



INDEPENDENT PROCEDURE

Title: **TRAUMATIC EVENT RESPONSE TEAM**

Policy No.: **9005**

Effective Date: **1999 September 01**

Department: Learning Support Services

Reference(s): System Contact List
TERT Principals Checklist
TERT Response Summary Sheet

1. Intent

- 1.1. This independent procedure outlines the Traumatic Event Response Team (TERT) workflow.

2. Objective of Procedure

- 2.1. The TERT responds when traumatic events occur within TVDSB Schools or the surrounding communities, and the School Community requires support to process the complex emotions that arise when trauma occurs.
- 2.2. Children and youth vary in their capability to understand traumatic events and rely on adults to assist them in recognizing and exploring their feelings including fear and sadness.
- 2.3. Children and youth differ in their fears and understandings about death and other traumatic events. An important task is to provide students with a caring and supportive atmosphere in which they can openly express their feelings and reactions.
- 2.4. A traumatic event can create intense feelings of threat, fear or loss.

Administered By: **Learning Support Services**

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3. Definitions

- 3.1. Due to the length of the definition section of this independent procedure, a list of definitions can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Types of Situations the TERT will Respond to

- 4.1. While this is not an exhaustive list, a School Community may experience any of these events as trauma and may access TERT support as a result:
 - 4.1.1. Death or attempted suicide of a person with whom there has been meaningful contact among members of the School Community;
 - 4.1.2. Assault, experienced or witnessed, verbal or physical;
 - 4.1.3. Major accidents involving vehicles, machinery, fire, or people;
 - 4.1.4. Large scale acts of violence, or threats of violence;
 - 4.1.5. Natural disasters such tornado, flood, fire; and
 - 4.1.6. Terminal illness impacting students and/or staff.

5. Overview of the TERT

- 5.1. The TERT is a team of trained educational and clinical personnel who are available to assist School Communities when a response to a traumatic event is overwhelming and causes distress within the School Community.
- 5.2. When a traumatic event impacts a School Community, the TERT can help mobilize the School Community to work through the initial response so that the School Community can return to a more balanced state.
- 5.3. To achieve this, the TERT is trained to activate initial assessments and respond with time sensitive interventions and recovery tactics in a culturally responsive and trauma sensitive manner. Specifically, the TERT will consider the following as they respond;

- 5.3.1. Respecting the unique needs of each School Community;
- 5.3.2. The importance of collaborating on the TERT response with the Principal and Vice-Principal of the school where the traumatic event occurred; and
- 5.3.3. Prioritizing the healing of the School Community.

6. Roles of the TERT

- 6.1. The role of the TERT is to provide;
 - 6.1.1. An immediate response;
 - 6.1.2. A review of the needs of the School Community with the Principal/Vice-Principal;
 - 6.1.3. Assistance to the Principal/Vice-Principal in managing the situation;
 - 6.1.4. Supports, resources and information to help students and staff through their grieving process;
 - 6.1.5. Referrals to outside organizations who can further support staff and students; and
 - 6.1.6. Support and training for TERT team members.

7. Members of the TERT

- 7.1. The TERT includes Board staff members from a variety of disciplines, including Psychological Services Professionals, Social Work/Attendance Counsellors, School Support Counsellors, Principals, and Vice-Principals.
 - 7.1.1. The TERT Coordinator can request additional TVDSB staff other than those listed in 6.1 based on the unique needs of the traumatic event and the TERT response.
- 7.2. The leadership team of the TERT is comprised of the following members:

- 7.2.1. Superintendent, Safe Schools and Well-Being as the Leader of the TERT program.
- 7.2.2. Manager, Student Mental Health as the TERT Coordinator.
- 7.2.3. Up to four Regional Administrative and Clinical Leads as identified in the TERT Contact List referred to as TERT Regional Co-Chairs.

8. TERT Activation Process

- 8.1. When a traumatic event occurs, the school may wish to request immediate support from the TERT.
 - 8.1.1. If the School Administration does not request a TERT response, the Superintendent for the Community of Schools where the traumatic event occurred can activate a TERT response.
- 8.2. To activate a TERT the following steps must be followed:
 - 8.2.1. The Principal shall inform the Superintendent responsible for the school requesting the TERT as well as the Superintendent of Safe Schools and Well-Being that a TERT response is required;
 - 8.2.2. The Superintendent of Safe Schools and Well-Being will then inform the TERT Coordinator and provide information regarding the incident;
 - 8.2.3. The TERT Coordinator will use the TERT System Contacts list (see section 10.0) to inform the TERT Regional Co-Chairs; and
 - 8.2.4. The TERT Coordinator will contact the school administration where the traumatic event has occurred to assess the needs and identify what supports can be provided by the TERT.
- 8.3. After consultation with the school administrative team, the TERT Coordinator or Regional TERT Co-Chairs may organize a response team in accordance with the nature of the situation and the identified needs of the school.

- 8.4. A TERT Lead will be identified for the response. This lead will be identified by the TERT Coordinator or Regional TERT Co-Chairs and will be a response team member. Every situation is unique and requires an individualized level of support. The TERT Lead will:
 - 8.4.1. Collaborate with the school Principal to determine a response;
 - 8.4.2. Review the *TERT Principals Checklist* for possible activities and administrative matters to be undertaken;
 - 8.4.3. Remain in contact with the Regional TERT Co-Chairs and the TERT Coordinator to ensure the safety and well-being of all; and
 - 8.4.4. Coordinate the day-to-day efforts of the TERT Responders.
- 8.5. Additional TERT Responders can be added to an active TERT by any member of the TERT Leadership.
- 8.6. Any of the following may be interventions provided as a part of the traumatic event response:
 - 8.6.1. Support at a stand-up staff meeting;
 - 8.6.2. Classroom presentations;
 - 8.6.3. Group debriefing;
 - 8.6.4. Individual support;
 - 8.6.5. Support drafting communications;
 - 8.6.6. Sharing resources with administration, teachers, and families;
 - 8.6.7. Coordination of Employee Family Assistance Program to respond on-site to support staff; or
 - 8.6.8. Supporting the coordination of school and community supports to ensure a seamless transition after the TERT has completed its work.

9. TERT Debriefing

9.1. Once a traumatic event response has been completed, a *TERT Response Summary Sheet* will be completed by an assigned TERT responder and will be forwarded to the Regional TERT Co-Chairs.

9.1.1. The TERT Regional Co-Chairs will send a copy of the report to the TERT Coordinator.

9.2. The TERT Coordinator or TERT Regional Co-Chairs will conduct an operational and psychological debrief with the members of TERT who responded to the traumatic event.

10. TERT Leadership Contact List

10.1. A list of the TERT Leadership with contact information can be found on the *System Contact List*, located on the TERT SharePoint. This page is accessible through SharePoint or the Employee Portal under “Crisis Response, Suicide Awareness and Traumatic Event Resources.”

TERT Independent Procedure Key Term Definitions

The Leader of the TERT Program is the Superintendent of Safe Schools and Well-Being.

School Community or School Communities refers to caregivers/families, students, and TVDSB staff.

Stand-up Staff Meeting refers to a staff meeting that occurs when urgent significant information needs to be shared with TVDSB Staff at a specific building.

The TERT Coordinator refers to the TVDSB Manager, Student Mental Health.

The TERT Lead refers to the TVDSB Staff member assigned by the TERT Coordinator to manage a TERT response day-to-day.

The TERT Leadership refers to the Leader of the TERT Program, the TERT Coordinator, and TERT Regional Co-Chairs.

TERT Regions refers to the division of TVDSB jurisdiction into four (4) unique regions grouped by location. For a specific list of TERT regions, refer to the TERT System Contact List on the TERT SharePoint Page.

TERT Regional Co-Chairs refers to the two TVDSB Staff assigned to the various TERT regions

TERT Responders refers to all TVDSB Staff members whom the TERT Leadership has identified as part of a specific TERT response.