

When Tragedy Strikes in the Workplace

Guidelines For Managers

#1 *Reach Out To Employees*

- Acknowledge the tragedy
- Provide opportunities for togetherness
- Organize a diffusing
- Accept all feelings (don't cheerlead or argue)
- Respect individual differences
- Wander around and ask "*How are you?*"
- Don't forget **all** the victims, including family members and those "off site"

#2 *Protect Employees From Further Harm*

- Protect from media
- Clean up
- Meet physical needs
- Protect employees from blamers
- Don't overprotect/Don't give false reassurance

#3 *Keep Employees Informed*

- Provide information about what has happened; what the company is doing; what the company will do; what the system is doing; and how the family is coping
- Acknowledge any lack of information and explain when information will be available
- Information should be timely, honest, understandable
- Provide regular "briefings"

#4 *Organize Chaos*

- Take time to develop a simple plan
- Ask for help from employees - they want to help
- Delegate tasks according to strengths
- Maintain a normal business routine
- Ask for outside help

#5 *Reinforce Strengths in the Workplace*

- Listen for strengths
- Support reminiscing
- Support "saying goodbye" rituals
- Support employee grieving and remembrance activities
- Point out what employees did right
- Provide comforting information about the family
- Thank employees for their help in managing the crisis
- Reinforce "positive thinking" when it comes from employees