: A common sequence is offered above in #5.)

Review the order of the stages. Ask groups to justify their placement. Ask students to volunteer any different ordering that applies to them.

#### **Lesson Procedure** (20 minutes)

- 1. Inform students that while we may undergo some or all of these stages during and after a crisis, we may react to and experience them differently.**

Remind students of the **crisis** reactions discussed during the first lesson. Tell students that though going through a specific stage may feel difficult, the overall healing process may require a person to go through that stage in order to achieve recovery.

- 2. Using the Recovery Stages as a guide, ask students the following:**

*What emotions might you experience at each stage?* Generate a list of about four or so emotions to write underneath each phase.

- 3. Inform students that during a crisis, our normal coping mechanisms may not be adequate to allow us to manage our response to the crisis alone.**

Give students one minute to talk to a partner about who they could ask for help during such a time. After the discussion concludes, tell students that if they could not think of anyone to ask for help, that you would be glad to be on their list. Consider writing your name on the board and putting a check mark next to it.

4. Further explain to students that because crisis events can result in an extraordinary degree of emotional distress, we should be gentle, patient, and kind with others who might be experiencing a crisis.
5. Have a student help you to distribute two to four "Coping Strategies" and "Giving Support" strips per student.
6. As the student is doing this, draw two large two-column tables on the board. Label the tables "Coping Strategies" and "Giving Support."

Label the two columns: "Should" and "Shouldn't." See example tables at the end of this lesson.

7. Give students a few minutes to read their strips then tape their strips below the appropriate column header on the board.
8. Review placements and discuss any disagreements. For the "Shouldn't" actions in the "Giving Support" column, ask students the following:
  - How would you feel if someone behaved this way as you were recovering from a **crisis**?
  - Do you have someone in your life who can support you in the way that you need?
  - If a friend is making suicide-related comments, what should you do? (Answer: Immediately tell a parent and a teacher or administrator).

9. If time, discuss Reflection Questions (below).

**Assessment** (15 minutes - can do next class period or as homework if needed)

- Ask students to write a letter to an actual or imaginary friend or relative who is recovering from surgery after a serious accident, in which they express their empathy and continued support. Have them consider: What might a person need from you as they recover from this **crisis**?

#### **Recommended Follow-up**

- Create posters from the two tables found at the end of this lesson (Coping Strategies and Giving Support) and post in a prominent place in the room. Revisit the information on the posters frequently, especially when individuals or families are known to be experiencing difficult times and needing community support.

#### **Reflection Questions**

- If your coping mechanisms don't seem to be helping, what can you do?

- Where could you find out about community organizations that are equipped to help people in a crisis?
- Why should you never tell someone, "It's been two months. Get over it."?



## Recovery Stages or Responses

**Immediate Impact:** The time period and experiences directly following a **crisis** event.

**Evaluation:** The stage characterized by **Assessment**.

**Solidarity:** Depending on the **crisis**, this stage is marked by cohesion and potentially community outpouring.

**Feeling Fractionated:** The stage in which individuals may examine their values, reevaluate their realities, and search for deeper meaning.

**Anniversary:** A significant moment in time following the **crisis** event (i.e., the first time you drive after an accident, the first birthday of a person following their death, the one-year **anniversary** of a flood).

**Integration:** The stage in which people begin again to actively participate in their relationships and/or interests or continue to work towards personal goals.

**Segregation:** The stage in which people cannot actively participate in their relationships and/or interests, nor continue to work towards personal goals.

## Coping Strategies

Should	Shouldn't
Talk to a counselor, friend, religious figure, or medical professional	Remain quiet because you do not want to make others feel uncomfortable or sad
Seek out a support group specific to your particular <b>crisis</b> .	Wait until you are at an emotional extreme to start talking about what you are going through
Tell others what you need from them	Distance yourself from friends and family
Schedule activities for yourself that you like	Begin using alcohol and drugs
Direct your focus on a practical task or project that you can do right now	Over-consume or under-consume food
Exercise	Quit the activities that make you happy
Write in a journal	Overwork yourself
Engage in relaxation and mindfulness activities such as meditation or yoga	Blame others for how you are feeling
Reminisce about what has happened	Become destructive and violent
Tell a teacher, counselor, or boss that you may need to take breaks throughout the day	Get a limited amount of sleep
Help plan a <b>memorial</b> or other type of remembering activity	Assume you should be "fully recovered" after a certain period of time
Remind yourself that recovery is a process. Allow yourself to feel the emotions that happen after a <b>crisis</b>	Avoid addressing the <b>crisis</b>
Research community resources that can help you	Engage in risky sexual behavior
Acknowledge how you are feeling and why you are feeling those things	Stop taking care of yourself
Reach out to a trusted adult, <b>crisis</b> prevention or suicide lifeline if you are in danger of harming yourself	Think that you can't enjoy yourself
Continue to eat healthy meals	Spend most of your time in front of a television or computer

## Giving Support

Should	Shouldn't
Give someone the time and attention to listen to what he or she has to say	Tell him/her to "move on"
Tell someone that you are there for whatever he or she needs	Tell someone that things will be fine if he or she just stays strong
Acknowledge how the person is feeling	Try to relate by constantly bringing up your own personal story as he or she is talking
Respect the person's feelings and coping mechanisms	Offer your friend alcohol or drugs
Ask this person to join a group activity or gathering	Get annoyed whenever your friend comes to you to talk
If comfortable enough with the person, encourage him/her to seek support from a counselor or another professional	Stop your friend from talking about his or her feelings
Check in on them	Compare your friend's coping process with others
If this person is consistently exhibiting unhealthy or risky behavior, talk to an adult or school representative	Offer advice without listening to what your friend needs first
Make plans around their interests	Tell your friend that others have it worse off
Be patient and judgment-free	Distance yourself from your friend
Help think of healthy ways to manage the crisis situation	Believe that your friend will never recover
Talk about positive ways to cope with a crisis situation	



## Lesson 3: Responding to Natural Disasters



**Lesson Focus:** This lesson begins with a news clip about flooding after Hurricane Harvey. Students will discuss the impact of and responses to this type of natural disaster. Then, they will research a natural disaster to learn about its effects, how people responded, what can be done to prevent this type of disaster from happening again, and available community resources.

### CASEL Competencies

- **Social awareness:** specifically, *perspective-taking and empathy*
- **Responsible decision-making:** specifically, *identifying problems, analyzing solutions, solving problems, and reflecting*

### Learning Standards

#### Students will:

- Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions (ASCA B-LS 1)
- Use time-management, organizational, and study skills (ASCA B-LS 3)
- Apply media and technology skills (ASCA B-LS 5)

### Essential Questions

- How can natural disasters impact people's lives?
- How should we respond when others are impacted by these events?

### Key Vocabulary Terms for Students

- none

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Research a natural disaster that affected people in their town or state.
- Identify at least two local resources that help people to cope after a natural disaster.
- Outline two courses of action that they can take to help those impacted by a natural disaster.

### Materials

- A projector or interactive whiteboard (to play news clip)
- Speakers (if needed to adequately hear video)
- One Local Natural Disaster worksheet per student. (See end of lesson).
- Access to computers

### Time Frame

*Preparation: 5 minutes*

*Instruction: 40 minutes.* \*If needed, you can shorten this lesson by having students do some or all of their research as homework instead of during class.

### Lesson Preparation (5 minutes)

1. Arrange for student computer access for this lesson (one computer per student, or, if that's not possible, one computer per 2 students).
2. Make copies of Local Natural Disaster Worksheet (one per student).
3. Pull up this video (2:23) and have it ready to play.

### Lesson Activator (10 minutes)

Ask students what coping mechanisms they might need to recover from experiencing a natural disaster.

Play this video (2:23) reporting responses to Hurricane Harvey in Houston in 2017.

Ask students to discuss the following in small groups:

- What aspects of people's lives are impacted by this kind of natural disaster?
- What made ordinary people step up and be brave in response to the flooding after Hurricane Harvey?
- What would you have done in the same situation?
- How might a community be stronger in terms of relationships, trust, and safety following a disaster?

### Lesson Procedure (30 minutes)

1. Tell students that they will each research a local natural disaster and answer questions about it. Tell them to look specifically for stories of people who were helped by others.
2. Distribute one Natural Disaster worksheet (see end of lesson) to each student. Review contents to ensure understanding.
3. Allow students 15-20 minutes to research online and complete the worksheet. Prompt with allowed websites or resources.
4. After students dedicate time to researching their selected crisis event, bring the class back together to address the following prompts:
  - What local resources did you identify that would be beneficial for those experiencing a **crisis** event?
  - What hero stories emerged from the disaster you researched?
  - How can you be an active and helpful community member when your neighbors experience a natural disaster?
5. (If time): Discuss Reflection Questions (below).

#### **Assessment**

- Collect and review student worksheets.

#### **Reflection Questions**

- What emotions did you experience when researching the **local natural disaster**?
- How could a community grow stronger through a shared **crisis**?
- What is the advantage of knowing about the available resources in your community?

#### **Variations or Extensions**

- Ask students to write a response to the following question: What would be your plan of action if a natural disaster occurred in your area?
- Have students research community organizations that support crisis recovery and have them make reproducible flyers with organizational information and a contact number to share with others.

There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves.  
- Lyndon B. Johnson

## Local Natural Disaster

For this assignment, research and identify one natural disaster that occurred in your town or state. Use the information gleaned through your research and earlier lessons to complete the chart below.

<b>Natural Disaster and Location</b>	<b>How did the disaster affect people and how did they cope? What hero stories emerged?</b>	<b>What can you do to lessen the impact of any future, similar events?</b>	<b>What resources are available in your community to help after an event like this?</b>	<b>What can you do personally to help people suffering from a natural disaster?</b>

## Lesson 4: Memorial Activities

**Lesson Focus:** In this lesson, students will learn about the benefits of community **memorial** activities after a **crisis**. Then, they will work in groups to brainstorm how they would go about planning a **memorial** activity. The lesson concludes with groups presenting their plans for **memorial** activities to the class.

### CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *stress management and organizational skills*
- **Social awareness:** specifically, *perspective-taking, empathy, and respect for others*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *communication, social engagement, and relationship building*

### Learning Standards

Students will:

- Demonstrate creativity (ASCA B-LS 2)
- Use time-management, organizational and study skills (ASCA B-LS 3)
- Demonstrate empathy (ASCA B-SS 4)
- Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams (ASCA B-SS 7)

### Essential Question

- What positive actions can students take to support recovery following a crisis?

### Key Vocabulary Terms for Students

- none

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify at least two activities that can positively affect the recovery process after a crisis.
- List at least two purposes for engaging in healing activities after a crisis.

### Materials

- A projector or interactive whiteboard (to play video)
- Speakers (if needed to adequately hear video)
- One "Planning an Activity or Event" worksheet per student (found at end of unit)
- Student computers (optional)
- One Interest Inventory per student (found in Project at end of this unit).

## Time Frame

*Preparation: 5-8 minutes*

*Instruction: 30-50 minutes. (\*If needed, this lesson can be split into two class periods by doing student presentations on a different day).*

## Lesson Preparation (5-8 minutes)

1. As this lesson specifically focuses on crises characterized by death (which may be a very sensitive topic for some students), consider inviting the school counselor, social worker, or another knowledgeable professional to review and participate in your lesson.
2. Review the following clips about remembering activities and choose one to use during the lesson (or, choose a different clip of your choice).
  - "Orlando Remember Shooting Victims, MSNBC" (0:07-1:45)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36-5HY5hcXI>
  - "Candles lit at service to remember Trevor Hillman" (0:00-1:00)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSzbNYq6vOY>
  - "Remembering Orlando shooting victims, one week after tragedy" (1:36-2:19)
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_fIW3smzO0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_fIW3smzO0)
3. Have selected video clip pulled up and ready to play.

## Lesson Activator (8-10 minutes)

Hand out **Interest Inventories** and give students a moment to complete them. Explain that these are for a project they'll begin next class. Collect the inventories after they're completed.

Tell students that some of the hardest crises to recover from are those characterized by the death of a loved one. Explain that a common way for people to acknowledge and reflect on a tragedy is to participate in activities dedicated to remembering the person who has died.

Ask students to share with a partner how a **memorial activity** has served as an element of their own healing process (if they have experienced the death of a loved one or pet). For example, a participant may get closure, have the chance to express and share feelings, incorporate someone's legacy into their lives, achieve a sense of togetherness, or feel proud or glad that the person's life was honored. This topic may be difficult for those who have had a recent experience with loss. Encourage students to be respectful of others' responses.

Play the video clip you selected. Discuss the following questions as a class.

What **memorial** activities did you see in this video?

What other **memorial** activities have you seen, done, or heard of that can be helpful after the passing of a loved one?

How have you seen the international community react to tragic events occurring in other countries?

Why do you think communities frequently come together after tragedies?

What parts of an individual's life do you think people like to reflect on and remember?

In what stage(s) of the recovery process do you think memorial activities could occur? (Note: these events could happen in multiple stages.)

**Lesson Procedure** (40 minutes, but can be split into two 20-minute periods if student presentations happen on during a separate class)

- 1. Tell students that they will be working in groups to plan a memorial activity in the wake of an assigned tragic event.** (Note: if some students find this exercise to be uncomfortable, consider having them do an alternative individual activity related to a real or imagined personal loss, such as journaling, practicing mindfulness, creating art, playing or listening to music, writing a private letter, etc.)
- 2. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4.**
- 3. Instruct each group to choose one of the following tragedies to plan a memorial activity for: a natural disaster, a terrorist bombing, a car accident that killed a well-known community member, a building fire. They can also choose their own type of tragedy (with your approval).**
- 4. Tell students that it is their responsibility to organize a memorial activity around the chosen event. Distribute a Planning an Activity or Event worksheet (see end of lesson plan) to each student.**

Explain to students that, in groups, they should address each question on the worksheet. If needed, allow students to use computers to research activities. Allow 15 minutes to complete the worksheet.

- 5. After students have addressed the questions, have each group present to the class.**

Ask that each member of the group participate in the presentation. If needed, do some or all student presentations during next class.

- 6. (If time): Discuss Reflection Questions (below).**

#### **Assessment**

- Student groups will present a well-thought-out plan to the class during their **Memorial Activity** presentation.

#### **Reflection Questions**

- Do you think all people will respond positively to a memory event? Why or why not?

- How can community togetherness help support an individual or family grieving a loss?
- What emotions did you experience during today's activities?

#### **Variations or Extensions**

- Ask students to think individually of a difficult event that has occurred outside of their town, city, or country. It could be the event that was **memorialized** in the video you watched earlier in this lesson. Ask students to consider the tragedy and reflect silently on the following:
  - What similarities exist between you and those most influenced by the event?
  - How can you improve your ability to empathize with those impacted by the event?
  - Why should we care about the experiences of people who we have never met?
  - Why do you think such events are important for us to know about and process together?
  - What can we learn from other people's experiences?



## Planning a Memorial Activity

1. Why do you think a memorial activity may be important for this situation?
2. What is your activity or event idea? What is its purpose (what person, or group of people, ideals, or event do you want to remember and honor)?
3. Where will the activity or event take place?
4. What materials will you need?
5. Who should be invited?
6. How will you inform your community about this event or activity?
7. Will you include a period for debriefing? If so, what will it include?

## Lesson 5: Launching a Website Project to Create an Online Support Page

**Lesson Focus:** This lesson will serve to launch the ongoing final project for this unit. Students will work together to create a Facebook, Slack, or online support page for their classmates experiencing a crisis. Rather than serving crisis-management purposes (which would require trained and qualified professionals), this Facebook page will function as a location for students to access relevant and helpful resources.

### CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, and organizational skills*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *communication, social engagement, and teamwork*

### Learning Standards

Students will:

- Apply media and technology skills (ASCA B-LS 5)
- Set high standards of quality (ASCA B-LS 6)
- Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility (ASCA B-SMS 1)
- Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams (ASCA B-SS 7)

### Essential Question

- What's an effective way to provide crisis resources to the people who need them?

### Key Vocabulary Terms for Students

- none

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Collaborate with one another to create a supportive resource for their peers.
- Synthesize information to create a user-friendly online resource.

### Materials

- One Quality Rubric per student (see end of lesson plan)
- Student computers

### Time Frame

*Preparation: 20 minutes*

*Instruction: 30 minutes*

**Lesson Preparation** (20 minutes)

1. Using the interest inventory and/or students' Indigo results, record students' areas of interest and motivation and assign roles to each student that align with these results. (Alternatively, have students work together in a group to identify their strengths and assign their own roles that most align with their interests).
2. Ensure that the IT team has allowed Facebook/other platform access on the student computers.
3. Communicate the intent of this project to the school staff.
4. Identify a qualified staff member, if not yourself, to serve as the administrator of the Facebook group. (Note: this person will need to have a Facebook account.) This person will also be required to work with a student to design the group, select the appropriate settings, research and identify local resources, ensure the included content is relevant, and brainstorm a way to make this group available to all students.

**Lesson Activator** (8 minutes)

Lead a group discussion based on the following questions:

- What relevant information have you learned about responding to crises in this unit?
- For those who have experienced a crisis, what resources would you recommend they explore?
- What search terms might you use to identify appropriate online and local resources after a crisis?

Tell students that you are beginning a project in which they will be working with a staff member to create an online support page for their classmates experiencing a crisis. Inform students that crisis professionals are often certified and experienced specialists. That is not the role students will be filling. Rather than communicating directly with their peers on this group, they will, instead, be compiling and creating resources for them to access and use anonymously. Introduce the staff member who you have selected to be the administrator of the page.

Assign Facebook development roles to each student. Explain to students that besides taking turns working with the staff member, most other students will be working in groups to accomplish their assigned tasks.

**Lesson Procedure** (22 minutes)

1. **Distribute the rubric (provided at the end of the lesson plan) to each student. Review together to ensure understanding.**
2. **Explain to students that the rubric provides some basic expectations. Advise students to take ownership of this project and to be as creative with it as possible.**
3. **Tell students that before group content is added or uploaded to the page, they will be required to show it to the staff member who is administering the group. Once the staff member reviews the content, either each group or the administrator can add the information.**

4. Take time to answer student questions about this assignment
5. Give students time (10 minutes or so) to work in their new groups to discuss their roles and initial ideas for their project.
6. Conduct a circle time and ask each student to respond to the reflection question (below).

**Assessment**

- Assessment will take place upon project completion.

**Reflection Question**

- Give a one-sentence descriptor that describe your thoughts or feelings about this project.

**Variations/Extensions**

- Instead of having students create a Facebook page, allow students to organize their content in an original and professional way. Some suggestions include: a brochure, an infographic, a PowerPoint, or a video.

## Project: Creating a Website Project to Create an Online Support Page



**Project Focus:** Students will work together to create a page for their classmates experiencing a crisis. Rather than serving crisis -management purposes (which would require trained and qualified professionals), this Facebook page will function as a location for students to access relevant and helpful resources.

### CASEL Competencies

- **Self-management:** specifically, *self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, and organizational skills*
- **Relationship skills:** specifically, *communication, social engagement, and teamwork*

### Learning Standards

Students will:

- Apply media and technology skills (ASCA B-LS 5)
- Set high standards of quality (ASCA B-LS 6)
- Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility (ASCA B-SMS 1)
- Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams (ASCA B-SS 7)

### Essential Question

- What is an effective way to provide crisis resources to the people who need them?

### Learning Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Collaborate with one another to create a supportive resource for their peers.
- Synthesize information to create a user-friendly online resource.

## Materials

- Student computers

## Time Frame

Preparation: none if completed prior to Lesson 5.

Project: 2-3 class periods.

## Project Procedure

1. **Divide students into groups that were established during Project 5. Post the following link on your whiteboard or screen: <https://www.crisis support.org>**
2. **Have students look together at the website, carefully examining the purpose and resources at each link.**
3. **Ask students to discuss and take notes on the following questions:**
  - a) What information found in this website might be useful for a student who is experiencing or who is recovering from a crisis?
  - b) What is missing that you believe would help someone in this situation?
  - c) What could be adapted from the website to be more specifically helpful to students (rather than adults)?
  - d) What did you learn about the design of a crisis support website?
4. **Give students one or two class periods to work on the Facebook Group.**
5. **Constantly check in with students as they complete their work to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of their research and the professionalism of their created documents.**

## Sharing the Page and Providing Feedback

1. After the page is launched, have the school counselor or social worker review the resources and language provided. Report back to the students any feedback that was provided.
2. Make the group available and have everyone take part in the responsibility of creating a message to share the availability of the website to the student body. This can be done with such things as an announcement, tweets, posters, fliers, group invites, or locker notes.
3. As students are doing this, complete the Quality Rubric for each group/individual.
4. Provide students with feedback by handing back the completed rubrics and by inviting school staff to share words of appreciation and feedback for improving the site to your class.

## Suggested Follow up:

1. Track visits to the Facebook Page.

2. Spend one Advocacy period each month upgrading the group through reviewing old resources, researching new resources, and testing links.
3. Revisit the **Memorial Event** activity when an event occurs that constitutes a **crisis** for an individual or group in the community. Discuss with students: How might the activity be adapted to bring comfort and support to those suffering from the event?

## Interest Inventory: Roles for Support Page Development Project

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The final project of this unit will ask you to work as a class to develop a Facebook page for your fellow students who are experiencing a crisis. Although you will be working as a class, each one of you will be assigned a specific responsibility. Please rank your top 3 areas of interest below (place a 1, 2, or 3 on the line next to the responsibilities you would be most interested in doing).

A. Facebook page design and settings\*: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Compiling a list of resources and contact information for those experiencing a crisis: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Compiling a list of healthy coping mechanisms (including memory activities): \_\_\_\_\_

D. Defining, explaining, and providing examples of crises (both human-generated and natural): \_\_\_\_\_

E. Compiling a list of the potential effects that a crisis can have on us: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Creating a list outlining the 'shoulds' and 'should nots' when supporting a friend who is experiencing a crisis: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note: One person will be responsible for this role. He or she will create a title for the group, visually design it, and brainstorm the best way to make this group available to students. This student will work hand-in-hand with a school staff member who will serve as the administrator of the group.



## Quality Rubric A Support Page for Students

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_

	3	2	1
<b>Researching and Synthesizing</b>	<p>The individual(s) excellently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researched relevant content (if applicable)</li> <li>• Synthesized information to create a pool of useful resources or content (if applicable)</li> <li>• Created an easy-to-navigate group, pool of resources, and/or documents</li> </ul>	<p>The individual(s) fulfilled responsibilities adequately. Further effort could have been directed towards identifying more resources and defining their usefulness to increase understanding.</p>	<p>The individual(s) could have used more time to fulfill responsibilities adequately.</p>
<b>Teamwork</b>	<p>Each member of the group worked well with others, collaborating effectively throughout the process. Most members worked well together throughout the process. Few individuals worked well together throughout the process.</p>	<p>Most members worked well together throughout the process.</p>	<p>Few individuals worked well together throughout the process.</p>
<b>Work Quality</b>	<p>The Facebook page and/or attached documents/resources were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edited</li> <li>• Creatively illustrated</li> <li>• Professional in appearance</li> <li>• Well-organized</li> </ul>	<p>The Facebook page and/or attached documents/resources were mostly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edited</li> <li>• Creatively illustrated</li> <li>• Professional in appearance</li> <li>• Well-organized</li> </ul>	<p>The Facebook page and/or attached documents/resources were not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edited</li> <li>• Creatively illustrated</li> <li>• Professional in appearance</li> <li>• Well-organized</li> </ul>

Total Points: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: