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# **ALERT**

**November 2nd, 2016**

## **Abbotsford, B.C., High School Stabbing**

**Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and Traumatic Aftermath**

### **Dealing with the Aftermath of a High Profile Tragedy**

Sadly the deadly stabbing attack at Abbotsford Senior Secondary has ensued in the death of a student and another listed in stable condition.

Due to the extensive coverage nationally and internationally through news media/social media this has created a critical period for our province and beyond. We are now in a “critical period” which is a predictable timeframe for increases in worrisome, threat making or threat-related behaviours that will extend at least two weeks beyond when the media coverage subsides.

Of utmost importance for professionals and parents to understand is that high-profile trauma intensifies already existing symptoms in identified vulnerable, and troubled youth. This can include those who identify with the victims and those who identify with the alleged perpetrator increasing their justification for targeting youth through bullying, threats, or other acts of violence.

Being caught within the “impact zone” of a high profile trauma means that some youth may be impacted by the widespread coverage of the violent incident.

For those who have recently experienced threats or acts of violence this incident could cause traumatic stimuli for them and it is important to reach out to such students at this time.

Given that we have seen an increase in worrisome and threat-related behaviour throughout BC and across Canada, it is important to be mindful of any changes in the behavioural baselines of students.

Due to the critical period and the impact zone that this current tragic event has created it is important to be aware of any students that may self identify throughout this time and ensure that your VTRA process is followed by continuing to collect data in collaboration with local support agencies prior to taking any disciplinary measures.

Given the viral nature of viewing of this incident it is imperative that our counselling and support staff have the resources to respond to any conscious or unconscious cries for help as they may emerge throughout the critical period. One of our greatest concerns is the number of our students who have watched once, or multiple times, the actual video of the incident. This may be important information for staff and parents to know when dealing with students exhibiting worrisome behaviour.

Please find attached some guidelines for staff and parents may assist when working through this traumatic event.

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