

Suicide

There usually is no single cause of suicide. Suicides, also, are not usually spontaneous. Rather, suicide is the result of a long-term, gradual process of decline in the person's ability to cope with life experiences and the emotions surrounding their experiences.

Teachers are a great resource to administrators in recognizing a student who may be experiencing problems that could lead to suicide. Teachers need to be encouraged to trust their instincts when dealing with their students because they see them five days a week for at least one hour, if not more.

Threat

1. Take the suicide threat seriously.
2. Advise the Principal as soon as possible regarding the child's dilemma
3. Call the student's parents immediately or as school procedures indicate
4. Remain with the child at all times until a parent/guardian arrives. If the parent does not come, call the Child Protective Services or the police.
5. Do not state that the child is "over-reacting" and that "it's really not that bad" (the child might view killing themselves as a solution). Things might, in fact, be "that bad" in their eyes.
6. Ask the child if they have a plan or intend to hurt themselves. Ask for details.
7. Call a teen crisis line for support and/or advice during the crisis.
8. Refer the child's name to the guidance counselor
9. Learn the facts about suicide
10. Follow-up on the suicide threat

Attempt

1. Call 911 immediately
2. Advise the Principal immediately
3. Activate the crisis response team
4. Call the student's parents immediately or as school procedures indicate
5. Remain with the child at all times
6. Refer the child's name to the guidance counselor
7. Stop rumors immediately
8. Contact the district guidance department
9. Request that the media be kept off campus
10. Follow the school safety plan on how to disarm a child if the need arises (e.g. razor, pills)

Dorn, M., Thomas, G., Wong, M., Sheperd, S., Kelly, J., & Stephens, R. (2004). Jane's School Safety Handbook: Response. (2nd ed.). U.S.: Jane's Information Group Sentinel House.

Suicide

1. Follow your local policies/procedures for suicide on or off campus.
2. Give less recognition if this did not occur at school in efforts to minimize making suicide attractive and to prohibit it from taking on heroic dimensions.
3. Any student known to have had prior knowledge of the person's intentions should receive individual attention by a crisis team member.

McEvoy, A. W. (1998). *When Disaster Strikes: Crisis Response Guidelines*. Learning Publications, Inc.: Holmes Beach, FL