

CODE: HHCF.AR

EFFECTIVE DATE: (29-01-2020)

TOPIC: Student or Staff Suicide

ISSUE DATE: (29-01-2020)

REVIEW YEAR: (2011)

REGULATION

The following provides guidance to Division staff for identifying suicide risk. The ability to assess risk for suicide and the willingness and ability to respond appropriately can save a life. Suicide risk assessments should be undertaken by individuals trained in suicide risk assessment, i.e., Division social workers and psychologists (when students at risk are involved) or Employee Assistance personnel (when staff at risk are involved).

A. HIGH SUICIDE RISK INDIVIDUALS

1. Identifying High Suicide Risk Individuals

The following are risk factors for suicide. The first three (**bolded**) are the most critical. If one or more of the first three indicators are identified, the individual should be closely monitored and a suicide risk assessment completed.

- a. **Discussion of suicide plan**
- b. **Previous suicide attempts**
- c. **Depressed with a lack of social or intrapersonal resources**
- d. Significant life stressor(s) or emotional trauma within the past 12 months
- e. Expression of helplessness and hopelessness
- f. Anger/disappointment at self and the world
- g. Statements that family and friends would not miss them
- h. Abuse of alcohol and drugs
- i. Giving away of personal possessions
- j. Pervasive death themes in spoken, written, and art works; e.g., use of dark, heavy, slashes and unconnected bodies in art work
- k. Sudden, positive behaviour change, following a period of depression
- l. Suicide or attempted suicide by family member or friend.

2. Obtaining Assistance for High-Risk Individuals

If a suicide attempt appears imminent, or occurs, take appropriate immediate action:

- a. stay with the individual.
- b. contact the individual's parents or guardians, spouse, partner, or caregiver immediately.
- c. seek assistance from a Consulting Services psychologist or social worker when a student is involved, or from Employee Assistance when a staff member is involved.
- d. take the individual to the emergency department of a hospital.

3. Follow-up Procedures for Students

- a. If a student is at risk, or has attempted suicide:
 - i. all staff having contact with the student shall be informed so that the student can be monitored.
- b. If a student will be absent for a period of time following a suicide attempt:

- i. the parents or guardians shall be contacted by the principal or designate to clarify the situation and determine probable absence time.
 - ii. teachers should provide appropriate assignments for the student.
 - iii. contact should be maintained with the social worker or psychologist involved with the student.
 - iv. the student should be monitored closely upon return to school and ongoing contact with parents or guardians maintained.
- c. Information regarding the student's suicidal behaviour shall be communicated to the principal of the receiving school when the student leaves one school and attends another.

4. Follow-up Procedures for Staff

The principal shall ensure that the staff member is informed about services available through Employee Assistance.

B. AFTER A SUICIDE

The following are recommended courses of action when a suicide occurs, or is believed to have occurred:

- a. The principal or designate contacts Security Services or District Support Services for advice and assistance.
- b. The principal will, in consultation District Support Services, determine support services needed and any required consultants will be made available. These staff members will advise with:
 - i. ways to inform staff and students of the suicide;
 - ii. the school's communication plan of the event;
 - iii. ways of involving Employee Assistance with significantly affected staff members.
 - iv. provision of grief counseling for affected students and staff;
 - v. organization for any contemplated school memorial service.
- c. Schools may wish to offer assistance to parents and other members of the school community by referring them to appropriate community agencies.

REFERENCES

AEBC.BP - Wellness of Students and Staff