

University High School Suicide Prevention Plan

Purpose:

The purpose of this suicide prevention plan is to ensure the well-being and health of all UHS students by having procedures and training in place to prevent, assess, and intervene in response to a student suicide or suicide attempt. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among adolescents and as educators we want to be proactive in preventing death by suicide among our students. The school's desire is to provide a safe and positive environment that is aware of the individual and societal factors that put students at a greater risk for suicide.

Staff Professional Development:

All UHS staff annually receives professional development on the risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, postvention and resources regarding youth suicide prevention. Additionally, UHS staff is trained on how to identify students that are at a higher risk of suicide, such as students with mental or substance use disorders; students that engage in self harm or have attempted suicide; students that are in and out of home settings or homeless; students that identify as LGBTQ and those students with medical conditions or disabilities.

Student Prevention Program:

The head UHS School Counselor will be the designated suicide prevention coordinator. Students at UHS are given core curriculum lessons led by the School Counselors on the following: coping strategies; how to recognize emotional and mental risk factors in themselves or others that lead to self-harm and suicidal ideation; how to maintain appropriate emotional and mental hygiene, and students will also learn strategies on how to seek help and resources for themselves and others. All students are provided suicide prevention information, crisis hotlines, local warmlines, and community-based support information located in their student handbook.

Communication with Parents, Caregivers, and Families:

All UHS parents are provided with information on suicide prevention resources located in the UHS Parent Handbook and website, which includes crisis hotlines, local warmlines, as well as school and community-based supports. If parents, families and/or caregivers identify or suspect a suicide risk, they are strongly encouraged to communicate with appropriate school staff (school counselor or administrator) for assistance.

Crisis Intervention Protocols, Referral and Follow-up Procedure:

If a UHS student should verbalize suicide ideation either through self referral, in-school suicide attempt or shows sign of suicidal risk factors or self harm behavior, the following will occur:

1. The student considered at risk will be seen or referred to the School Counselor and be assessed for risk factors and possible referral for medical treatment and/or mental health services.

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2. The student will remain in the presence of the School Counselor to ensure safety and well-being until a parent is notified. If necessary, campus police and/or other emergency assistance may be utilized.
3. The School Counselor will then work with the parent to make the appropriate referral to mental health services or a health care provider, which may also include emergency services.

For UHS students returning to school after a mental health crisis (suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization) the School Counselor and/or School Administrator will meet with the parent and student to discuss re-entry and ensure student's readiness to return to school. The parent/guardian will provide documentation from their mental health care provider that the student is no longer in danger to themselves or others. Once the student is integrated back to school the School Counselor will periodically check in with the student to address any concerns.

Postvention:

In response to a UHS student death by suicide, UHS will do the following:

1. The UHS administrative team will have an emergency meeting to develop and implement an Action Plan to guide the school. This Action Plan will include verifying and confirming the cause of death through the parent or guardian, and assessing the affect on other students and those most likely to be affected.
2. Until the cause of death is confirmed, information will be shared with staff, students, parents/guardians that a sudden death has occurred, but the cause is unknown.
3. A written script will be given to the UHS staff members to share with students with basic facts of the death and known funeral arrangements. Staff members will also advise students to seek their School Counselor to help with coping and grief.
4. The School Counselor will implement individual or group counseling as needed.
5. Appropriate communication will be made to the school community. The UHS Superintendent/Principal or designee will be the sole media spokesperson and all staff members will refer all media inquiries to the UHS administration.