

## **SDUHSD 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: Counselor by Alpha (Judy Mendez x6012)
- b. Secondary site contact (if unable to reach primary): AP by Alpha (Briann Hailey x6005 or Kristin Jenkins x6006)
- c. On-campus administrator (if unable to reach primary/secondary): Justin Conn (x6000)
- d. If above contacts cannot be reached, contact the 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.