

## General Reactions to Death/Crisis

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The aftermath of a death/crisis may result in a variety of emotional reactions on the part of students. Classroom discussions may generate additional reactions not only on the part of students who were close to the victim, but also among students who are at risk for suicide as a result of other reasons. It is important to identify those students in need of additional help and/or referral to a community agency. The general consideration listed below may be helpful in making decisions about which students need additional assistance. (When in doubt, consult with a member of the Crisis Response Team)

- Crying is a normal reaction; however, if a student is unable to control crying, he or she may be in need of additional support and/or counselling.
- Students who are exhibiting no visible signs of emotion may be responding appropriately, depending on degree of closeness to the deceased. Among students who were closer to the victim, some numbness of feeling is appropriate initially. It is the emotionally over-controlled student who requires attention; for example, the student who was very close to the victim but who is exhibiting no emotional reaction to loss.
- Anger is also a normal response. However, if most students in a classroom are displaying sadness while one student is exhibiting anger, this may indicate a need for further assistance for that student.  
Many students may be affected who had little or no concerns with the deceased. Students who have experienced a loss over the past six months to a year or who have experienced a traumatic event or have witnessed acts of violence, may display emotional reactions in response to this current stressor.
- Other individuals who are normally emotionally unstable or who are individuals with exceptional needs, may have strong reactions to a suicide or a death and may require assistance.