

# Suicide Prevention for Students

**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:

- Identify warning signs for those who may be at risk for suicide
- Respond to friends or peers who may be at risk for suicide
- Develop your own safety plan

## Identify Those Who May Be at Risk for Suicide

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

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered cries for help or invitations to intervene. These warning signs signal the need to ask directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide. Asking if a person is considering suicide will not put new ideas in the person's head, in fact if they are considering harming themselves they may be relieved someone has taken an interest in their wellbeing.

Warning signs include the following:

- **Suicide threats.** It has been estimated that up to 80% of all suicide victims have given some clues regarding their intentions. Both direct (I want to kill myself) and indirect (I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up) threats need to be taken seriously.
- **Suicide notes and plans.** The presence of a suicide note or plan is a very significant sign of danger.
- **Prior suicidal behavior.** Prior behavior is a powerful predictor of future behavior and anyone with a history of suicidal behavior should be taken seriously.
- **Making final arrangements.** Making funeral arrangements, writing a will, and/or giving away prized possessions may be warning signs of impending suicidal behavior.
- **Preoccupation with death.** Excessive talking, drawing, reading, and/or writing about death may suggest suicidal thinking when this behavior is new or out of character for the individual.
- **Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings.** Depression (especially when combined with hopelessness), sudden happiness (especially when preceded by significant depression), a move toward social isolation, giving away personal possessions, and reduced interest in previously enjoyable activities are among the changes considered to be suicide warning signs.

The following are also warning signs. The risk of suicide is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- 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 may be at risk for suicide**

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

Someone is considered at immediate risk if they are:

- 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

If you believe someone is in crisis or immediate risk of suicide, take action by following these steps right away:

1. If the individual 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 person. 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.
3. If you are on campus and the individual does not present an immediate danger to themselves or others, you can escort them 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 individual. 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 someone who may be at risk***

If an individual does not display signs of immediate risk for suicide but you are concerned about their wellbeing (as described in the section, “Identify Those Who May Be at Risk for Suicide”), you can take the following steps.

- Talk to the person 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 judging 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 individual mentions a plan, report this plan when contacting Campus Police or Counseling and Psychological Services. 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 about your friend or peer’s concerning behavior or suicide, contact Counseling and Psychological Services at **1 (909) 869-3220**, the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **1 (800) 273-8255 (TALK)**, or someone else you trust, for example a family friend, a Resident Advisor, a faculty member or staff, or a member of the clergy.

### **Develop your own safety plan**

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Suicidal thoughts can seem like they will last forever – but for many, these thoughts and feelings pass. Having a plan in place that can help guide you through difficult moments can make a difference and keep you safe. A plan can be developed with a counselor, therapist, or a Lifeline counselor who can help you write down actions to take and people to contact in order to feel safe from suicide.

In general, a safety plan is designed so that you can start at step one and continue through the steps until you feel safe. You should keep your plan in a place where you can easily access it

(your wallet or cell phone) if you have thoughts of hurting yourself. The following are elements to explore and include in the development of your safety plan:

1. Recognize warning signs: What sorts of thoughts, images, moods, situations, and behaviors indicate to you that a crisis may be developing? Write these down in your own words.
2. Use your own coping strategies – without contacting another person: What are some things that you can do on your own to help you not act on thoughts/urges to harm yourself?
3. Socialize with others who may offer support as well as distraction from the crisis: Make a list of people (with phone numbers) and social settings that may help take your mind off things.
4. Contact family members or friends who may help to resolve a crisis: Make a list of family members (with phone numbers) who are supportive and who you feel you can talk to when under stress.
5. Contact mental health professionals or agencies: List names, numbers and/or locations of clinicians, local emergency rooms, crisis hotlines – carry the Lifeline number **1-800-273-8255**.
6. Ensure your environment is safe: Have you thought of ways in which you might harm yourself? Work with your counselor to develop a plan to limit your access to these means.

## Resources

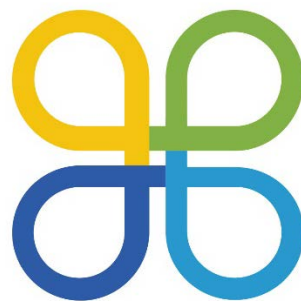
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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

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**