

# Directions for Telephone Tree

## Instructions:

When you receive a call about a school crisis, it will be important that you relay the information on to the next people on your list.

If the person following your name does not answer, call those following that name so notification of all is facilitated. Take the responsibility of verifying that the person you could not reach is called repeatedly until contact is made.

The following is the essential information to be passed along, and the manner in which to do so:

- Begin by making one statement or preparation, such as, "I'm sorry to have to call with sad (tragic, difficult) news." This gives the receiver a minute to prepare for hearing something difficult. If you think this person is going to have an especially difficult time hearing the news, considering sharing information in person, or asking whether he/she is alone.
- Don't drag it out...once you've given them the preparation statement, tell them the following:
  - That there has been a death (or tragedy) involving a student (or staff, or whatever) from your building. Then tell who died, when, and the mode of death, if known.
  - Tell the person of the before-school meeting, the time, and that more information will be shared at that meeting.
  - Do not speculate, participate in rumors, or elaborate.
  - Remind that person that, as they call the people behind them on the telephone tree, they also need to adhere to the above outline.

The goal is to allow people to become emotionally prepared for the next day, but to keep from starting or spreading any erroneous information. This is very important.

Because of our need to know, details get distorted very innocently and easily. Our grief is dependent on the circumstances of the death. It is crucial to give exactly the facts and details given you as you proceed to make further calls. It might be wise for each person to write down the message verbatim so it keeps its integrity as it is passed along.

A better alternative than using a phone tree is to have a small group of carefully chosen people do all of the calling so that the messages are all given with the same tone and detail.