**How can I help my child after a suicide threat?**

*Important parenting action steps to consider when your student has had a serious suicide threat.*

Young people, just like adults, can struggle with painful emotional problems. Young people may not know how to talk about feeling down or worried and may become withdrawn or less cooperative. Parents and caretakers need to act when signs of depression or anxiety begin to interfere with a child or teen’s ability to participate successfully in school, family and social activities.

1. **Take all safety precautions necessary with regard to restricting the means for carrying out an attempt.** Remove pills, knives, razors, or firearms. If likely to overdose, keep medications locked away or give out only as the person needs them.

2. **Keep student supervised** until a medical professional has determined that the student is no longer in imminent danger.

3. **Seek psychological or psychiatric consultation immediately from the community.**

   Options include:
   - Take student directly to the emergency room: ________________________________
   - Make an urgent appointment with the student’s therapist: ______________________
   - Call the Crisis Clinic 206-461-3222 or 1-866-4CRISIS to access Children’s Crisis Outreach Response System (CCORS) which provides families and youth with immediate crisis stabilization support.
   - In case of emergency: CALL 9-1-1

4. **Consider signing a release of information** to allow your school counselor and nurse to communicate with outside therapist.

   *Your student’s information will be kept confidential and will not be released without your prior written consent.*

5. **Notify your student’s counselor prior to returning to school.**

   *Prior notification will allow your students counselor sufficient opportunity to discuss support strategies when they return to school.*
**Tips for talking to your child about suicide**

Talking to your child about their suicidal thoughts and feelings can be extremely difficult for anyone. But if you’re unsure whether someone is suicidal, the best way to find out is to ask. You can’t make a person suicidal by showing that you care. In fact, giving a suicidal person the opportunity to express his or her feelings can provide relief from loneliness and pent-up negative feelings, and may prevent a suicide attempt.

1. **Let them know that you care in a calm, accepting and hopeful way:** the right words are often unimportant. If you are concerned, your voice & manner will show it.

   Show love and acceptance of your child’s feelings and acknowledge the courage that it takes to talk about “hard things”. Confirm they are doing the right thing by talking about his/her feelings. Communicate your willingness to support.

   Ways to start a conversation about suicide: (allow your child to talk, listen without interruptions)
   - “I have been feeling concerned about you lately.”
   - “Recently, I have noticed some differences in you and wondered how you are doing?”
   - “I wanted to check in with you because you haven’t seemed yourself lately”.

2. **Listen:** Let them unload despair, ventilate anger. No matter how negative the conversation seems, the fact that it exists is a positive sign that they are talking.

   If they say things like, “I’m so depressed, I can’t go on,” ask the question: “Are you having thoughts of suicide?” You are not putting ideas in their head; you are showing that you are concerned, that you take them seriously, and that it’s OK for them to share their pain with you.

   You can ask questions like: (However, listen more than talk)
   - “When did you begin feeling like this?”
   - “Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?”
   - “Can you tell me more about what’s going on?”
   - “Are you thinking about suicide?”
   - “How can I best support you right now?”

3. **Develop a plan of action.** Consider the need for professional help – Call the CRISIS line (1-866-4CRISIS) to have them help you with developing a plan of action if your child says they think about harming themselves or that their life isn’t worth living.

   Offer hope and develop a plan of support. Reassure them that help is available and that the suicidal feelings are temporary. Let them know that his or her life is important to you.
   - “You are not alone in this. I’m here for you.”
   - “I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help.”
   - “I know where we can get some help.”

**Things that are NOT helpful:**

**Arguing**. Avoid saying things like: "You have so much to live for," "Your suicide will hurt our family," “Look on the bright side”, or "What do you have to be depressed about? You get everything you want.”

**Acting shocked, lecturing on the value of life, or say that suicide is wrong.**

**Promising confidentiality.** Refuse to be sworn to secrecy. A life is at stake and you may need to speak to a mental health professional in order to keep the suicidal person safe. If you promise to keep your discussions secret, you may have to break your word.

**Offering ways to fix their problems, or giving advice,** or make them feel like they have to justify their suicidal feelings. It is not about how bad the problem is, but how badly it’s hurting your child.
Where do I go to get an assessment and immediate support for my child?

If your student has a therapist contact them first, they may be able to pursue a direct referral.

Immediate Emergency Assistance

Call 9-1-1

Hospitals and ERs

Seattle Children’s – Mental Health Services / Outpatient Children and Adolescent Psychiatry Program

Services: Provides evaluation and treatment services for ages 1 -18.

http://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/psychiatry-and-behavioral-medicine/

Address/phone: 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle WA 98105 (206) 987-2164
Hours: M-F 8am-6pm

Swedish Hospital

Services: Same or next day assessments

http://www.swedish.org/services/behavioral-health

Address/phone: 751 NE Blakely Dr. Issaquah, WA 98029 (425) 394-0610
Hours M-F 24 hours a day

Overlake Hospital Medical Center – Psychiatric Treatment Services

Services: Same or next day evaluations and treatment recommendations.

http://www.overlakehospital.org/services/psychiatric/

Address/phone: 1035 116th Ave Bellevue, WA 98004 (425) 688-5460
Hours: M-F 24 hours

Fairfax Hospital – Behavioral Health

Services: Assessment and treatment. Ages 4-12

http://www.fairfaxhospital.com/

Address/phone: 10200 NE 132nd St, Kirkland WA 98034 (800) 435-7221
Hours: M-F 24 hours

Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital

Services: Evaluation and treatment

https://www.marybridge.org/services/psychology-psychiatry/services/

Address/phone: 315 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Tacoma, WA 98405 (253) 403-0362

Navos – Family Counseling and Support Center

Services: evaluation and treatment. Ages 2-18

http://www.seattlechildrenshome.org

Address/phone: 2142 10th Ave W, Seattle WA 98119 (206) 283-3300
Hours: M-F 8am-5pm

Private Therapist of Psychiatrist

Contact your insurance company for a referral

Consultation and Links to Appropriate Services

24 Hour Crisis Clinic –Consults with families and connects them to appropriate services including Children’s Crisis Response System (CCORS). They can assess a student at school or home if they are in imminent danger.

http://www.crisisclinic.org

Phone: (206) 461-3222 or 1-866-4CRISIS(866-427-4747)

Teen Link – professionally trained youth volunteers answer the phone and talk with students about problems at school, drugs and alcohol, self-harm, grief and loss, dating violence, family problems, eating disorders, and much more.

http://www.866teenlink.org/

Phone (206) 461-4922

Hours: 6pm-10pm

Issaquah School District is not financially responsible for the psychological evaluation, but is simply sharing this emergency list as they would any health concern. Any further action that you undertake in regard to this matter is your own decision and your own financial responsibility.

2.3.17 Updated