

PTMS Suicide Information and Referral Procedure for All School Staff

Risk factors for youth suicide are personal or environmental characteristics, that when *one or more are present*, are associated with a higher probability of suicidal behavior:

- depression, feelings of hopelessness, loneliness,
- substance abuse, aggressive/risky behavior, low stress tolerance, impulsivity,
- stressful circumstances: abuse, exposure to suicide by peer/family member, bullying (victim/perpetrator)
- parent mental health issues, death of a parent, no access to mental health care
- exposure to discrimination based on sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, disability, physical characteristics

Protective factors are personal or environmental factors that reduce probability of suicidal behavior. They help a student cope with effects of risk factors:

- emotional intelligence: self-regulation, problem-solving skills, coping skills, resiliency
- family support and involvement
- access to mental health and healthcare providers
- school: positive experiences, sense of community, safe environment, connectedness

Suicidal warning signs that you may witness or hear about as they relate to a student:

- focus on suicide/death: in conversations, writings, drawings, social media posts
- threats to harm oneself (verbal, written, or posted on social media)
- giving away most valuable possessions
- isolation from friends and family
- acting differently than usual: anxious, impulsive, irritable or agitated
- loss of interest in favorite things; talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- sudden changes in mood or appearance

What if you suspect or have knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions?

Take every warning sign and/or threat of self-harm seriously and *immediately* follow below steps.

What if a student came to you with suicidal thoughts?

Take every warning sign and/or threat of self-harm seriously; *immediately* follow steps and let student know:

- You are not alone (ex: "I'm here to listen and we all care about you" or if you are prefer, "I can find someone trusted for you to talk with")
- Yes, we all feel this way sometimes (ex: "things going on can often feel overwhelming")
- No, you won't always feel like this. (ex: "these feelings won't last forever even though in the moment it may feel that way")
- Yes, the world is a better place with you in it. (ex: "I'm glad you shared this with me, I want you to know I look forward to seeing you every day and I'm here to help you")

STEPS TO IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW WHEN THE RISK OF SUICIDE HAS BEEN RAISED

STEP 1: Do not leave the student alone. Stay with student or designate another adult to stay with student. **If the student is in imminent danger (has access to a weapon, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), call 911.**

STEP 2: Take immediate action by contacting:

- a. Primary site contact: **Lauren Aguiar, School Psychologist, x4616**
- b. Secondary site contact (if unable to reach primary): **Lisa Curry, School Counselor, x 4607**
- c. On-campus administrator (if unable to reach primary/secondary): **Patricia Storey x4615**
- d. If above contacts cannot be reached, contact district office: **(760) 753-6491 x. 5570, 5556**

STEP 3: Remain with student until the contact person (or designee) is with the student. Once under the supervision of contact staff (counselor, school psychologist, school social worker or designee) SDUHSD's "Protocol for Helping a Student At Risk of Suicide" will be followed.

STEP 4: Only if after school hours: stay with student, immediately contact parent and stay with student until parent arrives. If unable to reach parent, stay with student and call 911.

If non-school hours and you are not with student but are notified student is suicidal, call 911 and then notify primary site contact.