

## Tips for Teachers: Talking to Students about a Death

As hurtful as it is, tragedy can bring people together and provide opportunities for growth and understanding. The following are some thoughts as you talk with your students:

- Provide students with the facts in a calm, caring manner.
- Students know and trust you. They will appreciate the opportunity to talk about the situation in a secure environment. They can learn from the manner in which you handle the situation.
- If you are comfortable with the discussion, allow students to talk about the things they might have heard about what happened, but remind them the facts may be different.
- Tell students the school will keep them informed of the facts as they are made aware.
- Some students may not know the student. Others won't have much personal reaction to the situation. They may or may not want to discuss what happened.
- Some students will react with sadness; others with anger; others with silence. Assure them that all of these reactions are normal.
- Allow yourself some time to regroup. Tend to your own needs. If you don't feel you can talk with students, ask for a back-up.

## SUICIDE or Suicide Attempts:

- Most students have had friends who have thought about suicide or they have entertained thoughts of suicide themselves. Help them discuss alternate courses of action and community and school resources that are available to them.
- Many students feel guilty for not having tried or been able to help. Guilt needs to be worked through as quickly as possible.
- Remind students of what they can do to prevent this type of tragedy from happening to someone else. They can listen, take threats of suicide seriously, and get an adult to help.