

## **SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND POSTVENTION PROCEDURES**

### **A. PREVENTION**

Prevention is defined as planned educational activities designed to achieve two broad goals: (1) to promote the development of positive self-image and coping skills necessary to constructively deal with life, and (2) to develop the skills necessary to recognize and intervene in potentially suicidal situations.

**1. Prevention Activities for School Staff** – School staff is seen as the support system needed to be able to respond to crises as they occur within the school. Staff development activities will be held for all appropriate school staff to:

- a) sensitize staff to the problem,
- b) promote understanding of warning signs to facilitate identification of a child at risk,
- c) generate ideas on how to interact with a student,
- d) delineate a referral chain within the school building of staff who would be available to help,
- e) familiarize staff with community resources that could be used when school staff are not available, and
- f) impart knowledge of basic crisis intervention theory.

**2. Prevention Activities for Students** – Prevention activities for students occur as part of the curriculum infused in health class and classroom guidance, PK-12. The objectives for the curriculum are to:

- a) develop understanding of the emotional dynamics of depression and suicide in the context of normal development crises,
- b) acquire knowledge of warning signs to help students know when they need to seek guidance for themselves or a close friend,
- c) be aware of resources for help within the school and community,
- d) develop an appreciation of the concept of shared responsibility,
- e) understand the importance of not letting a promise of secrecy prevent the referral of a suicidal friend, and
- f) be aware of the steps to take to obtain help for a friend at risk or themselves.

**3. Prevention Activities for Parents/Guardians** – Parents/guardians are seen as a valuable resource for getting help for their children and friends of their children. Prevention activities for parents/guardians will involve the distribution of literature and periodic workshops to:

- a) provide assistance in recognizing students at risk, and
- b) present information regarding resources for help in the school and community.

## **B. INTERVENTION**

Intervention is defined as action that is taken by a team of trained school staff when a student threatens or attempts suicide. The team shall include a school administrator, counselor, school social worker and school psychologist.

The following referral chain has been established to deal with such crises.

1. Teachers, students or other concerned persons should notify a school counselor or administrator of a student identified as being at risk. 911 will be called immediately if needed.
2. Call Crisis Line of Shawano County. 715-526-3240
3. While waiting for Crisis to arrive:
  - a) The student should not be left alone. A responsible adult shall remain with the student.
  - b) The parent(s)/guardian will be notified immediately.
  - c) School staff should not assume the responsibility of treating a suicidal student. However, after a referral for treatment has been made to Crisis the staff functions in a supportive way.
4. If the situation is determined not life threatening, but the student exhibits warning signs of potential suicide, these procedures will be followed:
  - a) The parent(s)/guardian will be notified immediately, and the student may be so advised of said notification.
  - b) A plan will be developed in consultation with another member of the team and the building principal and/or Crisis. The plan will include, at the minimum, a list of mental health agencies that will be given to the parent(s)/guardian. The team will offer a strong recommendation that the parent(s)/guardian choose an agency with whom to consult.
  - c) School staff should not assume the responsibility of treating a potentially suicidal student. However, after a referral for treatment has been made to a community agency or mental health professional, the staff functions in a supportive way and may often coordinate their work in the school setting with the student's therapist.
5. Documentation for any meetings with school counselors or other staff will be kept in the school counselor's office. Access to documents will be limited to school counselors and administration.

## **C. POSTVENTION**

Postvention is defined as the action taken when a suicide has occurred and subsequent attempts to respond to the grief and shock of family, friends, school population and the community at large. The primary objective of postvention is to prevent the occurrence of the cluster suicide phenomena.

1. The building principal is the crisis control leader. All inquiries from the media and the general public will be directed to the Superintendent.
2. A team member will contact the family and be available for support as needed. Siblings in the District will be provided with immediate crisis intervention counseling.
3. Factual information about the suicide will be gathered by the team.
4. Appropriate consultants may be utilized to assist staff and students.
5. Factual information will be disseminated faculty to the faculty. The faculty will:
  - a) present the information to their class about the suicide,
  - b) allow ample time for student reaction and interaction, and
  - c) inform the students that concerned staff and counselors are immediately available.
6. The suicide victim's closest friends will be identified for in-school supportive counseling. These students will be monitored closely, and their parent(s)/guardian will be contacted concerning the event.

#### **D. LIABILITY**

Any school district officer, employee or volunteer who in good faith attempts to prevent suicide by a student is immune from civil liability under state law for his/her acts or omissions in respect to the suicide or attempted suicide.

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