

# STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION PROTOCOL FOR SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to provide education and guidance to faculty, staff, students, and other members of the college community to help prevent student suicide at Salt Lake Community College. College community members should be able to effectively assist students who have:

- a) engaged in suicidal behavior and may be in need of emergency medical attention,
- b) communicated a suicide threat and may be at imminent risk for suicidal behavior,
- c) exhibited warning signs for suicide and may be at some risk for suicidal behavior.

## DEFINITIONS

Suicide: Death from an injury which is self-inflicted and by which the student intended to kill himself or herself.

Suicidal Behavior: Any potentially injurious behavior which is self-inflicted and by which a student intends, or gives the appearance of intending, to kill himself or herself.

Suicide Threat: Any interpersonal action, verbal or non-verbal, that a reasonable person would interpret as communicating or suggesting that suicidal behavior may occur in the near future.

Suicidal Ideation: Any self-reported thoughts or feelings about engaging in suicidal behavior.

Suicide Plan: A proposed method of self-inflicted injury through which the potential and intentional outcome is death.

## PROTOCOL

In the event a member of the college community learns, either directly or indirectly, that a student has a) engaged in suicidal behavior, b) communicated a suicide threat, or c) exhibited warning signs for suicide, that student should be referred for assistance according to the procedures outlined below.

## PROCEDURES

### Suicidal Behavior:

- Any member of the college community who learns that a student has *just engaged in, is in the processing of engaging in, or is about to engage in suicidal behavior*, should immediately report this behavior to emergency personnel by calling **911** or **Public Safety** (801) 957-3800.
- If possible, provide responding emergency personnel with any pertinent information that is known about the student.
- Contact the **Dean of Students** as soon as possible at (801) 957-4776 or at (801) 450-3920 if after business hours. The Dean may then consult, activate and/or convene other BIT members to help coordinate information, identify support strategies, and develop/implement a follow-up action plan.
- If the Dean of Students is not available, please contact the Director of Student Conduct & Support Services at (801) 957-2122 or at (801) 815-7012 if after business hours.

### Suicide Threat:

- Any member of the college community who learns that a student has *communicated a suicide threat* should contact the **Dean of Students** as soon as possible at (801) 957-4776 or (801) 450-3920 if after business hours. The Dean may then consult, activate or convene other BIT members to help coordinate information, identify support strategies, and develop/implement an action plan.
- If the Dean of Students is not available, please contact the Director of Student Conduct & Support Services at (801) 957-2122 or at (801) 815-7012 if after business hours.
- A student who has communicated a suicide threat may be required to be assessed by a mental health professional to determine the level of suicide risk.
- The assessment may be performed by a Health and Wellness counselor, a mental health professional in the community, or a crisis worker at a hospital emergency room.
- All suicide threats should be taken seriously. No attempt to independently evaluate the validity or imminence of the suicide threat should be made by a non-professional.
- If at any point it seems reasonable to assume that *suicidal behavior is imminent*, especially if the student is uncooperative with attempts to help, call **911** or **Public Safety** (801) 957-3800. Share the student's name, description, details of the suicide threat, and location/destination (if known). Safety officers can check on the student and take them into custody, as appropriate, to be evaluated for suicidal risk.

### Warning Signs of Suicide:

- Any member of the college community who learns that a student is *exhibiting warning signs of suicide*, but has not engaged in suicidal behavior or communicated a suicide threat, should contact **Health and Wellness Services** (801) 957-4268, for consultation and support, especially if the student is *exhibiting suicidal ideation*. The **Dean of Students** should also be notified.
- For immediate assistance with a student if Health and Wellness Services is closed, the **24-Hour Crisis Line** (801) 587-3000 provided by the University Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of Utah can be called. A **Mobile Crisis Outreach Team** is also available at this number for on-site assessment and crisis intervention.
- A student may also be referred directly to Health and Wellness Services for counseling and encouraged to make an appointment on their own. However, with the student's permission, a call may be made on their behalf together with the college community member, and/or the student can be accompanied to make the appointment.
- The most common Warning Signs of Suicide are described below:

**Ideation:** talk of suicide, researching suicide means, preoccupation with death

**Substance abuse:** increasing abuse of drugs or alcohol

**Purposelessness:** lacking meaning or purpose, having no reason to live, a sudden loss

**Anxiety:** restlessness, inability to sleep, panic and anxiety

**Trapped:** feeling there is no way out, stuck in unbearable pain

**Hopelessness:** depression, despair, feeling like a burden to others

**Withdrawal:** isolating oneself from friends, family or others, feeling alienated

**Anger:** exhibiting uncontrolled rage or wanting to seek revenge

**Recklessness:** thoughtless or impulsive engagement in risky activities

**Mood changes:** displaying extreme or dramatic changes of mood or behavior

**Other:** getting affairs in order, having a suicide plan, past suicide attempts

### TRAINING

Further education and training in identifying and assisting emotionally distressed and at-risk students is provided by the counseling staff at Health and Wellness Services, and is available upon request. To inquire about training, contact Scott Kadera at (801) 957-4268 or [scott.kadera@slcc.edu](mailto:scott.kadera@slcc.edu).