



Collegiate Tragedy Response Procedure

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PERTINENT DEFINITIONS TO PROCEDURE

Decision Group:

The Decision Group is comprised of the collegiate chapter's Senior Collegiate Development Specialist or Collegiate Development Specialist (SCDS/CDS), Regional Collegiate Specialist (RCS) and Regional Director (RD). The Director of Member Services can be included as needed, in addition to the Director: Chapter Support and Director: Chapter Advancement should the chapter be on a status and is receiving additional support. This group convenes via conference call or email to proceed through this procedure. The participants in this decision group mirror those who participate in the Tier 1 Decision Group identified in the Chapter Status Guide. The Decision Group can also choose to include the chapter president and advisory team chair (ATC) in their conversation should they find it valuable to hear directly from chapter leadership in determining action steps and needed support.

Note: the RCS may be substituted throughout this procedure for the chapter's Council Appointed Coordinator (CAC), Council Appointed Specialist (CAS) or New Chapter Coordinator (NCC), if applicable. In the event that a tragedy occurs within a new chapter, the Growth and Development Specialist should also be included.

Alumna:

In the event that a crisis involves an alumna member, the marketing and communications team will assess the crisis, determine the threat level and engage with the Crisis Communications Plan. Should support be deemed necessary to the collegiate chapter, the SCDS/CDS and Member Services will assist in determining action.

Tragedy:

Webster's Dictionary defines tragedy as: "[A] very bad event that causes great sadness and often involves someone's death" or "a very sad, unfortunate, or upsetting situation: something that causes strong feelings of sadness or regret."

With this base definition, the Tragedy Response Working Group identified the following types of tragedies that can impact a chapter, campus or the Fraternity as a whole.

- **Chapter Tragedy** includes but is not limited to injury or death (accidental or criminal) of collegiate new member/members, chapter employee or a chapter housing incident (accidental fire, natural disaster, riot, terrorism, arson), regardless of whether or not the housing/meeting space is owned by the chapter, the campus or a third party.
- **Campus Tragedy** includes but is not limited to injury or death (accidental or criminal) of a student, faculty or campus representative on campus, crime affecting, or witness by, more than one student on campus (hazing, mass violence, robberies, assaults, etc.), fire, natural disaster, terrorism or riot on campus or within the local campus community having a direct impact to our members.

When one of these types of tragedies occurs and Delta Gamma members are affected, it is the Fraternity's responsibility to work with the University/Fraternity Sorority Life Adviser (FSA), and/or designated campus liaison, to respond accordingly and provide organized, timely, and likely, ongoing support to those members.

Thus, the Collegiate Chapter Tragedy Response Procedures were developed to provide collegiate chapters, advisers, and alumnae with organized, guided action steps to tragic incidents and to ensure that all Delta Gammas affected by a tragedy receive and/or have access to appropriate support for their needs.

Relevant Policies:

- Crisis Management Procedures, Section 6: [Collegiate Chapter Officers Manual](#)
- [Crisis Communication Policy](#)
- Memorial Ceremony Options, [Rituals Handbook](#)

POSSIBLE TRAGEDY REPORTED TO

Executive Offices

- Notify CDS immediately (if CDS isn't who reported to)
- CDS Notifies Decision Group within 24 hours
- *Note: If a recent alumna is involved, CDS notifies the Alumnae Department at EO so she can alert the Regional Alumnae Specialist (RAS) and Alumnae Directors.*

Regional Team

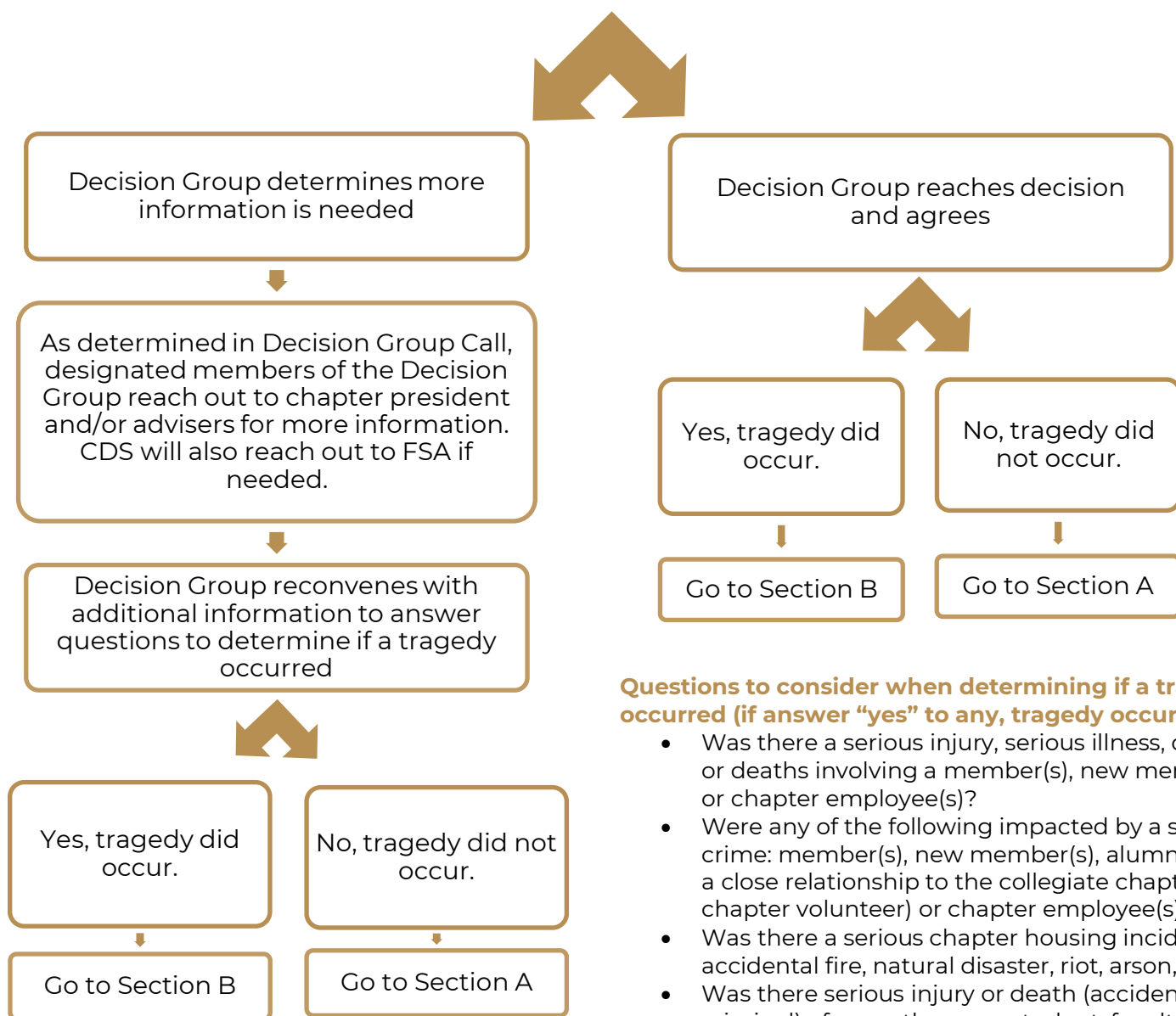
- Notify Regional Collegiate Specialist (RCS) immediately (if RCS isn't who reported to)
- RCS Notifies Decision Group within 24 hours

NOTES FOR ENTIRE PROCEDURE

- The SCDS/CDS, RCS and RD provide chapter-specific guidance and perspective, while the Director of Member Services, Director: Chapter Support and Director: Chapter Advancement provide context to larger conversations and goals. These roles can be consulted and included in the Tier 1 Decision Group calls as needed.
- The SCDS/CDS will send an email to any member of the Decision Group with updates as decisions are made by the majority of the Decision Group, if they were not present/unable to attend the call.
- The SCDS/CDS will also provide information to other key stakeholders as outlined in the Crisis Communication Procedure so all appropriate parties remain informed of any pertinent developments.
- The SCDS/CDS will also provide information to the FSA/University point of contact, if deemed appropriate, so all relevant parties remain informed of any pertinent developments.

TRAGEDY RESPONSE PROCEDURE - DETERMINING WHETHER A TRAGEDY OCCURRED

Executive Offices should be made aware of an incident as soon as is reasonably possible. If medical or fire emergency assistance is needed, 9-1-1 should always be the first notification followed by crisis@deltagamma.org. Include the RCS/NCC/CAC and RD in your email. The individual who is able to respond the quickest will provide any immediate recommendations. Subsequent support and action steps will be determined by the tragedy.



SECTION A – A TRAGEDY DID NOT OCCUR

SCDS/CDS

- Track outcome of Decision Group call via emailed Call Summary
- Follow up with FSA (if applicable/appropriate)

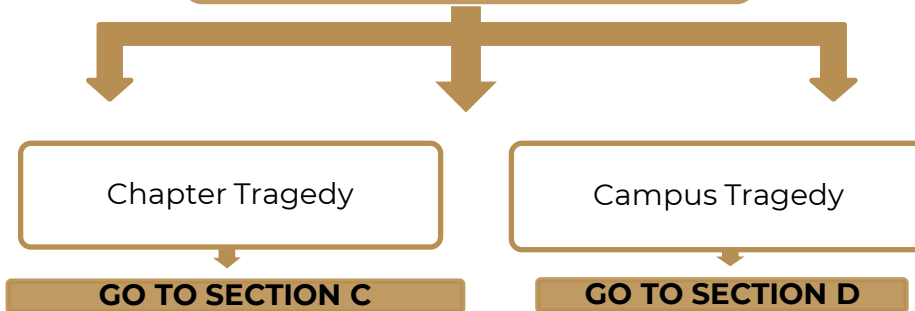
RCS

- Track Honor Board's progress (if applicable)
- Collaborate with RD and other appropriate regional team members to support the chapter following the occurrence that led to the call

SECTION B - A TRAGEDY DID OCCUR

SCDS/CDS, RCS, & RD, in consultation with the Director of Member Services and Director: Chapter Support or Director Chapter Advancement, work through the remainder of procedure.

Determine which type of tragedy has occurred by using the guiding questions below.



Questions to consider when determining if a *Chapter Tragedy* occurred (if answer “yes” to any, *Chapter Tragedy* occurred):

- Were there injuries or deaths of collegian(s), new members, chapter employee or chapter volunteer?
- Was there a serious injury, death, or chronic/terminal illness involving a chapter employee?
- Were any of the following impacted by a serious crime: collegian(s) or new member(s)?
- Was there a serious chapter housing incident (i.e., accidental fire, natural disaster, riot, terrorism, robbery, etc.)?
- Was there an occurrence involving collegian(s) or new member(s) that the Decision Group feels is a Chapter Tragedy?

Questions to consider when determining if a *Campus Tragedy* occurred (if answer “yes” to any, *Campus Tragedy* occurred):

- Were there injuries or deaths of a student, faculty member or campus representative?
- Was more than one student impacted by a criminal act (mass violence, hazing, campus violence, terrorism, etc.)?
- Was a student impacted by a disaster (natural disaster, riot, fire, etc.)?
- Was there an occurrence involving members of the campus community that indirectly impacts the collegian members, which the Decision Group feels is a Campus Tragedy?

SECTION C - CHAPTER TRAGEDY OCCURRED

1. SCDS/CDS, RCS and RD, in consultation with the Director of Member Services and Director: Chapter Support or Director Chapter Advancement, work through the remainder of procedure.
2. The Decision Group decides upon a nuanced support plan in response to the Chapter Tragedy. They should consider each of the following support options:

In-Person Meeting

- Meeting in person may help reduce the amount of panic or gossip related to the tragedy.
- This should only occur if the meeting can be led by someone with an appropriate disposition and skill set for discussing such issues.
- Only facts should be presented, including campus resources.
- This may not always be appropriate if the tragedy is of a sensitive nature.
- Should a visit be made by a Fraternity official?

Identify Resources

- CDS should check for the Campus Resource Worksheet on file and share with the chapter president.
- Community resources or on-campus counseling services may be contacted and made available to members.

Personal Outreach

- Should parents or families or specific members be called by the Executive Director?
- Should the ATC and/or chapter president be called by a member of International Council or staff?
- Should cards or flowers be sent by the Regional Team or EO?
- Please note that in the case of a death, card or flowers or donations are predetermined by Council protocol.
- Other arrangements to consider may be funeral attendance, meal coordination for families, etc.

Communication Plan

- Collaborate with the Marketing & Communications team at EO to determine which audiences should receive communication about the given tragedy. Audiences to consider include chapter members, parents, local alumnae, alumnae of that chapter, general press release, and social media posts.

Alternative Housing

- If the chapter facility is uninhabitable, the CDS will work with the Office of Housing to create a solution (temporary housing, relocation, etc.) in conjunction with the local House Corporation Board (HCB) and Regional Housing Specialist (RHS.)

3. Once a custom support plan has been agreed upon, proceed to [Section F: On-Going Support](#). Following the call, CDS sends a Call Summary to the Decision Group

SECTION D - CAMPUS TRAGEDY OCCURRED

1. SCDS/CDS, RCS and RD, in consultation with the Director of Member Services and Director: Chapter Support or Director Chapter Advancement, work through the remainder of procedure.
2. The Decision Group decides upon a nuanced support plan in response to the Campus Tragedy. They should consider each of the following support options:

In-Person Meeting

- Meeting in person may help reduce the amount of panic or gossip related to the tragedy.
- This should only occur if the meeting can be led by someone with an appropriate disposition and skill set for discussing such issues.
- Only facts should be presented, including campus resources.
- This may not always be appropriate if the tragedy is of a sensitive nature.
- Should a visit be made by a Fraternity official?

Identify Resources

- CDS should check for the Campus Resource Worksheet on file and share with the chapter president.
- Community resources or on-campus counseling services may be contacted and made available to members.
- Following a Campus Tragedy, a University response plan is likely. Consider collaborating with the FSA to utilize and support this plan.

Personal Outreach

- Should parents or families or specific members be called by the Executive Director?
- Should the ATC and/or chapter president be called by a member of International Council or staff?
- Should cards or flowers be sent by the Regional Team or EO?
- Please note that in the case of a death, card or flowers or donations are predetermined by Council protocol.
- Other arrangements to consider may be funeral attendance, meal coordination for families, etc.

Communication Plan

- Collaborate with the Marketing & Communications team at EO to determine which audiences should receive communication about the given tragedy.
- Audiences to consider include chapter members, parents, local alumnae, alumnae of that chapter, FSA/University, general press release and social media posts.

3. Once a custom support plan has been agreed upon, proceed to [Section F: On-Going Support](#). Following the call, CDS sends a Call Summary to the Decision Group to be distributed.

SECTION E - TIPS FOR PROVIDING ON-GOING SUPPORT

Tips for conducting a pulse and morale check:

- Accept and acknowledge all feelings. Let the grieving person know that it's okay to be emotional, to get angry, or to break down. Do not try to reason with them over how they should or shouldn't feel. They should feel free to express their feelings without fear of judgment, argument, or criticism.
- Be willing to sit in silence. Do not press if the grieving person doesn't feel like talking or doesn't respond to outreach. You can offer comfort and support with your silent presence and kind outreach. If meeting in person and you cannot think of something to say, just offer eye contact, a squeeze of the hand, or a reassuring hug.
- Let them talk about how their loved one died, if applicable. People who are grieving may need to tell the story over and over again, sometimes in minute detail. Be patient. Repeating the story is a way of processing and accepting the death. With each retelling, the pain lessens.
- Offer comfort and reassurance without minimizing the loss. Tell them that what they are feeling is okay. If you've gone through a similar loss, share your own experience if you thought it would help. However, don't give unsolicited advice, claim to "know" what the person is feeling, or compare your grief to theirs. The goal is merely to be present, be supportive, and to ensure they know what resources are at their disposal. Offer help on their terms by asking what would be most helpful to them, don't assume you know what they need.

Comments to avoid:

- "I know how you feel." One can never know how another may feel following a tragedy. You could, instead, ask them to tell you how they feel.
- "It's part of God's plan." or "Everything happens for a reason." This phrase can make people angry, and they often respond with, "What plan? Nobody told me about any plan." This may also unintentionally discriminate against or offend them.
- "Look at what you have to be thankful for." They know they have things to be thankful for, but right now that's not important.
- "She's in a better place now." They may or may not believe this. Keep your beliefs to yourself unless asked.
- "This is behind you now; it's time to move on." Sometimes the grieving are resistant to getting on with regular life because they feel this means "forgetting" their loved one or the tragedy that occurred. In addition, moving on is easier said than done. Grief has a mind of its own and works at its own pace.
- Statements that begin with "You should" or "You will." These statements are too directive and imply you think you have a solution to their pain. The goal of outreach is not to provide a solution; it's to provide support and to ensure they know what resources are at their disposal.

Adapted from Source: *American Hospice Foundation*