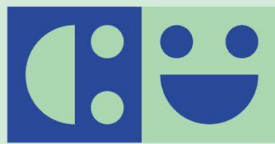


Quick Tips for Responding to a Student Mental Health Crisis

✓ Mental Health Crisis and Response Plan Checklist		
1	Identify if a student is in distress	Possible indicators of emotional distress: Infrequent class attendance, dramatic decrease in academic function, lack of enthusiasm for various aspects of student life, lack of energy or falling asleep in class, sadness, tearfulness, marked change in personal hygiene, alcohol and/ or drug use, high levels of irritability, including undue aggressive or abrasive behavior, bizarre or strange behavior, expressed thoughts of death/ suicide, or suicide attempts. ¹
2	Connect with the student	Request to see the student in private: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Briefly acknowledge your observations and perceptions of their situation- Express your concerns directly and honestly- Listen carefully and acknowledge their pain- If there is any evidence of possible suicidal thinking, ask directly, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
3	Assess the student's immediate needs	Is there an imminent risk of self-harm or harm to others? IF YES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- If the student is thinking about or has a plan to kill themselves, immediately contact your designated faculty to conduct a risk-assessment.- If the student has a weapon and is threatening to use it; the individual is threatening immediate harm to self; and/ or the individual has engaged in a behavior that requires medical attention, contact a colleague to immediately contact law enforcement. IF NO: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- If the student is acutely distressed or suicidal, in a non-emergency but urgent situation, or there is a clear risk but no evidence that suggests the student will be taking action at that moment - consider allowing the student time to communicate their needs, connect them to resources provided at your school to aid in mental health support, or provide them with outside resources (suicide hotline, treatment options).
4	Follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Debrief with administration and those involved in the crisis response.- Seek support for yourself. You may be experiencing a variety of emotions as a result of your efforts to support and assist this student.- Check-in with the student when the time is appropriate. Validate their needs and restore your relationship if needed.





Quick Tips



- **You are a mandated reporter.** This means you are responsible for reporting any concern regarding violence, abuse, or neglect of a student.
- **Changes.** If you notice changes in a student's mood, performance, or appearance over a 1-2 week time span, consider checking in with them and consulting your school counselor, social worker, or other appropriate staff.
- **Vulnerability.** Students with disabilities have an additional layer of vulnerability when it comes to living with mental health risks and needs.
- **Believe students.** Students with mental health needs may be presenting for the first time or have not been believed in the past.

Quick Resources

- **Practice Empathy:** [Brene Brown short video on Empathy](#)
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** [Risk of Suicide](#)
NAMI provides an in-depth guide for Navigating a Mental Health Crisis on the Risk of Suicide page on their website. Additionally, you can call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.





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Citations

¹ *Minnesota Department of Education Ensuring safe and supportive schools.* Minnesota Department of Education. (2017, September 25). Retrieved November 22, 2021, from <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/safe/>.

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