

# TIPS FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS: ADDRESSING CONFLICTS

*Conflicts prompt a range of strong emotions, perspectives, and actions. As a school mental health provider your support is critical to promoting positive emotion expression, coping and adjustment following upsetting events.*

## AS A SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER, HOW CAN YOU BEST RESPOND?

### FOCUS ON YOUR ACTIONS:

- Prioritize staff and student safety; be aware of and follow safety plans within your school and district.
- Work closely with your school team of educators, student support team members, and administrators to determine how to best offer support (including grief counseling, safety planning, etc.).
- Validate and reflect back on thoughts and feelings students and families express.
- Discuss and offer healthy strategies to process feelings of anger, sadness, anxiety, and fear.
- Offer meeting times with safe and private locations for students, families, and/or staff who would like to discuss and share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns about the events.
- Consult administrators to find the best way to be available to teachers and staff (i.e. attending a school staff meeting to offer assistance in unpacking an event)
- Don't forget to ensure and maintain confidentiality in student and family contacts.
- Pay attention to your own emotional wellness and regularly practice self-care strategies.

### REMEMBER TO STAY POSITIVE:

- Focus discussions and actions on student, family, classroom, school-wide and community level strengths, coping, and healing.
- Remain a positive, politically neutral supportive entity in the school.
- Support students' exploration of how they can express their opinions in productive and non-violent ways.
- Encourage peaceful expression of thoughts and feelings.
- Empower students and families to talk together about their feelings and the larger social issues underlying recent events.

