



SCHOOL SAFETY SUMMIT

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**Crisis Management:
Assessing Threat and Suicide in our
Schools**

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Purpose of Today's Training:

- To provide an overview of the Tangipahoa Parish School System's Suicide and Threat Assessment Processes
- To answer questions from participants about our process
- To discuss our documentation protocols
- To discuss when and how to involve additional agencies
- To discuss our Return to Learn Planning
- Data Collection and Analysis



Suicide Assessment

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.

Suicide Facts: Prevalence

Among high school-age youths aged 14–18 years, 1,952 suicides occurred in 2021, making suicide the third leading cause of death for this age group

Suicide accounted for approximately one fifth of deaths (18.6%) among this age group

In 2020, according to data from a nationally representative sample of emergency departments (EDs), approximately 105,000 youths aged 14–18 years visited EDs for self-harm injuries

In 2021, approximately one third of female students reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide, approximately one fourth reported making a suicide plan, and 13.3% reported attempting suicide.

During 2009–2018, suicide rates among youths aged 14–18 years increased by 61.7% from 6.0 to 9.7 per 100,000 population

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/su/su7201a6.htm>

Suicide Facts: Causes

- The majority of children and adolescents who attempt suicide have a significant mental health disorder, usually depression.
- Among younger children, suicide attempts are often impulsive. They may be associated with feelings of sadness, confusion, anger, or problems with attention and hyperactivity.
- Suicidal thoughts are often related to adverse childhood experiences including child abuse and neglect, bullying, family history of suicide, relationship problems such as a breakup, violence or loss and sexual violence
- Among teenagers, suicide attempts may be associated with feelings of stress, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, disappointment and loss. For some teens, suicide may appear to be a solution to their problems.

Risk Factors for Suicide

- Family history of suicide
- Adverse Child Experiences (ACES)
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
- History of alcohol and substance abuse
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Local epidemics of suicide
- Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- Easy access to lethal methods

Why do we need to formally assess suicide?

1. Safety of students
2. Provision of information to appropriate authorities (parents/guardians, law enforcement, child protection, coroner's office)
3. Resources: providing students and families with resources following the event
4. Liability

When Should You Initiate an Assessment:

A student makes a direct or indirect verbal, written or electronic threat to harm themselves

Example:

Direct: I am going to shoot myself

Indirect/Passive: Life really isn't worth living anymore;
I don't want to continue this way

OR You may initiate a CONVERSATION if you notice a significant difference in behavior, attitude, grades, attendance, grooming

Ways we receive information on suicidal students in Tangipahoa:

- A student self-reports to a teacher or staff member
- A teacher or staff member overhears a suicidal statement
- A student overhears a suicidal statement and reports it to staff
- A parent reports the suicidal concerns of their child
- A student is engaged with one of our counselors or therapists and discloses suicidal thoughts during a session
- We receive a P3 Tip from Crimestoppers
- We receive a SafeMail alert
- An academic assignment alerts staff of concerns
- We discover writings, drawings or note other signs (self-injury)

Step 1: Locate and Secure the Student

1. Immediately locate and secure the student.
2. The student should be escorted to the office.
Teachers should not send them with a peer.
Administration should not call them up via intercom.
3. Search student and their belongings for any items that could cause harm.

Step 2: Determine the Team

- Decide who are relevant members of the team-trusted teachers, school counselor, administrator, school nurse, special education staff etc. Some team members will remain steady while others will change as the student of concern changes.
- RKM should be contacted if the student is a current patient
- If the student is not a current patient the school administration, school counselor, nurse or other school staff should make the initial contact
- If the student receives related services from Special Education, that provider should be contacted

Step 3: Notify the Parent/Guardian

- Attempt to make contact with a parent or guardian and ask that they make their way to the school
- The parent will be needed for certain portions of the assessment
- The parent will also need to be present when we provide the results and make recommendations for continued assessment or treatment

Step 4: Interview & Assess the Student

- Describe the incident of concern
- Assess risk factors
- Assess current feelings/recent events
- Assess for presence of thoughts and a plan
- Assess coping skills
- Assess supports/protective factors

Step 5: Clarify Concerns

- Interview additional individuals who may have pertinent information:

Teachers

Related Service Providers

Agencies: OJJ, DCFS, Mental Health, FINS

Parents

Friends/Students

Step 6: Notify the Principal

- An administrator must sign off on any assessment
- They do not need to be present for the entire assessment but they should be briefed
- They need to be informed prior to you calling for emergency medical care or law enforcement

Step 7: Determine Level of Intervention Needed

INTERVENTION NEEDED:

The student is in distress or made concerning statements. There is suicidal thinking but the student does not seem intent on harming herself/himself. The student's concerns and needs may be readily addressed. The student does not appear serious about harming himself/herself, nor have they thought seriously about a means to do so. Some coping skills and supports are present. The student is open and responsive to support, or already has sufficient support.

EMERGENCY INTERVENTION NEEDED:

The student is in significant distress. There is clear suicidal thinking and warning signs are present. The student's coping skills and social supports are limited or compromised. There may be a situation that is difficult to resolve. The student appears to be in imminent danger of inflicting self-harm or attempting/completing suicide. There is a need for immediate intervention and possibly hospitalization.

The Plan:

<u>Possible Options for Intervention Needed:</u>	<u>Possible Interventions for Emergency Intervention Needed:</u>
<p>REQUIRED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Notify parent of the findings of the assessmento Provide Mental Health Resources List-See QR Code belowo Complete the Return to Learn Support Plano Follow up with Student in one week to reassess supports and determine need for further intervention <p>ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Recommend parents to take their child for intervention with a health care provider or community-based counseling from a licensed mental health professional.o Complete Return to Learn Student Support Plano Follow up with student in one week to reassess supports and determine need for further interventiono Complete Consent to Release Information if a provider has been determinedo Provided a Parent Permission Packet for RKM Primary Careo Provided the SDQ Permission Form (GPLA and PHS)o Notify current mental health provider	<p>REQUIRED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Assure student is transferred to a licensed physician/mental health provider or treatment facility for further assessment:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o <u>Parent transports</u> their child for immediate intervention with a licensed mental health care provider, physician, or coroner. <u>Student may not ride bus.</u> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Call 911 if indicated. School staff must go with <u>student</u> to the ER until parents arrive. (i.e. determine it is unsafe for student to be transported by his/her parent/guardian) <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Complete Parental Notification of Need for Further Assessmento Provide Mental Health Resources List-See QR Code belowo <u>Remind family</u> that the student is not allowed to return to school without medical clearance. They must call the school to set an appointment. <p>ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Provide family a copy of assessment or fax to outside provider and refer by phone (in the presence of the parent(s)) to a community-based mental health facility of their choice or an Emergency Roomo Complete Consent to Release Information if a provider has been determinedo <u>If parent refuses to take student for assessment</u> file a report with DCFS and contact Law Enforcement to make a Wellness Check.o Provided a Parent Permission Packet for RKM Primary Careo Provided the SDQ Permission Form (GPLA and PHS)o Notify current mental health provider

Required Documentation for all Risk Levels:

- ❑ Parental Notification-Verbal Notification and Support Plan (Intervention Needed) **or** Parental Notification of Need for Further Assessment (Emergency Intervention Needed)
- ❑ Provide Local Resource Guide
- ❑ Provide family a copy of assessment or fax to outside provider and make a follow up call to discuss concerns

After the Assessment: Planning for Return and Support



Student Return to Learn Student Support Plan

STUDENT NAME: _____ GRADE: _____ SCHOOL: _____

This Student Return to Learn Plan should be developed with the student and parent(s) or guardian(s).

Review this plan with staff as indicated and keep a copy electronically with necessary documents.

STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN (school):

- o Check-in with (Title/Name): _____ Daily Weekly As Needed
- o Provide increased supervision in these settings: _____
- o Modify daily schedule by: _____
- o Plan to complete academic assignments and complete all make up tests: _____
- o Precipitating/aggravating circumstances that may present difficulties for student: _____
Plan to address those: _____
- o School staff will collaborate with outside medical/mental health provider. Release of information signed? YES NO
- o If Special Education or 504 student, hold IEP/IAP meeting. Support to be provided by school psychologist/social worker per plan: _____
- o Referral to SAT team to consider possible RTI interventions.
- o Referral to RKM or School Based Mental Health Provider/Counselor. Permission given? YES NO
- o New Medications: _____ Nurse notified? YES NO
- o Other Action: _____

SUPPORT PLAN (home/parent or guardian):

- o Parents will provide increased supervision of the student at home, particularly in regard to supervising access to any weapons, drugs, medications or means to harm themselves. If the student expresses any desire to harm themselves at home and/or attempts to harm themselves in any way, the parent will call 9-1-1 or seek immediate emergency medical treatment.
- o Parents will alert primary care provider and/or current mental health provider about the student's suicide assessment completed at school and/or recent hospitalization.
- o Parents have an after care plan provided by the hospital or medical provider? ___ YES ___ NO
- o Parents will sign a release of information for the school to get information and/or collaborate with any mental health providers. ___ YES ___ NO
- o At home, if the student is having difficulties and struggling with emotions they can talk to: _____
- o If the parent or student needs support regarding suicidal thoughts/feelings, they can contact the National Crisis Line by calling 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE) or texting 988.
- o Mental Health Provider for continued care: _____
- o Other: _____

Parent/Guardian Date

Student Date

Administrator/Plan Supervisor Date

Counselor Date

Student Services Date

Other (please specify title) Date

Other (please specify title) Date

Other (please specify title) Date

Local Mental Health Resources





Threat Assessment

Schools should establish a reporting system that is continually monitored and allows anonymous reporting. Districts and schools should establish multidisciplinary teams and threat assessment programs to assess each report and respond to threats of violence and other concerning behavior.

What exactly is a Behavioral Threat Assessment?

- It's a prevention-based strategy that, in theory, means serious threats are stopped, while less serious ones trigger a review of a student's mental-health, behavioral, or academic supports.
- Threat assessment is the process of distinguishing “transient” threats from serious ones in a systematic, data-informed way.
- Threat assessment can lead to suspension if, in serious contexts, that's what's needed to keep students safe. But in other instances, the threat might be indicative of problems better handled through counseling, mediation, or other supports.

- In all cases, the goal is to pair the student with proper school and community-based intervention and supports.
- The systematic and proper implementation of threat assessment helps avoid impulsive and potentially harmful decisions that can lead to over management (i.e., unnecessary suspension and expulsion) and requires teams to take into account the context and disability rather than using a zero-tolerance approach.

What types of behaviors should trigger a Threat Assessment?

- Threat assessment should be prompted by a student's behavior, not demographic or personal characteristics.
- A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something.
- Threats can be verbal, written, drawn, sent electronically, or made by gesture.
- All threats must be taken seriously, investigated and responded to.

Developing Ways to Report Threatening Situations

Various methods for reporting can include :

- directly reporting to a trusted adult
- a tip line
- a reporting app (we use P3 tips)
- email
- voice mail (Google Voice)
- link on the school/district website
- 911 call.

It is important to have more than one confidential method to report, and students, staff, and families need to be explicitly trained on how and what to report and what is not appropriate to report via these methods.

The Importance of Assessing Threat Accurately

- Whole School Safety
- Gathering and documenting the information appropriately
- Determining what action (if any) should be taken?
- Determine the need to engage Law Enforcement or other agencies
- Avoiding overreaction

When Should You Initiate a Threat Assessment:

- When a student makes a direct or indirect, verbal or nonverbal, written or electronic threat to harm someone

Example:

Direct: I am going to shoot up this school

Indirect: I wouldn't be in the cafeteria tomorrow at lunch if I were you...

- A faculty member who becomes aware of a threat should promptly report them **DIRECTLY** to an administrator-no emails, texts, etc.
- Students should be provided an outlet to report concerns about their friends (tip line, email, google voice, website, etc.)

Step 1: Isolate the Student, Assess for Safety and Gather the Team

Create a multidisciplinary team, including representatives such as:

- Designate a principal, vice principal, or other senior school administrator to chair the threat assessment team.
- A staff member who is well liked and respected by students
- A trained investigator, such as a school resource officer or other police officer, assigned to the school
- A mental health professional, clinical social worker or school psychologist
- Other respected school professionals, such as a school counselor, coach, or nurse

Who Leads the Team?

- Designate a principal, vice principal, or other senior school administrator to chair the threat assessment team.
- Train team members in the threat assessment process, their roles and responsibilities, and the conduct of a threat assessment inquiry.
- Require members of the threat assessment team to cultivate and maintain relationships on campus. Make yourself available to the students to report concerns.

Create a private and safe environment

- Locate a private space for the assessment process to be conducted
- Search the student as they arrive for any dangerous items. They do not need their book bag or other belongings.

Step 2: Begin the Assessment

Using the Student Threat Report and Assessment:

Evaluate the Threat:

- Obtain a detailed account of the threat-interview the person who made the threat, the individuals who heard/witnessed it and the intended victim.
- What are the factors surrounding the threat-times, place, what was happening immediately before..
- Recent events that may contribute to the event (discipline problems, break up, recent loss, teasing, ...)
- Determine reliability of the informant where possible

- What kind of threat was it?
- Does the subject admit to making the threat?
- Show remorse/apologize?
- What amount of energy was put into the threat? Communicated in multiple ways? Citing specifics?
- Mitigating factors that reduce or increase concerns?
- Any recent event or “igniter” variable?
- Any indications of “false alarms”?

Decision point: Stop and Plan or Continue Assessing

After answering all questions above (Sections A-C) and consulting with your team are you:

- **More Concerned**-Continue additional questioning/review of data below; Contact Law Enforcement to join the team
- **Still Concerned**-Continue additional questioning/review of data below; Consider adding additional team members such as school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist
- **Less Concerned**-the threat appears to be transient and a plan will be created to add services as needed. Move to Step 3

Factors that reduce concern: apologetic, just “joking”, remorse, denies harm/retracts threat, willing to make amends

Indicate at this point your decision to:

- **Continue Assessment**
- **Discontinue Assessment (complete and sign Pages 6 and 7)**

Threat Appears to be Transient: Stop Assessment and Create a Plan for Services

If the threat appears to be ***transient*** in nature after an interview with the victim(s) and the person making the threat, the team may end the assessment and create a plan of support/action that could include:

REQUIRED:

- Notify student's parents and/or guardians
- Contact target of threat (and parent if target is a minor) if needed
- Assign a staff member to monitor student and status of intervention, as appropriate
- Student apology
- Issue a reprimand/warning
- Provide parent/guardian with list of Local Mental Health Resources (see QR Code Below)

OPTIONAL:

- Increased contact/monitoring of student
- Refer to school counselor
- Refer student to conflict resolution/mediation
- Provided a Parent Permission Packet for RKM Primary Care
- Modify student's schedule:

- Follow discipline procedures as per conduct policy
- Develop behavior intervention plan and/or contract, as appropriate
- Transportation Change: _____
- Provide increased supervision in these settings:

- Review IAP/IEP. Notify Team: _____
- Other: _____

Why document transient threats?

- If a student later carries out a threat that was previously judged to be transient, you will want documentation to show that you made a defensible effort to assess the threat
- If a student makes multiples threats, documentation of each incident will provide a useful overview/progression

Continue Assessing: Behavioral History

Things you could review:

- Prior Threats
- History of Violence/Aggression
- Prior Discipline Incidents
- History of Brain Injury or Serious Psychological Disorders
- History of Suicide Assessments or Attempts, Self-Injury
- History of Criminal Acts/Legal Involvement
- History of Cruelty to Animals/Fire Setting

(If two or more of the above are indicted a full assessment should be completed)

Other Indicators:

- Special Education Records
- Records from Outside Agencies (DCFS, OJJ, FINS)
- Suspected Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- History of Intense Anger/Resentment
- Socially Withdrawn/Isolated
- Feels Harassed or Bullied
- Fascinations with Weapons/Military
- Preoccupation violence, violent individuals or groups that promote violence, mass shootings, etc.
- Tends to blame Others for Problems, Holds Grudges, Keeps a List
- Is Often Depressed or has Significant Mood Swings
- Prescribed Psychotropic Medication
- Substantial Decline in level of Academic or Psychosocial Adjustment
- Lacks a Positive Relationship with One or More Staff Members

Next Decision Point: Inquire more or End Assessment

If you choose to continue you will review:

Family/Student History

- DCFS Reports/History
- Substance Abuse
- Divorce/Conflict
- Family History of Incarceration/Antisocial Behaviors
- Protective Factors/Positive Supports

Law Enforcement Issues

- Does any of the information you gathered require law enforcement intervention and/or arrest?

Step 3: Decide whether the threat is clearly transient or substantive

A ***transient threat*** could be readily identified as expressions of anger or frustration or perhaps inappropriate attempts at humor that dissipate quickly when the student reflects on the meaning of what he or she has said.

A ***substantive threat*** includes plausible details, may have been repeated over time or communicated to multiple persons, is reported as a plan or planning has taken place, the student may have accomplices or have attempted to recruit accomplices, or there is physical evidence of intent to carry out the threat such as a weapon.

Reacting to Threats that are believed to be Credible:

If the investigation results in evidence or information that raises a concern that a threat is credible and imminent, the threat shall be immediately reported to a local law enforcement agency for further investigation. Several students in our district have been formally arrested and detained for making threats of violence this school year.

Follow your district discipline guidelines for threats.

Interventions for Substantive Threats:

REQUIRED:

- Notify student's parents and/or guardians
- Provide direct supervision of student until removed from campus by law enforcement or parent/guardian.
- Notify law enforcement per regulation to contain threat
- Complete and have parent sign the PARENTAL NEED FOR FURTHER ASSESSMENT form
- Provide parent/guardian with list of Local Mental Health Resources (see QR Code Below)
- Contact target of threat (and parent if target is a minor)
- Notify superintendent or designee
- Follow discipline procedures as per conduct policy. Initiate expulsion proceedings.

OPTIONAL:

- Increased contact/monitoring of student
- Refer to school counselor
- Refer student to conflict resolution/mediation
- Provided a Parent Permission Packet for RKM Primary Care
- Modify student's schedule:

- Develop behavior intervention plan and/or contract, as appropriate
- Transportation Change: _____
- Provide increased supervision in these settings:

- Review IAP/IEP. Notify Team: _____
- Other: _____

Final thoughts:

For all threats, whether they are suicidal or homicidal, the most important part is not checking the boxes...the most important part is establishing trust so that you can gather the best information and create a **PLAN** to reduce the possibility for injury.

For Questions:

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