



Trauma-Informed Practices & Resources:

A Helpful Guide for Educators & Parents



After being involved in a traumatic event, it's important to care for yourself and reflect on your emotional and physical well-being. Being involved in a traumatic event such as a school shooting changes your body and brain on a cellular level. Your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors may look different than they did before the event, and while this is normal, it can be confusing and scary to experience. Gaining an understanding of what you're going through can help you to feel less afraid and alone. This knowledge can also help you to feel more in control.

The process of healing is a long and deeply personal one. People often associate significant trauma responses, or post-traumatic stress disorder, with certain events or the size of a tragedy. However, trauma responses are not merely a reflection of what happened or how severe the event was; trauma responses have a lot to do with the aftermath of the event. If someone who experiences a traumatic event can access resources and support to help them feel safe again — and if they are able to regain some form of stability and control in their lives — they're less likely to experience a significant traumatic response.

Trauma responses also have a lot to do with other stress factors in a person's life. Those simultaneously experiencing a traumatic event while dealing with other stressors, or those who have experienced trauma in the past, are at a higher risk of developing significant trauma responses or PTSD. Trauma responses also have a lot to do with your genetics and biology. If you have a family history of certain mental health conditions or if you have had previous mental health struggles, you are also at a higher risk of developing more severe trauma responses. **The bottom line is that everyone who endures the same traumatic event will experience that trauma and be affected by it differently.**

The most important thing to remember as you continue to work through your trauma and the effects it has had on you is that you are not alone. While you may not be experiencing the same things as your peers or students, there are undoubtedly symptoms, thoughts, and feelings that are similar. Talking about what you're going through with people who have shared the traumatic experience can be very powerful. Even though your experiences are not the same, your feelings of helplessness, horror, and grief are universal. Being able to connect with others who endured the event can be reassuring and healing.

Returning to a sense of safety in your schools is the number one priority. Part of ensuring that safety is practicing drills to respond to emergencies. Unfortunately, this can bring up a lot of intense thoughts, feelings, and sensations related to your trauma. Knowing this, preparing for this, and caring for yourself through this process is important so that you don't experience re-traumatization. You probably understand on a cognitive level that a drill is just a drill, but your body and the parts of your brain that have stored the trauma do not know that. When you participate in a drill, you will be exposed to certain sensory stimuli that may reintroduce trauma. Having a plan for dealing with your responses before, during, and after the drill is very helpful.

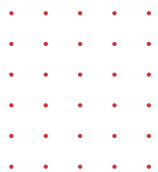


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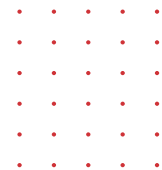
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What is ALICE Training®?

Navigate360 ALICE Active Shooter Response Training is the nation's leading options-based training program, empowering individuals to take an active role in their survival during an active shooter or life-threatening emergency.

The ALICE protocol—Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate—provides flexible, age-appropriate, and ability-sensitive response options tailored to the circumstances of a critical incident. Recognizing that no two situations are the same, ALICE Training® equips individuals with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions that best fit their unique circumstances.



Best Practices for Your Drills

Safety drills are key to increasing your school community's knowledge of how to respond to an emergency or act of violence. They help prepare individuals to respond quickly, calmly, confidently, and safely should an actual critical incident take place.

Effectively running drills — including ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) active threat response drills — requires open communication throughout the entire process. **We strongly recommend all organizations announce planned critical incident drills in order to ensure the safety of everyone involved.** Because drills involve a lot of moving parts, running them unannounced can cause major safety hazards. They can also cause panic and anxiety that is counterproductive to an efficient and well-organized drill.



Beyond compliance, the benefits of running periodic drills include the following, which are all vital to the preparedness, safety, and trauma-informed efforts of your district and schools:

- Drills allow you to identify potential areas of weakness in your team members' training.
- Drills allow you to test various processes and evaluate your incident command structure.
- Drills provide participants with a safe way to process their emotions and reactions in preparation for facing a real life-threatening, high-stress situation.
- **Drill requirements vary from state-to-state. Be sure to check your state and district requirements for drills.**

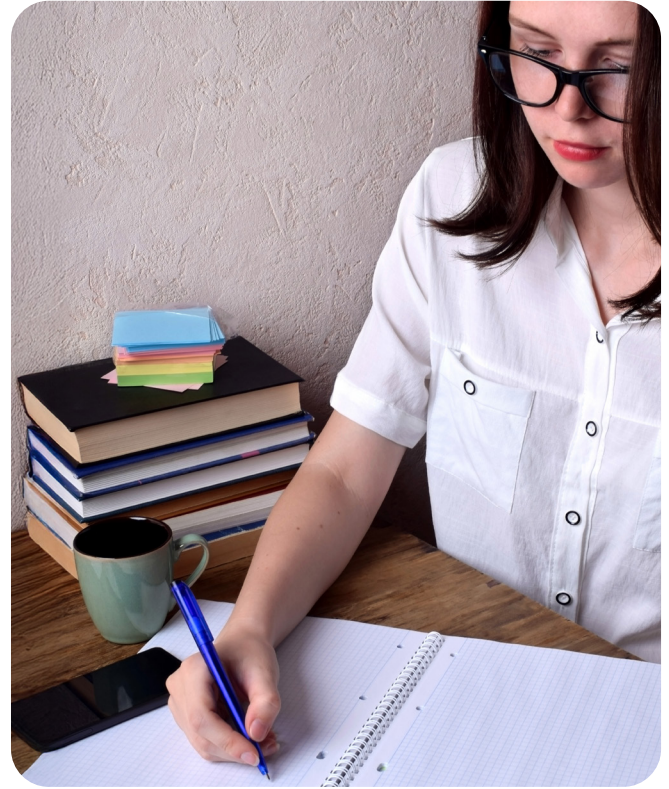
This trauma-informed guide was developed with care by the school safety and well-being experts at Navigate360. We believe the path to zero incidents requires a layered, holistic approach—combining comprehensive training with tools and technology to prepare schools for any emergency. We hope this guide empowers your school community to respond with confidence and build a culture of safety and resilience.

Resources for Adults & Educators

NOTE: These ideas are suggestions. Use your discretion and choose options that you feel best support your needs.

What You Can Do Before a Drill

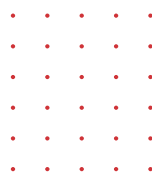
1. **Make sure that you are rested, hydrated, and nourished.** This will allow you to have the mental and physical energy you need to handle the stress of the drill.
2. **Have a plan for coping.** You know yourself and what works for you better than anyone, so make sure that you have what you need to use those coping strategies. Is there another familiar and trusted adult in the building that can be with you and your class during the drill?
 - a. Will you need to use certain sensory tools during the drill such as mints, essential oils, something to fidget with, or a picture/positive affirmation/mantra/quote that brings you peace? Make sure to have those items ready.
 - b. Prepare by practicing breathing and/or grounding techniques while you are feeling calm so that you can use them during the drill. Try to have a few different strategies planned to fall back on in case one doesn't work.
3. **Reach out and talk to supporters.** If you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed about an upcoming drill, don't ignore those feelings. Talk to family, friends, colleagues, or mentors about your thoughts and feelings. Sometimes just voicing your worries and getting validation from others is helpful. If you have a therapist or other professional that you work with, process your thoughts and feelings with them as well.
4. **Visualize yourself going through the drill.** This might be hard, but it's worth it. Imagine yourself going through the drill in detail. Think about each step of the drill and what that will look like. Work on breathing evenly and using positive self-talk as you walk yourself through the process of the drill. You can even pause the visualization to practice coping strategies to bring yourself back to a calm place throughout.
5. **Journal.** Write out anything that's on your mind before the drill, or use these prompts:
 - a. What are you most worried about?
 - b. What do you hope will happen during the drill?
 - c. What will it look like to go through this drill successfully?
 - d. What advice would you give a friend or colleague going through this drill?
 - e. What do you anticipate will happen during the drill?





What You Can Do During a Drill

1. **Breathe.** Try counting as you breathe. Inhale for a count of four and exhale for a count of four. The more you focus on your breathing, the calmer you'll feel.
2. **Stay grounded.** Use the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding method. Think of 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
3. **Use your coping strategies** that you planned before the drill.
4. **Use positive self-talk.** Repeat phrases that are calming and compassionate.
 - a. I am safe.
 - b. I am strong.
 - c. I will get through this.
 - d. This feeling is temporary.
 - e. I am going to be okay.
 - f. Nothing/nobody is going to hurt me.
4. **Use self-soothing strategies** such as twiddling with a fidget ring, smelling essential oils (you can keep a tiny bottle of a soothing scent in your pocket or a bag you carry), or chewing gum, sucking on a mint, or enjoying hard candy.



What You Can Do After a Drill, Individually

1. **Self-care is a must.** Self-care is different for everyone, and it's important that you do what feels right for you. Some examples include:
 - a. **Rest.** Try not to have anything scheduled for after school and allow yourself to take the night off from cooking, cleaning, or doing extra work when you get home.
 - b. **Exercise.** Some people find that they can't rest and that they need movement. Go for a walk, run, or hike. Do some strength training or yoga. Play a sport or ride a bike. If your body feels restless, listen to that feeling and move your body.
 - c. **Follow your regular routine.** Some people find comfort in the familiar. Sticking with your regular schedule might be what you need.
 - d. **Feel your feelings.** There is no right or wrong way to feel after the stress of a drill. You might feel anxious, angry, depressed, exhausted, scared, on edge, out of control, sad, or ashamed, or you might feel nothing. All of it is okay and all of it is valid. Even though your feelings might be painful or uncomfortable, allow yourself to feel them. Remember, "Feeling is healing."
2. **Connect with others.** Visit family or friends or call them on the phone. Have a movie night with your kids or significant other. Snuggle with your pets. Connect and debrief with colleagues or mentors about your thoughts and feelings. Being around others can be a great distraction and can help you to stay more grounded.
3. **Express yourself.** Write, draw, paint, color, dance, or sing. Artistic expression can be a great outlet.
4. **Distract yourself.** If you are in significant distress after the drill, you might need to disconnect for a bit. Watch your favorite TV show, go shopping, listen to music, cook or bake, look up funny videos to watch, or chat with a friend. Do something that will occupy your mind until you are ready to process your thoughts and feelings.
4. **Religious Practices.** For many, faith, private prayer, or meditation can be helpful in processing trauma.



What You Can Do After a Drill, Collectively

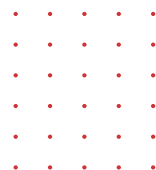
1. **Check in with each other.** If you're in a place to do so, try offering support to others. Not only will this be good for those you reach out to, but offering to do something helpful will be beneficial to you as well.
2. **Debrief as a school, grade level, or team.** Come together after the drill and discuss how it went. It's important to ensure that the group has set norms and expectations so that everyone can feel safe to share openly. Some common norms are:
 - a. What is said stays within the group.
 - b. Withhold judgement and use "I" statements.
 - c. Allow everyone's voice to be heard.
 - d. If someone is not comfortable sharing, they can pass.

Consider the following questions to reflect on as a group:

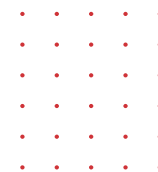
- What three words best capture your feelings about this drill?
- What went well?
- What was the hardest part?
- What surprised you?
- What do you wish went differently?
- What questions or concerns do you have going forward?
- What would you like to see happen next time?
- What can you do for self-care this afternoon?

Ensure the person facilitating this conversation has a goal of making sure all or most voices are heard. This can be accomplished by practicing reflective listening. For example, repeat back, "So this is what I hear you are saying." Making people feel safe goes beyond just physical safety. Ensuring a sense of belonging and validating that their voice matters goes a long way toward providing psychological safety to people.

3. **Provide after-hours support for those who are struggling after the drill.** After school, open a space such as the library, cafeteria, or a conference room where staff can come to give and receive support. There should be personnel who are qualified to offer emotional support and coping strategies as well as calming/soothing activities for those who don't want to talk. Some options to offer during this time are:
 - a. Printed mandalas to color
 - b. Guided meditation
 - c. Snacks, water, and tea
 - d. Guided progressive muscle relaxation
 - e. Puzzles
 - f. Gentle yoga



Supporting Resources for Students

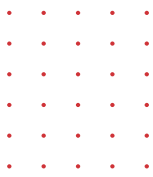


NOTE: These ideas are suggestions. Use your discretion and choose options that you feel best support your students. Always consider the individual needs of your students and what is developmentally appropriate for them.

What You Can Do Before a Drill

- 1. Talk to students about the drill.** As a class, discuss what to expect during the drill (Will there be an announcement? Will there be a fire alarm? Will there be law enforcement present?), what types of behaviors are expected of participants (no talking, staying calm, being where they should be), and answer any questions they have.
- 2. Talk to students about how their mind and body might respond during the drill.** Explain that drills can bring up unexpected and difficult thoughts, feelings, and sensations. While this is normal, it can feel very distressing.
- 3. Talk to students about how their minds and bodies might respond after the drill.** Explain that they might feel very tired or have difficulty sleeping that night. They might feel irritable, angry, or sad. They might also feel a sense of numbness. They might have a hard time focusing in the hours and days after the drill, and they might feel on edge, or get startled easily.
- 4. Talk about coping strategies participants can use during the drill.** Consider having a list posted in the classroom.
- 5. Take note of any students who seem especially distressed** during conversations before the drill, and make sure that those students have access to extra support (such as an additional, preferably familiar, staff member or a buddy that they can be paired with).

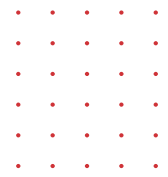




How to Support Students During a Drill

- 1. Try to manage your own emotions and responses.** If students see that you're distressed, it is going to increase their level of distress. Remain calm and think of having a "low and slow manner" – use a lower voice (avoid shouting), keep language simple and direct (try not to use a lot of words), and communicate and move slowly (avoid any sudden outbursts or quick movements).
- 2. Keep track of students who appear to be getting overwhelmed or significantly distressed.** Remind them of coping strategies or offer reassurance and validation (you're safe, this will be over soon, I know this is hard, everything is going to be okay). See if there is another student who is feeling more regulated and pair them up to help.
- 3. Have regulation tools at the ready to hand out if needed.** Some examples are:
 - a.** Fidget tools (spinners, stress balls, etc.)
 - b.** Hard candy, mints, or gum
 - c.** Positive affirmation cards (these could be prepared ahead of time as a class)
 - d.** Noise-cancelling headphones for students who are particularly impacted by loud noise
 - e.** Mini container of play dough or putty (if possible, use scented play dough or putty)

How to Support Students After a Drill



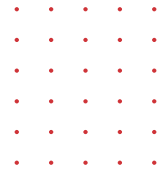
1. **Ensure that any students experiencing significant levels of emotional distress are tended to by a counselor, social worker, or other qualified staff member.** These students should be taken to another location, if possible, to avoid upsetting others.
2. **Have stations prepared ahead of time that offer quiet and calming activities.** There could be a listening station (with music or audio books), a coloring or writing station, a quiet game station (card games, word games, Sudoku, brain teasers, etc.), or any other quiet activities that your class enjoys.
3. **If you have been reading a book aloud to your class, read a couple of chapters.** If your class enjoys picture books being read aloud, choose a couple of good ones ahead of time. Suggestions include *Once I Was Very Very Scared* by Chandra Ippen and *I'm Not Scared, I'm Prepared* by Julia Cook for preschool-4th grade.
4. **If your students seem ready and able, debrief with them as a class. Use your discretion.** You know your students best. Only debrief with them if you feel it's appropriate or helpful to do so. If you choose to debrief, ensure a safe space is established for them to share openly by discussing expectations:
 - a. One person talks at a time (consider using a talking piece to signal whose turn it is to speak)
 - b. When someone is talking, they are listening
 - c. Respond to each other with kindness
 - d. Use "I" statements
 - e. What is said in the group stays in the group

Use any of the following prompts to spark discussion:

- What two words describe how you're feeling right now?
 - What do you think went well for our class?
 - What could we work on for next time?
 - Did anything unexpected happen for you during the drill?
 - What's one kind thing you can do for yourself this afternoon?
4. **Continue to monitor signs of distress in students in the days following a drill.** Sometimes, students may not immediately demonstrate an emotional reaction; they may struggle later. Children often use behavior as a way to communicate. Things to watch for include:
- a. Irritability
 - b. Changes in affect
 - c. Fearfulness or getting startled easily
 - d. Verbal outbursts
 - e. Withdrawal/shutting down
 - f. Changes in behavior such as restlessness, hyperactivity, lethargy, sleepiness, aggression, or crying



Resources for Families



NOTE: These ideas are suggestions. You are the expert on your child. Use your expertise and choose options that you feel will best support your child. Always consider the unique needs of your child and what is developmentally appropriate for them.

Your child's school will be taking part in ALICE Training®. ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate. This easy-to-remember acronym provides preparation and a plan for individuals and organizations to proactively handle the threat of a violent critical incident, including an active shooter event. ALICE's options-based strategies have become the accepted standard, as opposed to the traditional "lockdown-only" approach. To access more information and resources regarding the ALICE Training® program, visit the link below:

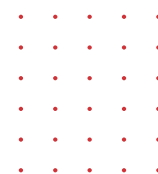
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How to Support Your Child Before a Drill

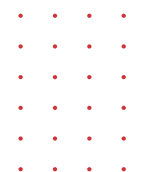
1. **Talk with your child about the upcoming drill.** Check in with them to see how they are feeling about it, what questions they have about it, and what they are expecting the experience to be like. Although your child may or may not have a lot to say about it, opening a line of communication is important as they may not know how to start the conversation themselves.
2. **Let them know that you are available to talk if they need/want to.** Sometimes kids need time to process before they're able to talk about what's on their mind. Leaving an open-ended invitation to talk lets them know that you are comfortable and willing to talk or just listen.
3. **Make sure that your child gets enough sleep, stays hydrated, and eats well in the days before a drill.** This will help your child have the mental and physical energy needed to handle the stress that a drill could cause.
4. **Communicate with your child's teacher if you have concerns or questions.** If your child tends to become distressed when there are changes in their day or if they have been showing signs of stress and anxiety leading up to the drill (or if they are experiencing other stressors in their life), it's important to communicate this to their teacher. Knowing these factors ahead of time allows your child's teacher to plan for extra support and come up with strategies ahead of time so that things can go as smoothly as possible the day of the drill.





How to Support Your Child After a Drill

- 1. Check in with your child.** Ask if they'd like to talk to you about how things went, but don't pressure them to talk if they're not ready. Sometimes, it's easier to do a two to three-word check-in. Ask them to share two or three words to describe their day or two or three words to describe how they're feeling. This way, they won't have to do a lot of talking, but you can still get some insight into their thoughts and feelings.
- 2. Stick with their typical after-school routine.** Most of us find comfort in the familiar, and children are no different. Coming home to normalcy may feel especially soothing after a stressful day.
- 3. Do not overschedule them in the days following the drill.** While some activities can offer a welcome distraction, your child may be more tired than normal after going through a drill and they may need time to decompress at home.
- 4. Bump up their bedtime.** Your child may have difficulty sleeping in the nights following the drill. Following a healthy sleep routine and starting this routine earlier can help them ease into their bedtime and allow for extra time to settle down if they need it.
- 5. Help your child use coping strategies if they are experiencing stress responses.** Some examples of coping strategies are:
 - a. Breathing techniques.** The more your child focuses on their breathing, the calmer they'll feel.
 - Have your child pretend like they are smelling a flower as they breathe in and blowing out a candle as they breathe out.
 - Have them count as they breathe, inhaling for a count of four and exhaling for a count of four.
 - Have them put their hand on their belly. As they breathe in, they can feel their belly expand like a balloon. As they breathe out, have them try to feel their balloon completely deflate.
 - b. Grounding techniques.**
 - Use the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Method. Have them list 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell, and 1 thing they can taste.
 - Ask them to name as many things as possible in the room that are a certain color.
 - c. Progressive muscle relaxation.** This technique can be very helpful before bed. Have your child breathe in and tense up muscles in a specific part of their body. Have them hold their breath for a few seconds as they keep their muscles tight. As they breathe out, they can focus on releasing all tension in that body part. It's helpful to start at either the head or feet and work your way up or down until each part of the body has been relaxed. There are guided muscle-relaxation videos online that you can search for as well.
- 6. Validate and acknowledge their responses to the drill while reassuring them that they're safe.** Let your child know that how they are feeling is normal and they are going to be okay. They might feel out of control because their body and brain are remembering a scary time, but they are safe now and nothing is going to hurt them.



7. Find some positive affirmations to write out on note cards for your child to keep and read when they need to. Some examples of positive affirmations are:

- a.** I am safe and cared for.
- b.** I can take deep breaths.
- c.** I am proud of myself.
- d.** I can do hard things.
- e.** I believe in myself.
- f.** I am loved and protected.

8. Communicate with your child's teacher. If you notice that your child is having difficulty following a drill, let their teacher know so that they can offer extra support at school. If your child didn't sleep well that night, send a quick message in the morning letting their teacher know so they are aware that your child may be more tired than usual.

9. Contact the school and area agencies if your child continues to struggle for more than a couple of weeks. If your child seems unable to return to

his or her usual self or seems to be experiencing significant distress, reach out to get more support. Your child may benefit from talking to a counselor or therapist. Your child's school will have a list of contacts for you to reach out to for help.

10. Take care of yourself. This can be traumatic for you as well. You may have emotional reactions that are painful. Seeing your child go through trauma can leave you feeling helpless and can trigger your own trauma responses. Caring for a child who is having difficulty regulating their emotions and behaviors can be exhausting. Use coping strategies for yourself. This will not only help you; it will be good for your child to see you model self-regulation skills. Making sure that you are getting rest, eating well, staying hydrated, and getting support for yourself will help you to stay well emotionally and physically, which will put you in a better position to care for your child. If you feel like you are struggling, reach out for support. Your well-being is important.



Learn more about ALICE Training® at
www.ALICETraining.com

