

Crisis plan

Espoo Growth and Learning Sector

Contents:

1. **Acting in a sudden crisis.**
2. **Preparation for crises and the roles of different people.** This plan describes crisis preparations at the City of Espoo Growth and Learning Sector. The operating unit should enter its specific contact details on the city's internal safety action plans.
3. **Unit-specific section.** The Director of Early Childhood Education/principal of the school (Head of Unit/supervisor) is responsible for the crisis plan with the student welfare unit. The Head of Unit is also responsible for what to do in an ongoing situation until the rescue services of police assumes responsibility.
4. **Information on crises and mental support**
5. **Tools for talking to children and young people after a crisis**

The city's internal safety **action plans** include detailed instructions for various crises, threats and hazards.

There is also a student welfare crisis plan, prepared by the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County, for the county's student welfare personnel.

1. Acting in a sudden crisis

Immediate actions in a threatening or hazardous situation

- Rescue and warn those in immediate danger.
- Prevent further damage.
- Remain calm.
- Call emergency services 112 for assistance.
- Report to your supervisor.
 - o Calling is the fastest way. Make sure the information is received.
 - o Report minor situations – if you don't, it could get worse with time.
- Follow the instructions of the authorities and your supervisor.

Receiving a crisis message

- Stay calm.
- Pay attention and take notes of what the reporter says, stick to the facts.
- Ask verifying questions to make sure that you understood.
- After the report, immediately contact the Head of Unit or a member of the crisis team.

Other measures during a crisis or hazard

- During a crisis, an employee at the unit must contact the head of unit, principal, vice principal or any member of the crisis team.
- A supervisor will convene the crisis team if necessary. They can also authorise someone directly to handle the crisis.
- The crisis team or those authorised agree on the crisis procedure in accordance with the city's internal safety **action plans**.
- The Head of Unit must immediately report to their supervisor, the director of the operating unit, and communications.
- The Head of Unit then informs their personnel and the guardians, and the students if necessary.
- The crisis team helps to plan and possibly implement aftercare measures.
- The crisis team monitors the wellbeing of the students and personnel after the event and helps them find professional help if they need it.

2. Preparation for crises and the roles of different people

Updates to the crisis plan

This crisis plan is a practical tool that must be updated when necessary. Unit-specific contact details must be updated on the action plans. The entire personnel must review the crisis plan and the action plans at the start of the academic year. New officials/employees must also be trained in them as soon as possible. The crisis plan and action plans must be known by the personnel and easily available to them.

Annual communications to the work community and guardians

The operational unit's crisis readiness requires it to train its entire personnel. Every employee must be ready to act in a crisis, as anyone may have to face one. The crisis plan is available to the students and guardians on the student welfare website.

Roles for different actors



Cooperation with police, rescue services etc.

Operational unit's crisis team

- Preparation for crises on the unit level
- Cooperation within the unit and with external parties
- Action during and after a crisis

KOTO working group for safety

- Prepares instructions for a safe (physical, mental and social) learning and work environment
- Reviews the tools for identifying and preventing crises and their observed shortcomings.

KOTO crisis team

- Convenes to take charge of the crisis

Crisis team of the early childhood care unit/pre-primary education unit/school/educational institution

Members:	Tasks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The unit must agree on a core team to designate as the crisis team - Members of the crisis team at a pre-primary education unit/school/educational institution can include all student welfare employees or some of them - It is possible to invite experts from partners as well as other unit personnel to the team - The crisis team must have a deputy head and a deputy of the deputy head, if necessary - The members of the crisis team must be prepared and willing to perform crisis tasks - The crisis team must plan and carry out psychosocial support during sudden crises - The members of the crisis team are included in the unit-specific section of this plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The team must meet at least once per semester, in autumn and spring - Responsible for planning of its activities - Documents the team's internal division of labour and responsibilities - Finds out the important local/regional crisis partners in advance and agrees on how to work with them - Trains other unit personnel on the crisis plan through courses, among other things. Training of personnel is the joint responsibility of the crisis team and the Head of Unit. - Ensures that all adults, children and young people, and their guardians know what to do in different situations and what to communicate in different stages of a crisis. - Organises the crisis response - Provides immediate psychological support and helps with possible further measures - Assesses the crisis actions and updates the crisis plan as necessary

KOTO working group for safety

Members:	Tasks:
<p>Includes the following parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unit for Swedish Education and Cultural Services - Finnish Basic Education Unit - Finnish Early Childhood Education Unit - Finnish Upper Secondary Education and Youth Services Unit - Growth and Learning Sector Management - Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Service County, Preventive and early support services - Western Uusimaa Police Department - The chair of the group is the administrative director of the sector 	<p>The KOTO working group for safety prepares instructions for a safe (physical, mental and social) early childhood education, learning and, work environment and reviews the tools for identifying and preventing risks and their observed shortcomings.</p>

Western Uusimaa Social and Crisis Emergency Services

Telephone: +358 29 151 2221 (24/7) Focuses on acute crisis services – traumatic events, near-misses Its approach is to provide psychological first aid for individuals and families. Social and Crisis Emergency Services provides psycho-social support after major accidents. It does not hold debriefing sessions. [Read more about Social and Crisis Emergency Services at the LUVN website.](#)

Occupational health care

The City of Espoo's Occupational Health Services provides debriefing assistance to support the personnel's ability to work after a sudden, particularly shocking experience at work that endangers the sense of well-being and safety. Examples include serious and shocking accidents, sudden violence or threat thereof at work, or the unexpected death of a colleague, such as in an accident or by their own hand.

These debriefings can be group sessions or one-on-one with an occupational psychologist or nurse. Debriefing of a shocking event support any worker affected by the crisis. They aim to promote recovery, alleviate the aftereffects and, in the case of a group session, allow for peer support.

3. Unit-specific section

First aid instructions

- First aid instructions are stored in the crisis folders in personnel facilities
- The folder includes information on persons qualified to give first aid

First aid equipment

- Must be stored in a place where everyone can find them. Place:
-

Unit's crisis team

- Members of the crisis team:
-

Communications during a crisis

There are separate instructions for communication, see KOTO's crisis communication threads

- The Head of Unit is responsible for in-unit communications. The personnel do not give interviews.
- The members of the crisis team inform their own supervisors.

4. Information on crises and mental support

Definitions: crisis and trauma

What people usually mean by a crisis is when someone is thrust into a life situation that they don't have previous experience or capabilities to handle. Crises can be divided into developmental crises and traumatic crises.

Normal developmental crises include transitional life events, such as puberty, break-up of a relationship, moving to live on your own, or entering the military service. Most people can handle these events on their own, although sometimes through significant effort.

Traumatic events are likely to cause significant pain to anyone. The death of a close one, a major accident, or your house could burn down. A traumatic crisis splits your life in two – life before and life after.

Therefore, trauma refers not only to the traumatic event but its damaging effect on a person's mental capacity. Negative experiences over a long time (such as sexual abuse or domestic violence) can also create a trauma.

Stages of a traumatic crisis and recovery

We all experience a traumatic situation in different ways. There are, however, different stages in the mental reactions to a traumatic crisis that are similar, independent of the cause or target of the crisis. It is important to understand that crisis reactions are expected in highly difficult life events.

Stages of a traumatic crisis

1. **Shock** can last from a few hours to a few days. In this stage, you may not comprehend what happened or even try to deny it. You may act abnormally or inappropriately, such as remain cool and collected or become furious and confused. It's possible that you don't remember what happened or what others have told you.
2. **Reaction** may last for a few weeks to a month. In this stage, you try to understand why and how it all happened. Your mental defences start working better and your denial lessens. In this stage, you may experience physical symptoms, anxiety, depression, difficulty sleeping, hostility (such as blaming others), concealing your emotions or pretending to be in control.
3. **Processing** can take from a few months to a year. This is the stage where you begin to accept what happened, you focus on it less, and the symptoms and feelings lessen. As you recover, your physical and mental symptoms fade and your mood improves. If you don't get the support you need to process your trauma, you may end up with post-traumatic stress disorder, which weakens your functional capacity and quality of life. It can manifest as insomnia, nightmares, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, difficulty learning or disability. Recovery will require professional help.

4. Reorientation is when the final recovery happens.

You have been able to process what happened and are no longer bound by it. A crisis always changes you, but in the best case scenario, you become stronger and better equipped to face further setbacks.

Immediate support for recovery

The following help with trauma recovery:

- a calm, safe atmosphere
- compassion and care
- understanding and accepting your reactions
- listening to the victims
- refraining from empty statements and promises
- a calm presence, not being left alone
- open and honest knowledge about what happened
- keeping up to date.

Rituals play an important role in processing grief. Memorials, funerals, photos, candles, writing letters or drawing can help you work through your grief.

- Opportunity to talk in the group of children or class
- Opportunity for one-on-one discussions with an adult
- Support from student welfare
- First aid from Social and Crisis Emergency Services

Debriefing for employees working through a crisis after the first stage

For helpers in a traumatic event. Allows immediate discussions on what happened and talk about your experiences. The crisis team can also hold a debriefing without an external host.

Need for further support

What further support people need is unique and influenced by the nature of the traumatic event. Grief over the death of a loved one does not fade in a few months, if ever, which is why you need time to grieve and recover. Some children or young people may need to discuss and process the issue several times. In such cases, student welfare and health care personnel can hold individual or group meetings for them. After a particularly traumatic event, a child or young person may need trauma therapy, in which case they are referred to further treatment. The unit's employees may also need further support.

5. Tools for talking to children and young people after a crisis

Here are some tools that you can use to process crises with children and young people. Remember to consider their age. After a traumatic event that has impacted the whole unit, it is a good idea to talk about it in groups/classes **on the day after the event or a few days later at most**. This discussion should be led by an employee/teacher with a partner if necessary. The employer/teacher/partner must ask the crisis team for the facts of the crisis.

These events are for discussing the **facts** and the **feelings and thoughts** about the crisis. It is usually easier for children and young people to return to early childhood education/pre-primary education/learning when they get to talk about it. Put aside enough time for the discussion event with plenty of leeway.

1. Getting started

Tell the participants what's going to happen in this discussion, as this helps to understand what happened.

Tell them the principles of the event:

- Recommend that the participants don't tell people not there about what the others have said. Nobody should be ridiculed afterwards because of what they have said or how they have reacted.
- It is allowed, not required, to be emotional.
- Everyone speaks for themselves, nobody has to speak.

2. State the facts

Discuss what factually happened. Try to instil an overall understanding of what actually happened. Address false rumours and correct misconceptions.

The children and young people can say how, from whom and where they found out about what happened.

3. Thoughts and feelings

Ask the children/young people what they thought or felt when they heard about what happened and how they feel or think now. Tell them that any experience, thought, or reaction to what happened is valid. Example questions:

- Are there any kinds of thoughts that haven't gone away? What are you thinking right now?

- Does anyone else feel the same way?
- How did you react?
- How do you feel right now?

The employee/teacher should focus on the fact that reactions are normal. It is worth saying that nobody has to react in one way or another.

After this, the employee/teacher can, depending on the age of the group, tell them what kinds of possible reactions are normal and that they usually pass (e.g. flashbacks, difficulty sleeping, various emotions, grief, longing, anger, fear, need for attention, guilt, blaming yourself, shame, difficulties at school, physical pain, avoidance of contact).

The adult can also encourage the group to:

- talk about what happened with their parents,
- talk to friends and acquaintances,
- talk to the psychologist, school social worker or public health nurse,
- visit the scene of the event,
- express their feelings through actions that feel natural (such as exercise, writing, drawing, listening to music, playing games).

4. Finishing up

Conclude the event: put things together. At the end, you can ask the group:

- Is there still something on your mind, was anything unclear?
- Is there anything that you're particularly concerned about?
- What did it feel like to talk about these things together?

If necessary, refer a child or young person to individual support in accordance with the Student Welfare Act.