

# Suicide Prevention for Faculty/Staff

**IF YOU ARE HAVING A LIFE-THREATENING MEDICAL OR PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY AT ANY TIME, PLEASE CALL 909-869-3070 (UNIVERSITY POLICE IF ON-CAMPUS) OR 911 (IF OFF-CAMPUS).**

This guide includes the following sections:

- Understand why suicide prevention is important
- Identify warning signs for those who may be at risk for suicide
- Respond to students who are or may be at risk for suicide

## Understand Why Suicide Prevention Is Important

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### *Understand your role*

As a member of the Cal Poly Pomona faculty or staff, you have an important role to play in suicide prevention. You are in a key position to:

- Observe students' behavior and act when you suspect that a student may be at risk of self-harm
- Provide needed expertise, support, and information to other faculty, staff, students, and parents

## Identify Students Who May Be at Risk for Suicide

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### *Be alert to the problems facing students*

Your position gives you an opportunity to become aware of problems facing students that may put them at risk for suicide. Certain risk factors are associated with increased suicide risk but there is no profile that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty. These factors are not signs of suicidal thinking but contribute to the possibility of suicide.

Researchers have identified a large number of risk factors for suicide, with the risk generally greater among individuals with multiple risk factors. The most common ones are:

- Prior suicide attempt(s)
- Substance abuse
- Mood disorders
- Access to lethal means

Other risk factors include:

- Recent death of a family member or friend, especially if by suicide
- Engaging in self-harm
- Problems in school (academic and/or discipline)
- Relationship problems or breakups
- Bullying or other forms of violence
- History of depression, mental illness or substance/alcohol abuse disorders
- Isolation or lack of social support
- Discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender nonconformity
- Family history of suicide or suicide in community
- Family problems or abuse, current or in the past
- Legal issues
- Serious illness or injury
- Other stressful events

### ***Watch for signs of immediate risk for suicide***

Some behaviors may indicate a person is at immediate risk for suicide. These three behaviors should prompt immediate action:

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

The following signs also suggest someone is at risk for suicide, with a greater risk if a behavior is new, has increased, or if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

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

## **Respond to students who are or may be at risk for suicide**

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### ***Take action if you encounter a student who is at immediate risk***

If you believe a student is in crisis or immediate risk of suicide, take action right away:

1. If the student presents an immediate danger to themselves or others call Campus Police at **1 (909) 869-3070**, or dial 911 if you are off campus.

2. Stay with the student. Do not leave an individual in crisis alone until help has been contacted and agrees to provide appropriate supervision. If you can, remove any potential means, such as pills, as long as this does not put yourself in danger.
3. If you are on campus and the student does not present an immediate danger to themselves or others, you can escort the student to Counseling and Psychological Services (Bldg. 66, Rm. 116) or contact them at **1 (909) 869-3220**. Crisis counseling is available to currently enrolled CPP students on weekdays from 8am to 4:30pm. To reach the after-hours crisis line, dial 1 (909) 869-3220 and press 2 to speak with a crisis counselor. Crisis counselors are available by phone, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, including weekends, holidays, and breaks.
4. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1 (800) 273-8255 (TALK)** or offer this as a resource to the student. This lifeline is **free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week**.
5. For mental health services off-campus, refer students to Tri-City Mental Health Services, which serves the Pomona, La Verne and Claremont areas. They are located at 2008 N. Garey Avenue, Pomona CA, 91767. They can be reached at **1 (909) 623-6131**.

### ***Reach out to a student who may be at risk***

The steps above are steps to take if a student shows immediate warning signs. If a student does not display signs of immediate risk for suicide but you are concerned about the student, you can take the following steps.

Be prepared to have a conversation about suicide and know the appropriate resources to refer a student to for help (see Resources section or see above section).

- Talk to your student directly about suicide in order to assess for risk of suicide or other forms of self-injury. Asking “Are you thinking about suicide?” will not put the idea into their head. Knowing the risk factors and warning signs of suicide will help you determine an immediate threat.
- Listen without judgment and show you care. Allow for the discussion of experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Be prepared for expression of intense feelings. Try to understand without taking a position about whether or not such behavior is justified.
- Remain calm. Becoming too excited or distressed will communicate that you are not able to talk about suicide.
- Ask if there is a plan. If the student mentions a plan, report this plan when contacting Campus Police or other resources. As long as it does not put you or others in danger, attempt to remove the means.
- Help the person identify and connect with professionals. Provide contact information for Counseling and Psychological Services **1 (909) 869-3220**, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline **1 (800) 273-8255 (TALK)**, Tri City Mental Health Services **1 (909) 623-6131** or other professionals who can help.

If you are not prepared to have a conversation with the student about the concerning behavior you notice or suicide, contact the Office of Student Conduct and Integrity at **1 (909) 869-6985**, Counseling and Psychological Services at **1 (909) 869-3220** or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **1 (800) 273-8255** (TALK) or at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>. **If you would like to make a report regarding an ongoing concern about a student or a concerning incident please see the Cal Poly Pomona [Behavioral Intervention Team](#) page.**

## Resources

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Know the Signs Campaign <http://www.suicideispreventable.org/>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center <http://www.sprc.org>

The Trevor Project <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>



**CAMPUS HEALTH  
& WELLBEING**