



Responding to a Critical Incident

Plan for
Loughinisland GAC

Reviewed April 2023



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Critical Incident Response Plan - Loughinisland GAC

Lead Liaison Person:

Alternate Liaison Person:

Chairperson: Louise Kearney

Club Secretary: Shauna McCabe

Contact Number: **07817222569**

Contact Number: **07894728974**

Email: blkearney@hotmail.co.uk

Email: Secretary.loughinisland.down@gaa.ie

Response Team:

Name: Pat McGreevy	Suicide/trauma support	No. 07809441950
Name: Eimear Murray	Family/signposting	No. 07593917025
Name: Raymond McClements	Emergency services Liaison	No. 07703726465
Name: Martin Keenan	Meeting Place	No. 07738665883
Name: Hugh Carville	Media Liaison Person	No. 07813859820
Name: Helen Rice	Response Team Care/Support	No. 07916350917

Key Duties:

- Liaison Person will call Executive Committee to an emergency meeting to gather information and brief members;
- Designate a Contact person to meet and ascertain the needs and wishes of the family/families;
- Call a Response Team meeting;
- Decide key actions and assign roles and implement;
- Agree information strategy for handling press/media enquiries and informing members
- Set dates for follow up meeting and potential “stand down” meeting
- Set review date to consider key learnings and any updates to the plan
- Authorise Self-care session(s) for response team members to offer support

Introduction

A critical incident is any event that is outside the range of usual human experience. It is an event that causes an unusually intense stress reaction which has the emotional power to overwhelm an individual's usual ability to cope. It may impede people's coping mechanisms immediately or in the future following the event. (GPA/GAA guidelines, 2014.)

Examples of critical incidents may include:

- Death or serious injury on or off the playing field
- Exposure to the aftermath of a road traffic or other serious accident e.g. the accident scene, the victim(s)
- Personal loss or injury, real or threatened to a child or adult
- Being violently threatened
- Close encounter with death
- Diagnosis with illness/condition that has wider community implications
- Suicide of a club member (this tragic situation can cause extreme distress and confusion for everyone involved. Guidelines developed by professional services highlighting the most appropriate responses following a death by suicide by sporting organizations are available. Please refer to contact information in appendix)
- A situation with excessive media interest
- A natural disaster or act of God
- Other incidents not covered above but which are associated with unusually strong emotional reactions

Communicating a critical incident

Figure 1: Recommended avenues for communicating a critical incident.



Developing your Critical Incident Response Plan

Have key roles been clearly identified and tasks clearly outlined?

Are personnel suitable?

Has contact been made to external agencies?

Is the contact list appropriate and complete?

Are materials such as press releases, letters readily available, for adaption to suit the particular circumstances?

Are telephone numbers on contact lists up-to-date?

Has a date been set for a review of the plan?

Where will the plan be kept and are people aware of this?

Useful service contacts in the area

Contact	Contact Person	Contact Details
Downpatrick Hospital	Switchboard	028 44 61 3311
Ulster Hospital	Switchboard	028 90 48 4511
New Life Counselling -suicide bereavement support	Sarah Grant-Jones	02890 391630
South Eastern H & SC Trust (Health Development Specialist for Mental Health, Suicide & Prison Services)	Alison Doake	028 9041 3872
St John's Ambulance	Switchboard	028 9079 9393
GP Out of Hours	Switchboard	028 9260 2204
PSNI	Switchboard	101
Parish Priest	Fr Dallat	028 44 811 611
St Macartan's Primary School	Audrey Watson	07776 181 519/ 028 44 811 364
Aware	Switchboard	028 9035 7820
Mind your Mate	Switchboard	028 437 27549
Cruse Bereavement Care	Switchboard	028 9043 4600
Public Health Agency	Switchboard	NHS 111

Useful GAA contacts

Contact	Contact Person	Contact Details
Club Chairperson	Louise Kearney	07817222569
Club Health & Wellbeing Officer	Helen Rice	07916350917
Club Children's Officer	Bronagh Mason	07546289102
Club PRO	Brenda Torney	07706899106
County Health & Wellbeing Officer		
County Children's Officer	Sean Óg McAteer (interim)	07739700705
County PRO		
National Children's Officer (Croke Park)		
Community Health Manager (Croke Park)		

Sample support letter for members

Support Service for _____ Club/County members

We are all in shock from the untimely death of _____.

To lose a loved one like _____, a dear friend and team mate, is one of the most difficult life experiences you will have to face.

When the death is sudden and tragic, _____ family and friends must cope with the sadness of their loss plus all their additional heightened feelings like confusion, questioning of self, anger and coming to terms with his death.

Should you wish to speak to someone in confidence about how you feel or if you need help or guidance to come to terms with _____ death, please call:

Samaritans, official helpline of the GAA and are available 24-7, on their free-phone number 116 123. Lifeline is a Northern Ireland crisis response helpline service operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you or someone you know is in distress or despair, call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000.

The above is a confidential service available to you and we encourage you to avail of it and call, if you need to talk to someone.

Equally, should you know of any of your friends or colleagues, who are struggling to come to terms with _____ death please encourage them to call also, or talk to a loved one about their feelings.

We also ask you to keep an eye out for each other, not to be shy or embarrassed about asking for help and to talk to and support each other during what is a very difficult time for us all.

If there is anything we can do to help and support you please let us know. We will get through this tragic time together.

_____, **Chairperson,**

on behalf of the _____ Club Committee.

Phone: (insert your number here if you feel it is appropriate for any additional enquiries)

Guidelines for dealing with the media following a critical incident

Following a critical incident in which people have died, press interest in survivors and bereaved families can be intense. There are rules and standards the press should follow. All members of the *press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) is charged with enforcing the 'Editors' Code of Practice'.*

Individuals are under no obligation to speak to the media. If someone doesn't want to speak to them - tell them.

When speaking with the media the following are some helpful tips;

- *always make a note of the journalist's name and contact phone number at the outset*
- *consider appointing somebody as a spokesperson for family - this might be a relative or friend, or your solicitor - some support groups have appointed media liaison people who will field questions on behalf of the support group*
- *don't do anything in a hurry, whatever the journalist says about deadlines*
- *ask what they want to talk to you about in advance*
- *ask them to write down the questions they want to ask you in advance*
- *give yourself time to think about what you want to say*
- *write down your answers*
- *ask the journalist to ring you back at a specified time*
- *ask if you can see what they wish to quote from you before it goes to press - they may not do this, but it will alert them to your concerns about what they are going to publish*
- *never say anything 'off the record' unless both you and the journalist have a shared understanding of what this means*
- *Remember that a journalist is entitled to report anything you say, so don't mistake them for counsellors or friends*
- *bring the conversation to a close if you are uncomfortable*

Sometimes journalists will ask for photographs of you, your loved one, and your family. You may wish to provide these, but remember that you are under no obligation to do so. If you do, ensure that you have a copy and ask for the photographs and any other personal items that you pass on to be returned.

Sample announcement to the media

This can be used as a template by clubs to be emailed, faxed or given to the media. It may help to decrease the number of media calls and callers to the club.

In some instances it is not appropriate to provide names or information that might identify individuals.

This announcement will need to be changed based upon confidentiality issues, the wishes of the affected family and the nature of the incident.

Template:

My name is (Name) and I am the (Role within the club) of (Name) club. We learned this morning of the death of (Name). This is a terrible tragedy for _____ family, our club and our community. We are deeply saddened by these events. Our sympathy and thoughts are with (Name) family and friends.

(Name of person) was a member of (Name) club and will be greatly missed by all who knew him/her. We have been in contact with his/her parents and they have requested that we all understand their need for privacy at this difficult time.

Offers of support have been pouring in and are greatly appreciated. Our club have implemented our Critical Incident Response Plan.

The club has been open to members, to support them and to offer them advice and guidance. We would ask you to respect our privacy at this time.

Thank you.

Chairperson

Policies

Clubs should develop policies and procedures on suicide prevention as well as other broader areas such as drug and alcohol use. For example, the GAA has developed an Alcohol and Substance Abuse (ASAP) Programme which aims to prevent alcohol and drug problems taking hold in clubs.

Agreed and signed off by Executive Committee on

July 2019

March 2020

February 2021

April 2023 _____

Chairperson's signature

Louise Kearney Louise Kearney

5TH APRIL 2023

Review date (at least once per year)

Completed July 2019

Reviewed March 2020

Reviewed February 2021