



December 2, 2022

Traumatic and Triggering Events

I was the health consultant to the BCPVPA for many years. My fellow benefit consulting colleague, who had consulted with the BCPVPA for more than 20 years, told me in those early days that Principals and Vice-Principals **were the 'first responders' of the K-12 education system.**

I never fully appreciated that insight until I joined the BCPVPA staff. This has rung true for me, from analyzing the outcomes of our Thriving in Education survey that proved comparable to those of first responders, to the stories I hear from members, to meeting many of the traumatized members we support.

Last week, at Tamanawis School in Surrey, there was a fight in the school parking lot that resulted in a young man losing his life. When we heard about the event, BCPVPA President, Brian Leonard, immediately reached out to the administration team onsite. In his words, *"Today you are probably focused on supporting the members of your community, and rightfully so. However, when the dust settles, just know that the BCPVPA is here to support **you**, as a team and individually."*

As school leaders, your instinct and role is to take care of those around you, and to do what you can to mitigate the impact of such traumatic events on the people within your school community. You are also a part of that community that needs care and compassion.

In our recent Board of Directors meeting, Jackie Borosa shared that she was aware that the event at Tamanawis was triggering even for folks outside of the Surrey School District. Considering that, it is a timely focus for this week's ReFresh.

We provided to the Tamanawis Principal and Vice-Principals the BCPVPA document [Releasing Trauma](#). We are sharing this document as it has advice and tips on how to calm your nervous system and focus on self care both when traumatic events occur, and when your brain has been triggered by similar events and is reliving your own experiences of trauma. Keep this document on hand for whenever you need this kind of support.

That said, don't hesitate to reach out to the BCPVPA for direction, resources, and support when your role as the K-12 first responder becomes heavy and your well-being requires a much-needed boost!

Take care of you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.