

Steps to Take if a Student Discloses Suicidal Thoughts

It can feel overwhelming when a student shares thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Responding calmly, supportively, and quickly can help protect a student's safety and connect them to the help they need.

Stay Calm and Listen

If a student opens up about suicidal thoughts:

- Stay calm and give the student your attention
- Listen without judgment or panic
- Take all statements seriously
- Thank the student for sharing
- Let them know they are not alone

Helpful responses may include:

- "I'm glad you told me."
- "Thank you for trusting me."
- "Your safety is important."

Do Not Promise Secrecy

A student's safety must come first.

Avoid saying:

- "I won't tell anyone."

Instead, say:

- "I may need to involve people who can help keep you safe."

Follow School Safety Procedures

Immediately follow your school's crisis response or suicide prevention protocols.

This may include:

- Contacting a school counselor, social worker, or administrator
- Staying with the student until support arrives
- Alerting designated crisis response staff
- Contacting parents or guardians according to school policy

Do not leave the student alone if they may be unsafe.

Ask Direct and Supportive Questions

It is okay to ask direct questions about safety.

Examples include:

- “Are you thinking about hurting yourself?”
- “Do you feel safe right now?”
- “Have you thought about how you would hurt yourself?”

Talking about suicide does not increase suicide risk. Open conversations can help students feel supported and understood.

Avoid Harmful Responses

Try to avoid:

- Minimizing the student's feelings
- Reacting with shock or anger
- Arguing or lecturing
- Making promises you cannot keep
- Trying to handle the situation entirely on your own

Wyandot Behavioral Health Network

Website: <https://www.wyandotbhn.org/> | Phone: 913-328-4600

In Crisis? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or call 913-788-4200

Connect the Student to Support

Students experiencing suicidal thoughts should be connected to trained professionals and supportive adults.

Resources may include:

- School mental health staff
- Community mental health providers
- Crisis response services
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Crisis Resources

If a student is in immediate danger:

- Call 911
- Call or text 988
- Follow emergency school safety procedures

Remember

You are not expected to be a mental health expert. Your role is to listen, respond supportively, and connect the student to appropriate help and safety resources.