

# Suicide Prevention

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The Role of Teachers

# Be A Trusted Adult

You have day-to-day contact with students, and are able to observe their behavior daily.

Foster the emotional well-being for all students. Create an environment of connectedness in the school community. Make students aware that adults and peers care about their well being, as well as their learning.

Promote healthy behaviors in class, such as how to cope with difficult situations, how to increase resiliency, how to best seek help when needed.

Be a person students can come to with problems. When they come to you with suicidal thoughts, report it to appropriate mental health personnel.

# Observe

- Know the warning signs
  - F - Feelings - Expressing hopelessness about the future
  - A - Actions - Displaying severe/overwhelming pain or distress
  - C - Changes - Showing worrisome behavioral cues or changes in behavior (withdrawal from friends, changes in social activities, anger, hostility, changes in sleep)
  - T - Threats - Talking about/writing about/making plans for suicide
  - S - Situations - Experiencing stressful situations involving loss, stress, humiliations, trouble
- When you see the warning signs, refer them to mental health support staff.

# Listen

When your students tell you something that worries you, listen to them.

Better to be safe and wrong, than dismissive.

When your students tell you something worrisome as it relates to suicide, refer them to the appropriate mental health support staff.

# Refer

Submit a CARE referral immediately, and make contact with a member of the mental health team.

Some behaviors to report:

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol/drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

# Immediate Risk

If a student displays these behaviors, they are placed at an immediate risk level:

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feelings hopeless or having no reason to live

If you observe or hear any of these signs, take the following action:

- Supervise the student constantly, or make sure the student is in a secure environment supervised by a caring adult, until he or she can be seen by mental health contact.
- Escort student to see the mental health contact.
- Provide any additional information to the mental health contact, so that you can help in the process. That person will notify the student's parents.

# Follow Up

After you make the initial referral, follow up with the mental health contact. They may not be able to tell you specifics on the case, but you can ensure that action has been taken to address the student's needs.

# Additional Steps

In order to help other students who may be at risk, you can take one or both of the following steps:

- Talk with the mental health contact about your concerns about students. These concerns can be taken to the SIT meetings, or that mental health contact can start scheduling regular check-ins with a student.
- Reach out to students to see how they are doing. Listen without judging. You could mention changes in behavior, note that you are concerned. If the student is open to talking to someone, suggest they see the mental health contact.