

Suicide Prevention and Intervention

Prevention

Suicide prevention involves school-wide activities and programs that enhance connectedness, contribute to a safe and nurturing environment, and strengthen protective factors that reduce risk for students.

Examples of prevention activities include:

1. Promoting and reinforcing the development of desirable behavior such as help seeking behaviors and healthy problem-solving skills.
2. Increasing staff, student and parent/guardian knowledge and awareness of risk factors and warning signs of youth suicide and self-injury.
3. Monitoring and being involved in young people's lives by giving structure, guidance and consistent, fair discipline.
4. Modeling and teaching desirable skills and behavior.
5. Promoting access to school and community resources.

Intervention

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help staff identify and respond to students at risk of suicide. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the administrator/administrative designee and/or mental health team member. When a suicidal ideation, threat, and/or attempt is reported, the school administrator/administrative designee and/or school mental health team member shall:

1. Reference Alliance College-Ready Public Schools' Mental Health Crisis Response procedures for step-by-step guidance
2. Ensure the student's physical safety by one of the following, as appropriate:
 - a. Securing immediate medical treatment if a suicide attempt has occurred
 - b. Securing law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened
 - c. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene.
3. Designate specific individuals to be promptly contacted, including school mental health team member(s), school administrator or administrative designee, and/or the student's parent/guardian, and, as necessary, local law enforcement or mental health agencies
4. School mental health team member or administrative designee, will document the incident using the Alliance College-Ready Public Schools Risk Assessment Documentation Form
5. Teachers, administrators, and other staff will document a suicide threat, ideation, or attempt using the Alliance College-Ready Public Schools Incident Report Form.
6. Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed
7. Provide access to school mental health team members or school administratorship team to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident at the school
8. Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions (postvention)

If you believe that your child is thinking about suicide, approach the situation by asking. Asking is the first step in saving a life and can let them know that you are there for them and will listen. If you need IMMEDIATE assistance due to a life threatening situation, call 911. For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771. Students and family members can also call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for free and confidential support for themselves or for loved ones.