

**Behavioral Health  
Advisory Group  
Ambassador Team (BHAGAT)**

BHAGAT is a school-based mental health crisis response pilot project supported by Measure A funding awarded to One East Palo Alto (OEPA) by San Mateo County (SMC) Board of Supervisors and overseen by SMC Health System's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services division.

BGAHAT is planned and implemented by a partnership comprised of the East Palo Alto Behavioral Health Advisory Group (convened by OEPA), Ravenswood City School District (RCSD), the East Palo Alto Police Department and San Mateo Office of Education.

BHAGAT's overall aim is to provide culturally competent crisis interventions to middle school students at RCSD's Ronald McNair Academy who experience trauma as a result of violent crime in East Palo Alto so as to meet their needs as victims and enhance their recovery.

**Behavioral Health  
Advisory Group  
Ambassador Team (BHAGAT)**

BHAGAT is a group of trained community members whose primary purpose is to respond to crisis situations by providing support to students and their families who have experienced trauma due to acts of violence in and around the East Palo Alto community.

BHAGAT Services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ School-based crisis intervention support,
- ◆ Emergency assistance
- ◆ Youth Mental Health First Aid training and empowerment,
- ◆ Resources, referrals and victim advocacy

**Behavioral Health Advisory Group  
Ambassador Team (BHAGAT)**

*... providing excellent crisis response services to the children of East Palo Alto and their families*



**Helping Your Child Cope with  
Trauma during  
Traumatic Events**

*Tips for Parents, School Personnel  
and Caregivers*



**Behavioral Health Advisory Group  
Ambassador Team (BHAGAT)  
Operated by One East Palo Alto**

**Mailing Address:  
903 Weeks St., East Palo Alto, CA 94303  
Program Operations: 2400 Ralmar Ave.,  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Phone: (650) 391-9617  
Fax: (650)745-1167 Cell:650-771-3793  
Email: mlatu@1epa.org**

## What is Trauma?

**“Trauma is a difficult or unpleasant experience** (Webster’s Dictionary Online).” [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma)

**It is normal** for children and early adolescents to have emotional and behavioral reactions after traumatic events. Trauma can cause fear, confusion and insecurity. Whether a child has personally been exposed to trauma or has merely seen the event on



**Community members can help during times of traumatic events...** discussed by others, it is important for parents, school personnel and all who work with children to be informed and ready to help.

There are many things you can do to help your child cope with trauma resulting from a violent event if you know how to provide intervention in response to a crisis. Such intervention will lower the risk of your child being negatively impacted in the long run.

## Children/Early Adolescents Respond Differently to Trauma

Children/Early adolescents respond to trauma in many different ways. Some may have reactions very soon after an event. Others may seem to be doing fine for weeks or months and then begin to show signs of stress. Some children may not show any distress because they do not feel upset.

### Knowing the Signs



**Traumatic events may result in severe behavioral problems...**

Knowing the signs associated with reactions to crises at different ages can help parents, school personnel and others who work with youth recognize problems and respond appropriately.

Behavioral Health Advisory Group Ambassador Team (BHAGAT) members are able to help with this very important process. Here are some common reactions that all childcare providers should be aware of when working with children who have experienced a traumatic event.

## Following Traumatic Events Some Children/Early Adolescents May Behave in the Following Ways:

- Express vague physical complaints such as stomach aches or Headaches
- Abandon chores, school work and other responsibilities they previously handled
- Seek out attention from parents and teachers, or may withdraw, resist authority, become disruptive at home or in the classroom
- Display “mood swings”
- Experiment with high-risk behavior such as drinking or drug abuse

If you observe these signs in your child, notify the school’s principal as soon as possible to make a referral to BHAGAT. This is a great way to start the process of healing.

## Contact Mele Latu for more information about BHAGAT as follows:

**Mailing Address: 903 Weeks St., East Palo Alto, CA 94303**  
**Program Operations: 2400 Ralmar Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025**  
**Phone: (650) 391-9617**  
**Fax: (650)745-1167 Cell:650-771-3793**  
**Email: [mlatu@1epa.org](mailto:mlatu@1epa.org)**