

Crisis Intervention

Statement of Purpose

Depression, suicide, and other potential crisis situations are encountered by schools throughout the year. The following procedures, although written specifically for suicide intervention, are intended to be used in all crisis situations where appropriate and necessary. These procedures will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our students.

General Procedures

If any employee suspects that a student may be planning suicide, or intending to harm another individual, the following will apply:

1. Report the suspected student to a Counseling and Support Team (CAST) member and a building administrator.
2. The CAST team member shall be responsible for determining the seriousness of the threat. In the case of life-threatening situations, all parties involved must understand that the issue of confidentiality shall no longer apply. CAST team members will explore the following in evaluating the student:
 - a. feelings of hopelessness and helplessness and the duration of these feelings.
 - b. self-destructive thoughts and how persistent and strong the thoughts are.
 - c. what plans, if any, have been made, how detailed the plans are, and whether any preliminary actions have been taken.
3. Following the collection of data, available CAST team members and administrators should consult and determine the level of risk and the appropriate plan of action.
 - A. Level 3 — High Risk
 - 1) Characteristics — feelings of hopelessness, a detailed suicide plan, history of a previous attempt, chronically self-destructive lifestyle combined with severe loss or threat of loss, anniversary of a loss, inability to accept help, sudden unexplained happiness, paucity of resources, and/or method of suicide is available.
 - 2) Plan of Action
 - a. Keep student under constant supervision.
 - b. Notify parent immediately.
 - c. Release student **ONLY** to a parent or someone who can provide help, such as a relative, psychiatrist or clinic.
 - d. Make the parent aware of sources of professional assistance and hotline numbers.
 - e. Follow-up to ensure that professional help has been secured.
 - f. Should parents/guardians decide not to seek professional assistance, the CAST team should reconvene and determine a course of action.

For example, the Team could file a report with Child Protective Services, contact community Crisis Intervention agencies, and/or request a psychiatric evaluation. In an extreme emergency, the police may be notified.

B. Level 2 — Medium Risk

- 1) Characteristics — some suicidal ideation, threatening statements, lack concrete plan, does not have a method of completing an attempt, lacks support from a professional or significant others, and/or has not exhibited radical changes.
- 2) Plan of Action
 - a. Notify parent as soon as possible.
 - b. Consultation between CAST team members and possible consulting psychiatrist to determine need for school and/or community assistance.
 - c. Advise student and parent of recommendation of CAST team; document contact. (see Reporting Procedures, A.)

C. Level 1 — Low Risk

- 1) Characteristics — vague feelings of hopelessness, no suicidal plans, no explicit written or verbal threat, supportive help available.
- 2) Plan of Action
 - a. CAST member to set up contract with student by which he/she agrees not to do anything self-destructive while staff member is working with him/her.
 - b. Parent may be notified at discretion of CAST team. Information about danger signs and means of getting assistance may be given to parents.
 - c. Notify “Significant Others”, e.g. interested teacher, nurse, guidance counselor, administrator, etc.
 - d. Provide supportive counseling and encourage student and parent to utilize outside source of support.
 - e. Follow-up.
4. If a contract is made at a time other than school hours, the CAST member should follow the same guidelines as described above.
 - A. If he/she judges the risk to be life threatening, the parent should be notified and if no community organization or professional is involved or available, a law enforcement agency should be notified.
 - B. Upon return to school, the CAST team or Student Assistance Service should become involved and assess continuing need for support.

Reporting Procedures

- A. The CAST team member who initiates the procedure will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy.
- B. Reports will be discussed with building administrator and grade administrator.
- C. Report to be filed in CAST confidential folders.