

SUICIDE CONCERNS INFORMATION SECTION
APPENDICES

T – Teacher Information A – Administrator Information

	Page	
S1	Northwest Adolescent and Child Suicide Prevention Policy	1
S2	Dealing with the Issue of Suicide in our Schools	2
S3	School Procedure for Dealing with Suicide/Suicide Ideation	4
S4	Youth Suicide: Warning Signs	5
S5	Guidelines and Strategies for Responding to a Suicide Attempt or Suicide Threat	7
	Suicide Attempts	7
	Suicide Threat	7
	The School's Role after a Suicide Attempt	8
ST1	Teacher Guidelines for Talking to Students about Suicide	9
ST2	Tips for Schools	10
SA1	Initial Meeting (Sample Staff Memo)	11
SA2	Guidelines for Written Notification for Teachers to Share with Students	12
SA3	Sample Announcement to Students	12
SA4	Sample Letter to Parents (Suicidal Death)	13
SA5	Vulnerable Students (Sudden Death)	14
SA6	Memorial Policy	15
SA7	Media Guidelines	16
SA8	Memorials and the Funeral (Suicide)	17
SA9	Suicide: Principal Action Plan	18
SA10	ASIST Directory	19

S1..... Northwest Adolescent and Child Suicide Prevention Policy

Policy

Northwest Adolescent and Child Suicide *Prevention* Policy

“Suicide is a serious concern in our school/community.”

- Suicide Behaviors have been increasing in severity and frequency among children and adolescents. The Board directs that all school personnel be made aware of the identifying sign of these behaviors.
- Suicidal behavior may not be apparent until a critical phase has been reached. School personnel must be prepared to spot at-risk students to refer them to designated staff. Any such signs or the report of such signs from another student should be taken seriously and communicated immediately to the principal or other designated staff. Every effort shall be made to provide positive intervention by using available school personnel and the assistance of appropriate agencies on behalf of the student.
- The student’s parents/guardians shall be notified immediately of any suspected suicidal behaviors and their cooperation shall be sought in arranging for appropriate intervention.
- If parents/guardians indicate an unwillingness to cooperate in the best interest of the student, the school administration shall contact appropriate administrative or legal agencies to request intervention on the student’s behalf.
- In-service shall be made available to the professional staff to assist them in identifying the signs of suicidal behaviors.
- Staff members shall also take appropriate procedures for immediate assistance and intervention for the student.
- The current curricula including the health education curriculum will address the topics of stress, depression and suicidal behaviors.

What are some rationales for involving the school in dealing with suicide?

- Suicide is an increasing problem in our society.
- There are certain signs/indicators that students may exhibit if they are at risk for suicide.
- The school can play several roles in the prevention and identification of suicide: perhaps not necessarily direct roles, but often indirect roles.
- The topic of suicide can often be incorporated into school curricula.
- Our schools are addressing the potential risks of suicide. This is evident in the incorporation of the Wellness Model to help students develop awareness around sound mental health practice. Providing supportive teachers and counsellors who are willing to take intervention action is part of a preventative role of schools. Helping students to recognize and learn to cope with the demands of life is an integral part of developing resilient people for the longer term.
- There are community agencies with which school personnel can work or to which they can make referrals.
- Teachers often become the forefront in terms of becoming aware of situations in their students' lives. They are often privy to information and observations which parents may not recognize (or may deny) or which children and adolescents may not reveal in the home setting.
- Early identification of persons at risk and early intervention to prevent the immediate risk is one of the most important parts of a suicide safer school/community.

What can be expected of teachers?

- Teachers are great observers. They can become familiar with general signs of possible risk for suicide.
- Teachers can make referrals to/through the school counsellor or the wellness coordinator, who in consultation with teachers and the administration, can make referrals to outside agencies.
- Where there is an opportunity, teachers may want to consider incorporating this topic in their programs. Since the topic of suicide may be too dramatic or uncomfortable on its own, it can be addressed through the areas of maintaining sound mental and emotional health. The school counsellor and/or community agencies can often provide both written and personal resources.
- The involvement of families (parents/guardians) is necessary.
- Teachers teach students coping skills which are transferable outside of the school environment.
- Participate in in-service made available to the professional staff to assist them in identifying the signs of suicidal behaviors.
- Teachers provide the immediate assistance and obtain intervention for the student at risk.
- Become part of the School-Based CISM Team.

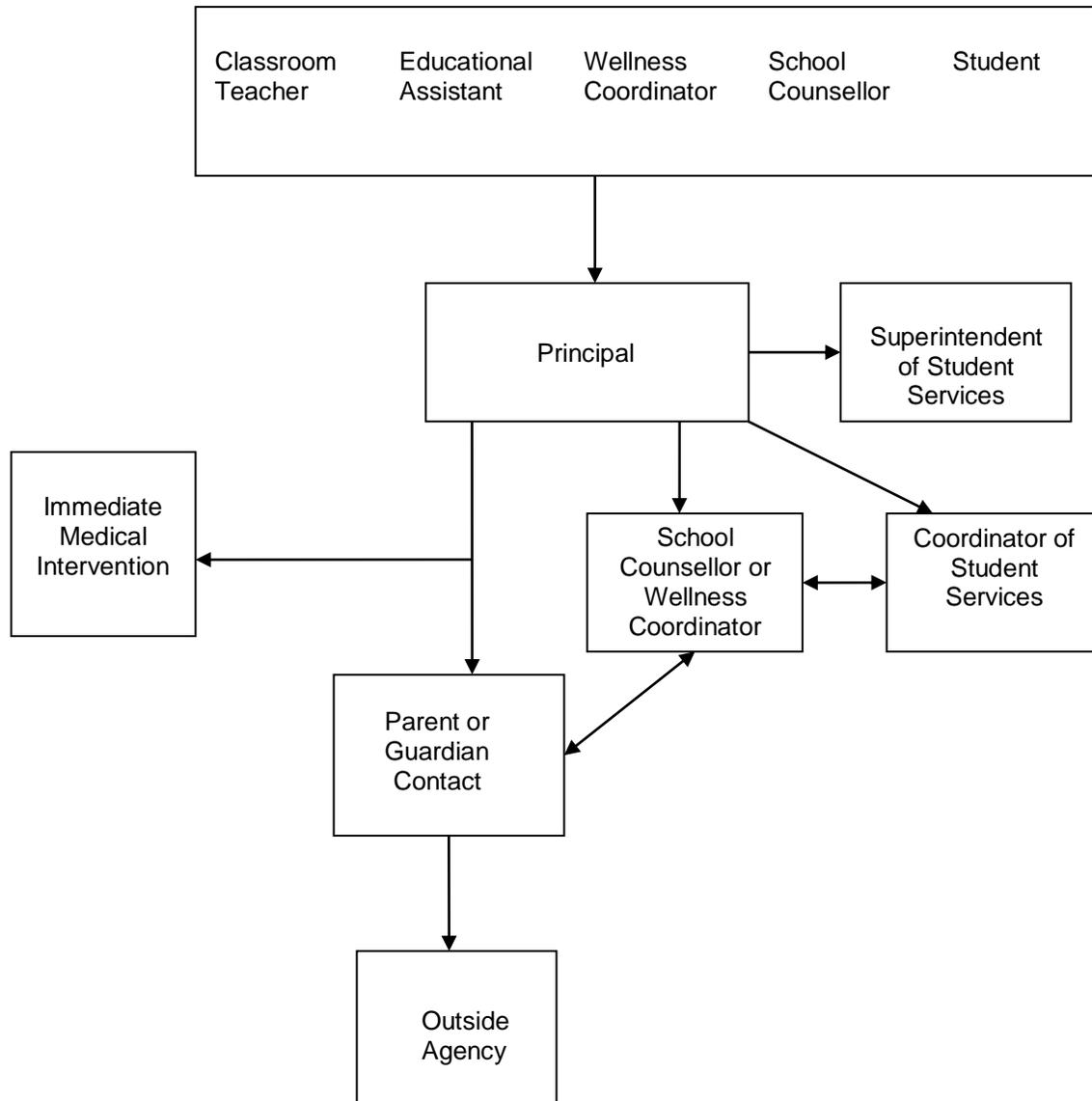
What are some common “at risk” signs to watch for in the students?

- Difficulties in dealing/coping with loss or change, such as in death or family dynamics.
- Low tolerance for frustration or stress.
- Expressing a pre-occupation with death. (In comments, writings, drawings, social interactions.)
- Inability to concentrate or think rationally.
- Complaints of physical problems: headaches, abdominal pains.
- Dramatic changes in behaviour: either despondent or angry and aggressive.
- Withdrawal/alienation.
- Quits activities and interests.
- Neglect of personal appearance/hygiene.
- Expresses thoughts and feelings of death. (Suicide alienation)
- Makes comments of worthlessness.
- Demonstrates behaviours not typical of the individual.
- Sudden change in weight.
- Anger, hostility, aggression, rage.
- Sudden academic decline.
- Drug/alcohol use/abuse.
- Relationship problems: family, peer, romantic.

What are some roles of the school?

- Detection and assessment of “at risk” students.
- Designate school persons to serve as liaisons between the school and other agencies/resources.
- Respond to the needs of students experiencing difficulties.
- Utilize student/peer information as available source (along with others) in referring students.
- Recognize that since some families are not able to deal with suicide issues, the school may become the initial responder to concerns.
- Foster positive, safe and secure school environments.
- Work as a team by networking with other agencies and resources.
- Create an awareness and understanding of suicide through education: programs for students and staff. (Which also may include parents and community.)
- Recognize the need for post-incident support services. (Such as peer, family, etc.)
- Establish a school response protocol (the following one being suggested) for responding to suicide ideation.
- Encourage educational opportunities for school personnel to become trained in providing suicide first aid.

S3.....School Procedure for Dealing with Suicide Concerns/ Suicide Ideation:



S4..... Youth Suicide: Warning Signs

The importance of recognizing warning signs is crucial. People under stress do provide clues that indicate they are hurting and in trouble.

Researchers believe that most suicidal individuals convey their intentions to someone in their network of friends, family, or peers, either openly or covertly. These individuals are intimately connected and in the best position to recognize the signs and render help.

No one profile or check list exists for identifying a suicidal adolescent. Suicide, like much of human behaviour, is difficult to predict. Despite experts' best efforts, even they cannot say, if or when, a person will attempt suicide. But they have identified several warning signs which, particularly in combination, demand immediate concern and attention.

The following list of warning signs is not all inclusive, but they provide a basis for what to look for in potentially suicidal adolescents:

Suicidal Threats.

Suicidal threats can be classified into two categories: (a) veiled/disguised threats and (b) specific desire-to-die threats. Veiled/disguised threats may include "sometimes I just want it to be over with", "I can't take it any more" or "the world would be better off without me". These veiled/disguised threats are like little teasers - but they must be followed up on.

Specific desire-to-die statements leave no doubt about the adolescent's intentions. Examples of such statements could be; "I'm going to kill myself" or "I'm going to commit suicide". These direct threats require immediate attention. Direct threats require referral to competent mental health professionals. People who talk about suicide do attempt suicide and complete suicide.

Sudden Changes in Behaviour.

This category of suicidal warning signs reflects the concept that people behave according to how they feel about themselves. When adolescents are experiencing stress, problems, and traumatic events in their lives, their behaviour changes.

Changes in eating behaviour are common. Often adolescents dramatically increase/decrease the amount of food they eat.

Changes in sleeping behaviour may be another warning sign. Adolescents may sleep an inordinate amount of time. Excessive sleeping allows them to avoid stress and conflicts. Insomnia is another warning sign of people experiencing stress.

Adolescents considering suicide will often change their style of dress and personal appearance.

Personal hygiene and grooming reflect feelings of depression and low self-esteem. This may range from an excessive/obsessive grooming compulsion (not feeling adequate or up to par with peers) to complete neglect of appearance. (Not caring how they fit in or appear). Educators, parents, and peers are in an excellent position to observe these changes.

Suicidal adolescents often demonstrate changes relative to activities that once were important to them. They become disinterested and drop out of these activities.

Depression and Isolation.

Depression in adolescence is often expressed by changes in behaviour. The depression may be demonstrated by adolescents choosing isolation from friends and family. One of the difficulties in perceiving adolescent depression is the fact that adolescents often show depression in ways that are different from adults. The adolescents who are displaying acts of defiant, aggressive and rebellious behaviour may be expressing their depression.

Giving Away Valued Possessions.

In some cases, suicidal adolescents will give valued possessions to their friends.

Getting Their “House” in Order.

Another warning sign revolves around "getting their house in order", and taking care of unfinished business. Adolescents will often patch up old quarrels and make amends for past mistakes. Such behaviour is particularly alarming when other warning signs also are present.

Previous Suicide Attempts.

Adolescents who have made serious suicide attempts are at the highest risk for actually killing themselves.

A Loss in Their Life

A loss in adolescence is often a contributing factor to suicidal behaviour. The loss may include the break-up of a love relationship, death of a family member, or the loss of a parent through separation or divorce. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable at times of geographical movement and separation from friends.

Adolescents may have a concept of death that is different from the adult concept of death. As people continue to have longer life expectancies many young people will not have experienced the death of grandparents and/or other family members. They don't comprehend the finality of death.

Drug and/or Alcohol Use.

Adolescents who use drugs and/or alcohol are a greater risk for suicidal behaviour.

S5.....Guidelines and Strategies for Responding to a Suicide Attempt or Threat

A fundamental responsibility of the staff of the school is the safety of students. All staff has the responsibility to act on any information which indicates that a student is in danger. School staff, policies, procedures and education through curriculum can reduce the risk of suicide.

The purpose of this document is to outline specific procedures as to "who" is to do "what", "where", and "when", if there is any risk of suicide. In priority order the process will address: Safety of the student, Communication with those in a position to help, Referral, Treatment and Follow-up.

If a student is believed to be at risk for suicide, the school administrator should be contacted immediately. All information regarding a potential suicide should be considered confidential and is to be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

When following the Guidelines for responding to a suicide, suicide attempt, or suicide threat, personal judgement and discretion need to be exercised due to the uniqueness and complexity of each situation.

Suicide Attempts

In the event that a suicide attempt occurs at school, the following steps are to be implemented as soon as possible:

- The person who discovers the situation is to attend to the medical emergency immediately by either applying first aid or by summoning a staff member who is qualified in first aid or CPR.
- An ambulance and/or police should be called. A staff member should accompany the student to the hospital if appropriate. He/she should remain with the student until a parent or guardian arrives.
- The person who discovers the emergency will notify the school administrator. The school administrator will contact the student's parents/guardians.
- The school administrator will contact the Director of Education and they will jointly decide the need to activate the critical incident response plan.

Suicide Threat

A list of warning signs is provided at the start of this section which may provide a basis for determining potentially suicidal students. These are meant to be guidelines only.

Information regarding suicidal threats may range from a teacher's general uneasiness arising from a student's essay or artwork to information from a classmate indicating that the student has a plan for taking his/her life and the means to carry out the plan. Regardless of the degree of risk perceived to be involved, the staff member in receipt of the information or who has developed uneasy feelings regarding a student should share that information with his/her school principal.

Indirect Threat

- The school administrator should inform the parents/guardians of concerns about the student. This should be done in consultation with school counsellor, the school community counsellor, wellness coordinator other mental health professional. Any action taken should be documented.

Direct Threat

At no time is a student at risk to be left alone.

- Every consideration should be given to making the situation as non-threatening to the student as possible.
- In the event that there is a direct threat made by a student, the school administrator and the parents/guardians are to be notified. A parent/guardian should be asked to come to the school to meet with the school administrator, wellness coordinator, school counsellor and the teacher who received the information.
- The student should not leave the school unless accompanied by a parent/guardian, or a person clearly designated by the parent/guardian.
- If a parent/guardian is unavailable and the student can not be maintained in the school, school personnel could transport the student to the local hospital for assessment and/or possible admission. Under extreme circumstances it may be appropriate to call the police/RCMP.
- The student should be referred to the appropriate counselling service for assessment and follow-up.
- Designated school personnel should follow-up the next day with the parents/guardians to determine what action has been taken, and to identify the role of the school.
- If, in the course of the interview or from other sources, it has been suggested that the means to commit suicide has been brought to school it may be considered grounds for search of the student or a search of the student's locker.
- All action taken should be chronologically documented.
- The Superintendent and Coordinator of Student Services should be contacted if additional support or intervention is required.

The School's Role after a Suicide Attempt

Although the school is not in a position to offer therapy, it can provide a post-crisis support program. Such a program can take a number of forms to address the following:

- Transition back into school.
- Monitoring of the student.
- Support in school related matters.

Regardless of the degree of intensity of the suicide threat or the action taken in a suicide attempt there will be a degree of awkwardness experienced by the student when he/she returns to school. A transition plan may help ease the student's move back into school. The transition plan should have the following elements:

- The school administrator should be assigned to coordinate post-crisis support. If parents/guardians and the treatment agency are willing, a support plan should be discussed. Do not assume, however, that all students who have made a suicidal threat or attempt become involved with community support services.
- In development of a post crisis support program, a student's right to confidentiality shall be respected. Safety concerns must sometimes override confidentiality.
- There should be discussions with classroom teachers concerning the student's return to class. In general, the academic expectations for the student should remain the same as for other students.

Students who have been identified as at-risk or who have attempted suicide should continue to be monitored. The purpose of the monitoring is:

- To identify any changes in behaviour which might signal an increase of risk, and communicate the concern to the parent/guardian and designated therapist.
- To identify and provide support in cases where the school may be contributing negatively to readjustment.

Regular monitoring of the at-risk student should be undertaken with discretion to ensure that this process is not an added source of stress for the student.

ST1 Teacher Guidelines for Talking to Students about Suicide

- Prepare students for the serious and tragic nature of the information you are about to share with them. Say that it is expected that this news will upset many of them and that both you and other staff are there to help them get through this. Staff should try to be calm but let your humanity show as well.
- Announce the facts of the situation and what actions are being taken as a result. (E.g. all classes are being informed, drop-in centres are being set up, etc.)
- Allow students to react.
- Dispel any rumours or unconfirmed information.
- Stress that we each react differently to tragedies and must respect one another's feelings and ways of reacting.
- Point out that grief, sadness, anger, guilt, fear, and disbelief are all normal reactions to such news.
- Convey a sense of acceptance for all the feelings expressed. Avoid judgmental or value statements about anyone's feeling.
- Note that some people's feelings will be stronger than others and that individual help is available (name where and with whom) for those who want to discuss their feelings further with someone.
- If students' reactions seem particularly intense or you feel unable to respond to them adequately, strongly encourage them to seek assistance at one of the designated drop-in centres. Offer to accompany them to the room.
- If students have questions you are unable to answer, or if you are feeling uncomfortable in the discussion, request help from the CISM Team.
- Encourage students to be supportive of one another but stress the importance of seeking help or encouraging their friends to seek help from adults if their feelings seem more intense or persistent than "normal".
- Reassure students that they are not responsible for what happened - discourage guilt and unrealistic "hindsight regrets". Instead, focus discussion on how they might use what they now know to avoid similar tragedies in the future.
- Stress that the feelings students now have are temporary and will diminish with time; display your own sense of assurance that things will get better.
- In cases of suicide, avoid glamorizing the death or dead person. Stress that this was a tragic and unnecessary event.***
- In cases of suicide, avoid focusing on the details or circumstances that led up to the person's death; stress that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem and focus discussion on how the person might have gotten help to avoid this tragic ending. Stress that suicide is not a normal reaction to life's setbacks.***
- Allow students who do not want to participate in the discussion to study quietly in the room or to go to one of the drop-in centres. Don't assume that the lack of a visible reaction means the student has no reaction. As well, with some students no response can be okay too.
- Allow as much time as students seem to need for the discussion. Try to move discussion toward how students can help one another express sympathy for the family.
- Discussion moves to suicide prevention. Be aware that this can be useful but a very sensitive topic for the friends, etc. of the deceased.***
- End the class by reminding students of the counselling and support services that are available.

ST2.....Tips for Schools

- Have a policy in place before a suicide occurs. Do not allow activities to go beyond what is customary for other types of death.
- Assume that all students and staff are affected by the death.
- Ensure that adequate support services are available.

ONE SCHOOL'S PRACTICE

"Our school, towards the end of the year, quietly purchases works of art (e.g. paintings) and dedicates one to any student who has died during the school year. This procedure recognizes all students who died whatever the cause. A dedication ceremony is not involved."

*Jan Brown. –Guidance Counsellor
Lord Beaverbrook High School
Calgary, Alberta*

Tips for Helping Bereaved Students

- Provide students with the information they need and that they can handle. (Keep child appropriate).
- Provide an open and non-judgemental atmosphere in which students can say what and how they feel about suicide and people who commit suicide. (Deaton & Berkan, 1995).
- Focus on the fact that the deceased student saw suicide as an option for solving their problems. Emphasize that there are many other options for people who are in distress and that asking for help is not a sign of weakness.
- Teach students healthy ways of coping with grief. Direct their efforts into constructive activities, e.g. collecting funds for the local crisis agency.
- Help students (and parents when necessary) to distinguish between goodbye rituals, commemoration and memorialization.
 - Good-bye rituals: what is done after a critical incident to bring closure and acceptance such as a scrapbook, flowers, etc.
 - Commemoration: a service or celebration in memory of the deceased person.
 - Memorialization: something designed or adapted to preserve the memory of a person such as an annual day or event, a monument, etc.
- Be prepared to facilitate commemorations where the life of the student is celebrated, and not the way in which they chose to die. (Metzgar, 1995)

SAMPLE DEATH OF A STUDENT BY SUICIDE COMMUNICATION

TO: Staff

FROM: Principal

DATE:

One of our students, _____ died Wednesday night by taking his/her own life. It is a tragedy and something many of us have trouble understanding and even coping with.

There will be a meeting _____ to share the crisis response plan and how our school will deal with this tragic event.

In addition, support staff will be available throughout the day if you wish to talk to someone.

Adapted from the American Association of Suicidology.

SA2.....Guidelines for Written Notification for Teachers to Share with Students

Written notification is helpful to staff but not necessary. The important part is that teachers are aware of what to tell their students.

The following sample statement may be used in the notification of students:

After a suicide...

"A tragedy has occurred in our community and a grade _____ student has died from self inflicted injuries. Details of _____'s premature death will not be released to protect the privacy of his/her family. You will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible."

"This kind of tragedy does not need to happen. Lots of people think about hurting themselves, but there are many better options to pain than taking your life. There are people who are able to help you. If you feel you would like support, speak with someone who can help such as a counsellor, school wellness coordinator, teacher, coach, etc.

"This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You will probably feel many feelings within the next few days. You may feel sad, angry, confused, numb, or depressed. In fact, you may think about hurting yourself too."

"Drop-in Centres where you can come to talk about these feelings are available to you. Drop-in Centres will be located in rooms _____ for the next ____ days. You can use the Drop-in Centres whenever you like. Let your classroom teacher know when you are doing so."

"This kind of tragedy never needs to happen again in this school. We need to communicate with one another, and help one another to make sure this doesn't happen again."

SA3.....Sample Announcement to Students

One of our students, _____, died last night. The death was an apparent suicide. The investigation is still continuing.

Since many of us knew _____, it is only natural that there will be some very deep feelings with which we will need to deal.

We are all sad, and we will need to help each other to talk about our loss and about our feelings.

Our critical incident response team is available to talk with anyone who would like to speak with them.

We will share information about the funeral when we receive it.

The family of _____ needs to know that we *care*, but they also need some privacy today.

Dear Parents of _____ students:

The _____ School community was saddened to learn of the apparent suicide of one of our students. The death of any young person is a loss which, in one way or another diminishes each of us. The tragic circumstances of _____'s death are perhaps more shocking and more difficult to accept.

We have asked the assistance of the Critical Incident Response team to help our school community deal with this loss. We are doing everything we can to help your child and our staff through this tragic event. You and/or your child may have more questions and a need to talk about the suicide at home.

_____ 's funeral will be held at _____ Church, _____, on _____ at _____.

Your child may be excused from school to attend the funeral with written permission from you. We encourage you to accompany your child to the funeral. The school will remain open for those students who choose not to attend.

_____ 's classmates and teachers have decided to receive donations in his/her memory and will make a contribution to _____. Please contact the school office at _____ for further information.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's reactions to the tragic death of _____, the school principal will be available to assist you.

Adapted by the American Association of Suicidology.

SA5..... Vulnerable Students (Sudden Death)

Identify and refer vulnerable students to the School-Based CISM Team. Vulnerable students may include:

- Students with prior suicidal behaviour.
- Students with a history of emotional illness or depression.
- Students, who have recently suffered a loss such as a death, break-up of a romance, and/or a separation/divorce of parents.
- Students who were close friends or siblings of the deceased.

“AT RISK” STUDENTS (After Suicidal Death)

Immediately following a completed suicide there may be other students and adults in the school and community who became suicidal themselves.

Probable “High Risk” Students after Suicidal Death:

Students who:

- Participated in any way with the completed suicide: helped write the suicide note, provided the means, involved in a suicide pact, etc.
- Knew of the plans but kept it a secret.
- Were siblings or other relatives, best friends, girlfriend/boyfriend.
- Was a self-appointed therapist.
- Have a history of suicidal threats/attempts themselves.
- Identified with the victim's situation.
- Have reason to feel guilty about things they had said or done to the student prior to the suicide.
- Are desperate for any reason and now see suicide as a viable alternative, i.e. depressed.
- Observed events which they later learned were indicative of the victim's suicidal intent.
- Who have experienced sudden or traumatic losses in their own life. (E.g., death, divorce.)

See Administrators' Section for Memorial Policy

Schools should have a policy re: memorials. Memorializing students who kill themselves can lead to an imitation effect. Even though there may be an overall policy on memorials in the school, suicide should be treated differently than sudden death in the school.

Recommendations Regarding Suicidal Deaths:

- Students' responses should be channelled into constructive projects to help the living.
- Contribute or donate funds to concerned agencies, such as a Crisis Center.
- Customary Memorial activities may be questionable.
- Do not dedicate athletic events.
- No permanent memorial. (E.g. plaques, planting a tree or dedicating a year book or establishing a scholarship fund.) This has potential for constant invitation to consider suicide.
- Memorial assemblies can be too intense and difficult to manage.

A critical incident within a school raises anxiety which requires educators and members of the community to work in partnership to cope with the incident.

School and central office staff must work effectively with the media to ensure that the media become a positive force in responding to the tragedy.

Research suggests that the phenomenon of the "cluster" or "copycat" suicide is on the increase. This phenomenon refers to the occurrence of more than one youth suicide/suicide attempt at nearly the same time or place which may be a result of imitation. Media information regarding youth suicide needs to be sensitively and responsibly shared in ways which will not encourage imitation.

Specific Recommendations

- The school administrator or his/her designate should assume responsibility for media who contact the school. All school personnel should be informed that all contacts from the media should be directed to the Director of Education or the designated spokesperson.
- The designated spokesperson should attempt to gather as much factual information as possible. Factual information will help to decrease anxiety and dispel rumours. Care must be taken to avoid release of unauthorized information.

Prepare a written statement outlining the information that can be shared.

- Be open to contact with the media. The designated spokesperson is in a position to give responsible information about the tragedy. If the spokesperson is unavailable or perceived by the media as not open to communication, members of the media will turn to other sources of information such as students. This may be counterproductive to school personnel managing the tragic event and its aftermath.
- Using the phrase "no comment" may be perceived as withholding information. If a media inquiry cannot be addressed, provide the reason for which it cannot be answered. Never speak "off the record" or give exclusive interviews. Give the information that you need to give even if the right question is not asked.

SAMPLE COMMENT TO MEDIA

Our school community has been saddened by the death of _____, a student/staff member at _____. The cause of death is reported to be _____.

Members of the Division/Critical Incident Response Team have responded to our request for support in coping with our grief. The Response Team will work with students and staff in our school to help them discuss their feelings and cope with this loss.

_____ will be available for updated information regarding this tragedy. I ask that members of the media respect our need for privacy. Please do not attempt to interview students and staff at this time.

There needs to be a balance maintained between supporting the grieving process and the avoidance of glamorizing or sensationalizing the suicide. Maintaining this balance is a particularly delicate issue as the school decides on appropriate commemorative activities. Often the school's customs with regard to student deaths will provide a baseline for the decision. Memorial activities should not go beyond what is customary in other situations. For example, if it is the custom to fly the flag at half staff or have a moment of silent prayer then this activity is all right.

Some memorial activities are questionable, even if customary. Do not dedicate an athletic event, dance or other school activity to the deceased student. Establishing any kind of permanent memorial such as a plaque, planting a tree, dedicating the year book, or establishing a scholarship fund has the potential for becoming a constant invitation to consider suicide. Memorial assemblies can be too intense and difficult to manage. Grieving students may be persistent in their efforts to honour the memory of the deceased friend. School personnel should understand and explain these responses as part of the grief process and channel the students' energies into constructive projects to help the living. If funds are collected, they may be offered to the family to help with funeral expenses or donated to a community agency such as a crisis centre.

All students wishing to attend the funeral should be encouraged to do so, with parental permission. Funerals play an important role in helping people to accept the reality of death. They provide rituals for the shared experience of grief. Encourage parents to accompany their children and be available to discuss the experience with them. Many students will be anxious about the funeral and this can be a topic for individual and group counselling to prepare for the emotional impact. The opportunity should also be provided for individual and group support after the funeral. The school or the teachers should not assume responsibility for taking students to the funeral home, church or cemetery. A funeral service held after regular school hours minimizes the disruption of the regular school schedule. If this is not the choice of the family and the funeral is held during school hours, the school should stay open for those students who choose not to attend. Provision should be made for teachers and administrators to attend.

Please refer to the document: After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools for updated information.
https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/App_Files/Media/PDF/sprc_online_library.pdf

