

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS



SAVE A LIFE / REACH OUT

KNOWING THE SIGNS IS THE FIRST STEP

Suicide prevention is the collective effort of school and community providers working together to support our students.



WHAT TO DO WHEN FACED WITH A STUDENT IN CRISIS:

Saving lives often begins with asking a question.

Ask the difficult question. "Have you had thoughts about killing yourself?" Do not offer unrealistic reassurances.

Paraphrase what you are hearing the student say. This will support your ability to monitor how accurately you are understanding what the student is saying. For example, "I understand when you say that you aren't sure if you want to live or die, but have you always wanted to die? Well, maybe there's a chance you won't feel that way forever. I can help."

Remember, your job is not to act in the role of the mental health professional.

Connect the student with a counselor, administrator or mental health professional immediately. Maintain visual contact with student at all times.

Always provide a student with a 24-hour crisis number. Have them put the contact information into their phone if possible.

Be aware of the identified individuals on your site who are working with you to provide more long-term professional support.

The wider your network of support, the more effective you will be in managing the crisis for the student, family and others.

CONNECTING AND COMMUNICATING:

- Staff will connect and communicate with administration and crisis team on-site to determine level of risk.

CRISIS TEAM AND ADMINISTRATION WILL:

- Contact district director for consultation and support.
- Contact law enforcement or protective services.
- Inform the parent or guardian.
- Identify staff member to monitor student.

WHAT TO AVOID WHEN HELPING A STUDENT IN CRISIS:

The student could be in a state of chaos and confusion, so how you model your emotions is key.

In an effort to provide support, be careful that you are not providing your opinions.

Avoid being impatient, judgmental or acting shocked.

Be careful not to minimize the students' experience, but do not overreact as it may cause the student to shut down.

Base the foundation of your relationship on honesty and trust.

Do not promise secrecy in an effort to glean information regarding the crisis.



WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered "cries for help" or "invitations to intervene." We encourage our staff to follow your instincts, it is not overreacting. Please communicate with your counselor or mental health professional on site if you observe behaviors that concern you.

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness
- Changes in sleep patterns or eating habits
- Significant changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings

- Change in school attendance/tardies
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Suicide threats (direct and indirect)
- Suicide notes and plans
- History of suicidal ideation/ behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- Preoccupation with death
- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions, posting plans on social media, sending text messages to friends)

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR SUICIDE:

Protective factors buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior. Identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as understanding risk factors.

- Family and community connectedness.
- Opportunities to participate in and contribute to school and/or community projects/activities.
- A reasonably safe and stable environment.
- Restricted access to lethal means.
- Responsibilities/duties to others.

UNDERSTANDING AND REACHING OUT



BE DIRECT

BE HONEST

REMAIN CALM

ACTIVELY LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGING

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

School and Community Resources:

School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Social Workers and Mental Health Therapists.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

(800) 273-TALK (800-273-8255)

Or text Hope to 741 - 741

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

24-Hour Local Suicide Prevention Crisis Line

(916) 368-3111

Trevor Project

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

Know the Signs

<https://www.suicideispreventable.org>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

<https://afsp.org>

NAMI Sacramento: Crisis Help for Mental Illness

<https://namisacramento.org/resources-home/crisis-contacts-services>



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