

Approaches with Suicidal Students

General Guidelines for all staff faculty and staff to observe during a suicidal crisis:

1. Take every threat seriously.
2. Remain calm, Do not act shocked.
3. Listen actively and without judgment. Give the student the permission to express the full range of his or her feelings.
4. Acknowledge the student's feelings. Ask questions for clarity.
5. Do not get into a debate about whether suicide is right or wrong.
6. Offer hope. Let the student know that there is help, and that he or she can feel better.
7. Do not promise confidentiality. Do not act shocked.
8. Do not underestimate or brush aside a threat.
9. Do not take too much upon yourself. Your responsibility to the student in a crisis is limited to listening, being supportive, and getting him/her to a trained professional. Under no circumstances should you attempt to counsel the student.
10. Explain to the student the next steps in the intervention, e.g., going together to see the Guidance Counselor or designated staff.

(Sources: School-Based Crisis Management Recommendations on Suicide by Suicide Awareness Voices of Education and Association of California School Administrators.)