
Abstract

Crisis communication in a school community following a junior high student's suicide

HIWATASHI, Takanori

Kyushu Sangyo University

KUBOTA, Yuki

School Counselor in Kitakyushu City

MUKASA, Akiko

Hiroshima International University

School crises such as incidents, accidents, and disasters have profound effects on the school community. There is a global shortage of research on early-stage psychological support for such crises, with a particular lack of clarity regarding crisis communication when these events occur. This study focuses on crisis communication and aims to clarify the experience process of a school community post-crisis. Using Junior High School A—where a student committed suicide—as the subject, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five of the student's classmates at the time, as well as four teachers and two emergency support school counselors. Analysis was carried out using the modified grounded theory approach, resulting in the identification of 39 concepts and 10 categories. A crisis communication process model was developed, centered around the category of failure in a school's consistency regarding the collection, sharing, and transmission of information. It was suggested that poor crisis communication immediately following the incident affected the school community as a whole, with the shock of the suicide complicating communication and managerial dysfunction obstructing effective communication strategies.

Keywords: suicide, school crisis, crisis communication
