

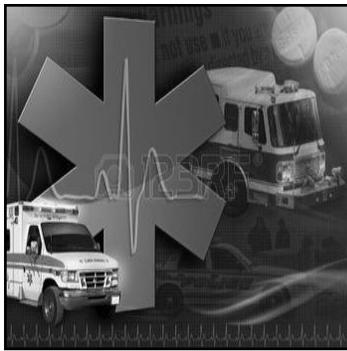
MOVING FORWARD

News and information about the education of special
needs students for teachers and parents

Winter 2016

CRISIS INTERVENTION

As members of the human family, we are all traveling on our own unique life journeys, from birth to death. Life can be filled with amazing experiences and wonderful moments that bring us joy, but life is a bumpy road. At some point in our lives, no one will have escaped experiencing at least one or more traumatic events, be it through life-threatening injuries or illness, death, war, terrorism, violent crimes, or personal loss.



intervention procedures, including suicide prevention, the use of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CPI) procedures, and short-term crisis counseling.

From a proactive perspective, teachers and support staff receive ongoing professional development for district-wide and building level Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and anti-bullying education.

The occurrences of most of these events are usually not within our ability to accurately predict or effectively control. However, the good news is that through emergency preparedness and crisis intervention, the quality of our lives following a traumatic event can be significantly improved. In fact, what we view as being a potential catastrophic situation can often lead to positive, transformative life changes.

The community is also supported by county, state and federal resources that are in place to assist families in crisis that offer assistance with food, shelter, clothing, counseling, and medical assistance.

Because it is a sad commentary that our world has become an increasingly unpredictable and potentially dangerous place to live in, the theme of this issue of *Moving Forward* addresses crisis intervention.

There are procedures that have been put in place in all of our schools that support safety for all students and staff. These include fire, tornado and lockdown drills that are practiced on a regular basis. In addition, every school has a crisis team that has been trained in specific crisis

This newsletter touches upon various types of crisis, and more importantly, it provides a short list of essential resources in the community so that families can always find a place to reach out for help when needed.

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Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved.

Helen Keller

SCHOOL AND CRISIS

What kind of crises do schools have to deal with?

Death of student/staff Students who go "missing" Terminal illness Intimidation
 Extreme poverty Homelessness Hunger Students or parents who are murdered or abused
 Suicide Mental illness Bullying Runaways Neglect Gang initiation
 Sexual assault Incarceration Harassment Drug/Alcohol abuse Destruction of homes



Warning signs that a student may be in crisis:

Sudden changes in behavior Uncontrollable anger Sleeping all the time Sudden refusal to talk Erratic behavior
 Regression Changes in hygiene Extreme mood swings Things that used to matter don't anymore Excessive crying
 Hopelessness A new group of (negative) friends Self-destruction Extreme weight gain or loss No motivation
 Sudden obsession about death or destruction Mental deterioration Aggression Poor concentration School failure

People in the schools that you should know:

Guidance Counselors School Psychologists Administrators Social Workers Parent Involvement Coordinators
 School Security District Homeless Coordinator Mental Health Agency Therapists Student Support Services

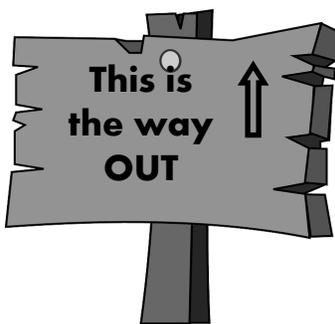
How to Survive Rock Bottom

The concept of "**Rock Bottom**" can be different from person to person. Some people take a long time to reach the bottom. Others, who are at a much lower point in life, have a much shorter distance.

Regardless of how we measure the fall, one thing is certain, we often can't see our way out, blaming our demise on the economy, bad relationships, lack of money, poor decisions, trauma or just bad luck. Knowing "why" things happened may be important for making future decisions, but offers little help on how to get "unstuck."

Planning **HOW** you are going to make a come back is what is really important. Here are some things to consider when we find ourselves in a downward spiral.

- What can you control? There are some things that can be changed, and some that cannot. Work with what you can, and sidestep what is unmovable. No matter how small, take a step in the right direction.
- Create a personal plan with small goals that are reachable. Feelings of accomplishment go a long way



in making you feel better about yourself, and can help you build some upward momentum.

- Alcoholics Anonymous used to have a motto: "**If you don't want to slip up, stay away from slippery places.**" To move forward, you may have to take inventory of your relationships, friends, habits and your environment. Tough decisions will need to be made, or real change may be very elusive.
- The great part about reaching bottom is that you can only go back up. Take a good, hard look in the mirror. Sometimes we just lose perspective. Taking a step back, swallowing pride and asking for help from a trusted source can be just the pull you need to step out of the hole.
- Feeling sorry for yourself only perpetuates the feeling of failure. Look around and gauge where you are in the world compared to others. Believe it or not hitting bottom energize the soul. It reinforces a fresh sense of humility, and that can be a very powerful force for change.

WARNING SIGNS AND TIPS FOR DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION

RED FLAG! Your Date is...

- ◆ rushing you to have sex or pressuring you into doing things that you don't want to do
- ◆ trying to isolate you from your friends and family
- ◆ brags about winning fights, and generally treats others with disrespect
- ◆ wants to meet you in a private place where there are few, if any people around.
- ◆ trying to control you, or seems overly jealous
- ◆ blames all of his/her life problems on other people
- ◆ Becomes violent with little provocation
- ◆ is constantly monitoring where you are, and demands to know what you are doing at all times
- ◆ uses aggressive language and posturing



- ◆ Trust your instincts. If your gut feeling is trying to tell you that something is wrong, LISTEN to it.
- ◆ Keep a clear mind. Don't be talked into experimenting with substances that may cloud your thinking. Don't accept drinks that you didn't open, and don't ever leave a drink unattended.
- ◆ Let friends and family know where you are at all times.
- ◆ If you don't feel comfortable driving home with someone, discreetly call a cab or a friend. Don't EVER get into a car if your gut tells you not to.
- ◆ When meeting a person for the first time, meet in a public place, or take some friends with you to sit at a distance.
- ◆ If you really like the person but still feel something may be wrong, do a background check.
- ◆ Don't be lured by those who may be too good to be true. Con-artists are great at being charming.
- ◆ Always keep your cell phone charged, handy, and ready for use. Consider a code that you can use to call someone that discreetly signals that you are in trouble.

Tips to Consider for Safety

- ◆ Don't ever be lulled into a sense of security. Always be aware of your surroundings and have an exit plan.



DEALING WITH LOSS— THE “ART” OF EFFECTIVE GRIEVING

Grief is a process that cannot be dictated by time or even the best intentions. The sufferer can try to control this course, but more often than not, it takes on a life of its own. The best way to deal with grief is to accept the journey, and find the inner strength to weather the storms.

Everyone has a different approach to grieving. Sad, angry, indifferent, or moody, no one really knows how they will react until the situation presents itself. There is no set formula for coping with grief, and one method is not better than another. *The best approach is whatever works for you.*

The most productive grief is when a person channels their emotions into something constructive. This is especially true with senseless killing, suicide or sudden death.

The Breast Cancer Walk, Black Lives Matter, Suicide Out of the Darkness walk, are just a few examples of national pro-

grams that were borne out of a small group of people who felt the need to take a bad situation and make it better for others. Some wounds may never heal, but knowing something good came out of it, no matter how small, can release some of the pain.

Loss can consume a lot of emotions and energy. Find ways to replenish yourself such as meditation, art, or exercise. Doing nothing but dwelling on what happened for long periods of time may only intensify your pain.

The most important thing to know is when to get help. If you are paralyzed with sadness, become self-destructive, hopeless or aggressive, *reach out*. Find a trusted person, a counselor, a therapist or support group with whom you can openly share your feelings.

Loss is often a game-changer. The question is whether or not it will serve as a stepping stone or a personal peril.



RESOURCES FOR DEALING WITH CRISIS

Alternative House: A safe-house for children who are in danger or need emergency shelter. Assistance is local, FREE and confidential. **219-938-7070**

Crisis Hotline: A 24 hour phone center for people in crisis. Free and anonymous. **219-938-0900**

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **800-273-8255**

Runaway Hotline: **800-RUNAWAY**

Lake County Health Department: **219-755-3655**

Food Bank of Northwest Indiana: **219-980-1777**



Indiana Child Protective Services: To report suspected child neglect, abuse: **800-800-5556**

Indiana Adult Protective Services: To report suspected abuse or neglect of elderly or disabled adults. **800-992-6978**

The Caring Place provides service and shelter for victims of violence and their children. Through education and awareness, we empower all members of the community to live in peace. **219-464-2128** or **800-933-0466**

Alcoholics Anonymous: Hammond **219-844-6695**

Northwest Indiana Narcotics Anonymous: **219-765-5327**

KNOWING DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES CAN BOOST COMMUNICATION

Dealing with children and young adults can be very different, depending on what developmental stage they are in. Here are some proactive tips for keeping the lines of communication open:

- **Elementary School** children don't always understand the relationship between action and consequence. Expectations and instructions have to be clear and concrete. Life tends to be about wants and needs, often without much forethought. It's better not to ask "why" a child behaved a certain way because the stories and excuses can be nonsensical and endless. Speak directly and leave very little to inference.
- To **Middle School** children, friendships are everything! (They may even dress alike). The roots of adult rebellion are stirring, but not quite at their peak. Research indicates that middle school is the time many students start taking risks with drugs, sex and other negative behavior. This is a tough age. This group tends to be stubborn, overly dramatic and high energy. Don't react until you know exactly what happened.
- **High School** students want to be independent and separate themselves from adult authority. They are not children, and they are not yet adults. Whereas middle school is about sameness, high school is about cultivating a unique identity to stand out from others. High school students need to have options, for direct demands tend to be met with great resistance. Allowing them some ownership in the decision-making process goes a long way. To overlook their need for some control can invite exhausting power struggles.



Defeat may serve as well as victory to shake the soul and let the glory out.

Edwin Markham

Moving Forward

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