



Education First –
Safety Always!

March 2017

WSSCA Newsletter

The "news you can use " periodical for Wisconsin's school safety and security professionals

School Security



Note: WSSCA has recognized that mental health is an element of ensuring school safety that we must address and be prepared to support. Indeed, it is one of our three organization goals. Recently I was told that one of our WSSCA Board Members was looking for information on dealing with a student death. Barbara Dorff, WSSCA Board Advisor, and retired Executive Director for Student Services is a recognized expert in addressing the ways that school personnel can most effectively help students and colleagues cope with and overcome the severe effects of grief following the death of a child, friend, colleague. This is the first installment of a three-part series from Barbara.

Coping with the Death of a Student:

Part 1: Understanding the Concept of Death at Certain Ages.

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While the superintendent may direct crisis response of the district as does the principal in a school building, in many cases there are important roles for the facility personnel to play. Because of their daily contacts and relationships with students the building engineer may be in a unique position to respond to potentially traumatic events for students such as the death of a classmate. Their observations of student behavior throughout the school may also put them in the position of helping the student access additional support services such as counselor and social worker assistance.

The concept of death varies by age. Children ages three to five do not understand the permanence of death. They may believe that death is temporary or reversible. They may also believe that their actions or thoughts could cause death, and that they have magical powers that can make someone live or die just by wishing it so.

Children ages six to eight have fears about what happens to the body after death, they begin to understand the finality of death and they usually perceive death as happening to others not to themselves or their families.

Children ages nine to twelve understand that death is normal and irreversible. They may experience a variety of emotions such as anger, vengeance or despair and may act out in school or at home.

Adolescents understand that death is final and irreversible and that it will happen to everyone. They are in a risk-taking developmental stage and may deny that death can happen to them. They may focus on the “glory” of death and idolize a peer who has died. Teens with a history of depression, suicidal behavior and chemical dependency are more at risk for prolonged and serious grief reactions.

Typical grieving behavior of student ages five to eleven may include anger, guilt, withdrawal, headaches and stomach aches, sadness and acting younger than their chronological age. They typically do not sustain a grief reaction for a long period of time but transition back and forth between grieving and normal activity.

Older students may be consumed by the situation or may laugh

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and joke in what might be seen as an inappropriate manner, as a way to cope. Some may display a total lack of feeling and lose interest in peer and social relationships. It is important to remember that children may grieve in ways different than adults and to be accepting of that fact.

Part 2 of this series will address ways to help students deal with death.

Part 3 will address best practice around student memorials and funerals.

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Green Bay

School Fencing

Advantages and Disadvantages



Note: The WSSCA web site has links to several great resources, and one that bears another look is the Hanover Research report on school fences. The WSSAT School Security audits that WSSCA has conducted have shown that there is a lot of variation in how school fences are provided, installed and maintained. I have included the opening paragraph of the executive summary of this research report along with the link to the full report. Interesting stuff – really.

Growing concerns over safety in U.S. schools have led many districts to consider the implementation of new, more stringent security measures. The use of fencing to bolster campus security – often as part of broader safety plans – has become a key issue in discussions of school safety. The National School Safety Center highlights control of campus access as a central dimension of strategic school preparation, and proponents argue that campus fencing can not only provide adequate protection, but, assuming strategic budget allocation and effective planning, can also be aesthetically pleasing. Opponents argue that fencing can contribute to an unpleasant environment for children and may not be fully effective in deterring security breaches.



Click [here](#) for additional information.

How Does Indoor Air Quality Impact Student Health and Academic Performance?

Recent research suggests that a school's physical environment also can play a major role in academic performance.

Leaky roofs, problems with HVAC systems, insufficient cleaning or excessive use of cleaning chemicals and other maintenance issues can trigger a host of health problems, including asthma and allergies that increase absenteeism and reduce academic performance. Research links key environmental factors to health outcomes and students' ability to perform. Improvements in school environmental quality can enhance academic performance, as well as teacher and staff productivity and retention.

Click [here](#) for additional information.

Playground Safety

It's Always Time



Note: WSSCA Advisor Jodi Traas has been great about keeping us up to date and well informed about playground safety issues. This month I'm borrowing a little of her thunder and sharing a brief reminder from the SafeKids.org web site. Spring is almost here and winter always does a job on both the physical aspects of our playgrounds and the memories of those supervising and using them.

With active supervision and some basic safety tips, every day at the playground can be a walk in the park.

The Hard Facts

Falls are the most common type of playground injury, accounting for more than 75 percent of all playground-related injuries. Lack of or improper supervision is associated with approximately 45 percent of playground-related injuries.



Top Tips

1. Actively supervise children on playgrounds. It won't be hard – they'll probably be calling for you to watch them climb, jump and swing.
2. Take your kids to playgrounds with shock absorbing surfaces such as rubber, synthetic turf, sand, pea gravel, wood chips or mulch. If your child falls, the landing will be more cushioned than on asphalt, concrete, grass or dirt.
3. Dress appropriately for the playground. Remove necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings that can get caught on equipment and pose a strangulation hazard. Even helmets can be dangerous on a playground, so save those for bikes.
4. Teach children that pushing, shoving or crowding while on the playground can be dangerous.

Congratulations to our new 2nd Vice President and Board of Directors!



John Stangler - Pewaukee School District - 2nd Vice President



Jay Jones - Oshkosh School District - Board of Directors



Jeremiah Johnson - Muskego Norway School District - Board of Directors



Tim Gorecki - Muskego Norway School District - Board of Directors



Scott Johnson - West Salem School District - Board of Directors

Thank you to all our candidates who ran in our recent election.

Certification Course Modules 5 and 10

April 25, 2017

Holiday Inn Madison at The American Center Madison, WI 53718

Click [here](#) to register.

Quotes of the Month

"When good people in any country cease their vigilance and struggle, then evil men prevail.

- *Pearl S. Buck*

"We are afraid to care too much, for fear that the other person does not care at all."

- *Eleanor Roosevelt*

Borrowed Humor

SpringFever

Four high school boys afflicted with spring fever skipped morning classes. After their lunch break they reported to the teacher that they had a flat tire.

Much to their relief she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a test today so take seats apart from one another and take out a piece of paper." Still smiling, she waited for them to sit down. Then she said, "First question, which tire was flat?"



Thank you to all the participants, vendors, and sponsors of the 49th Annual WSSCA Conference and Expo. Mark your calendar now and plan to come to the **50th Anniversary Conference on February 26-27, 2018!**



School Safety Certification
2017 Course Schedule

Modules	Course Titles	Dates	Location
5&10	Sound Risk Management Practices Emergency Response Practicum - Register at WSSCA.org.	April 25, 2017	Madison, WI
1&6	Health and Safety Compliance Part A General Aspects of Crisis Management	October 2017	To be determined

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WSSCA CONTACT INFORMATION

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