

B5: Beyond School Suicide and Awareness Prevention Training: Trained Staff...Now What?

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Moderator: Susan Berry, Maine Department of Education

Health Education and Health Promotion Coordinator

Crisis Plan

Brian Walsh
Hermon High School
Principal

SUICIDE

SUICIDE (Attempt)

When a student or staff member attempts to take his/her life, either at school or in the community.

	TIME	WITNESS/REPORTED BY	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Student, faculty, and staff		
		Contact the principal who will call 911		
√	TIME	PRIORITY PROCEDURES	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Take the threat seriously		
		Secure the scene for police investigation		
		Communicate incident to the principal and/or designee		
		<u>Don't</u> leave student/faculty/staff member alone, if safe to do so		
		Call 911		
√	TIME	PRINCIPAL OR INCIDENT COMMANDER	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Convene School Emergency Team		
		Inform Superintendent		
		Notify parent or guardian and offer assistance for appropriate medical and psychological care, referrals and emergency services		
		On a 'need to know' basis, inform faculty/staff/students, including homeroom teacher, coaches, and others who have regular contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality		
		Prepare and send letter home to parents as appropriate, while maintaining confidentiality		
		Debrief School Emergency Team and faculty/staff		
		In the event of suspected abuse of the individual, notify Child Protective Services and/or police, in accordance with state law and school policy		
		Complete incident report		
		Prepare or update prevention protocols in case others attempt or complete suicide		
√	TIME	SCHOOL EMERGENCY TEAM	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Hold an immediate team meeting and institute immediate referral for assessment and treatment		
√	TIME	SCHOOL COUNSELOR	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		If others are aware of the threat or attempt, reassure them that action is being taken		
		Notify parents of any students of concern		
		Complete an assessment to determine risk level, using an approved screening tool		
		Meet with referring staff/faculty and/or student		
		Contact the local mental health emergency service screeners and request screening		
√	TIME	SCHOOL NURSE	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Make an immediate assessment and take any immediate action necessary to provide medical care		

SUICIDE (CONTINUED)

✓	TIME	POLICE AND FIRE LIAISON	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Secure area and prevent non-essential people from accessing the scene or witnessing a traumatic event		
✓	TIME	COMMUNICATION AND RECORDER	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Initiate incident report, following school policy		
		Gather student/staff contact information		
✓	TIME	CUSTODIAL STAFF	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Secure area and prevent non-essential people from accessing the scene or witnessing a traumatic event		
✓	TIME	INFORMATION AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		After consultation with local emergency services in charge of the scene, prepare a written statement for staff to read to students and send to parent(s)/guardian(s) describing the known facts and procedures for accessing support		
		Refer all media questions to law enforcement officials		

Death by SUICIDE

	TIME	WITNESS/REPORTED BY	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Student, family, faculty, staff or other		
✓	TIME	PRIORITY PROCEDURES	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Confirm the death, verify details, notify principal immediately.		
		Offer emotional support to school community to facilitate recovery		
		Prevent further suicides		

✓	TIME	PRINCIPAL OR INCIDENT COMMANDER	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Confirm the death and notify police		
		Verify details with the family and offer assistance, appropriate support, and referrals. Honor the family's wishes if possible		
		Inform Superintendent		
		Convene School Emergency Team		
		Inform faculty/staff of the death. If school is not in session, contact faculty/staff via phone tree		
		Open the school to provide school/community support		
		Complete incident report		
		Prepare and send letter home to parents/guardians		
		Allow faculty/staff/students to attend the funeral		
✓	TIME	SCHOOL EMERGENCY TEAM	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Hold an immediate team meeting to plan for notifying students/faculty/staff of the death and to provide emotional support		
		Plan schedules and activities for the school day and week		
		Identify those particularly affected, such as relatives, friends, classmates, teammates, those with a history of suicide ideation, depression and/or substance abuse		
		Help create a Support Center in the building		
		Provide safety measures and special services for students, faculty, and staff		
		Ensure faculty and staff attend the funeral to offer support to students		
		Meet with parents, guardians, and families of those at increased risk		

SUICIDE (CONTINUED)

		Reassure and provide a sense of security, a way to remember the deceased and resume routine as appropriate to facilitate recovery		
		Prepare or update prevention strategies and protocol in case others attempt or complete suicide		
√	TIME	SCHOOL COUNSELOR	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Make home visits to affected families to offer support and referrals		
		Provide outside psychological support—contact local mental health agency or providers		
√	TIME	SCHOOL NURSE	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Make an immediate assessment and take any immediate action necessary to provide life support measures, such as CPR, if appropriate		
		Coordinate home visits to affected families with school counselor		
		Follow up with continued counseling for those who need it		
√	TIME	POLICE AND FIRE LIAISON	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Secure area and prevent non-essential people from accessing or witnessing the scene, if suicide occurs at school		
		Coordinate home visits to affected families with the nurse and school counselor		
√	TIME	COMMUNICATION AND RECORDER	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Keep an informal time and procedures log of emergency response activities		
		Permit students to leave school only with parental permission and carefully track attendance		
		Provide substitutes for faculty and staff if they need to go home		
√	TIME	CUSTODIAL STAFF	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		Secure area and prevent non-essential people from accessing or witnessing the scene, if suicide occurs at school		
		Assist in setting up a Support Center		
√	TIME	INFORMATION AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE	NAME OF CONTACT	CONTACT NO.
		After consultation with local emergency services in charge of the scene, prepare a written statement for staff to read to students and send to parent(s)/guardian(s) describing the known facts and procedures for accessing support		
		Refer all media questions to law enforcement officials		
		Prepare faculty and staff by offering accurate and verified information regarding the death. Provide written statement for all to read to classes and make emergency hotline numbers available		

Crisis Team

- o Principal
- o Assistant Principal
- o Superintendent
- o Middle School Principal(s)
- o Guidance Director
- o HS Guidance Counselor(s)
- o Middle School Guidance Counselors(s)
- o District Social Worker
- o Contracted Social Worker
- o School Nurse(s)
- o School Resource Officer/Local Police Officer
- o Athletic Director
- o CTE Coordinator
- o Health Teacher
- o Registrar
- o Office Secretary
- o Lead Teachers / First Responders / Gatekeepers

Student Death by Suicide

Note: Crisis team calls and Emergency tree calls go out upon police verification/notification.

Additional counselor requests made via Director of Guidance only.

Crisis Team – (Meet at 6:15 a.m. in conference room 120)

Review what we know.

Go over each item below.

Make a list of close friends and students of concern. (Counselors will check-in with those identified.)

UTC – If UTC student, CTE Coordinator will make contact. CTE attendance coordinator/bus monitor will ride bus to and from UTC both AM and PM. UTC Admin will secure UTC locker.

Powerschool - Registrar will remove student name from classes and homeroom list to prevent auto-call to parents.

Locker – AP will go to locker, change combination, clean out and secure belongings in his office. Admin will keep watch for locker decoration as memorial. Anything 'offensive' will be taken down. End of day two, AP will collect anything left on the locker – save to be given to parents.

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Student Death by Suicide

Media - All calls/inquiries to Admin. Admin will not speak to the media before making contact with parents.

Homeroom Message – Copy and distribute to teachers at 7:15 a.m. faculty meeting.

Guidance – All students will go through Registrar. If a student is sent down faculty will follow with a call #1308. Registrar will assign counselor to students upon availability/comfort level. Use three office in Guidance, conference room 119, conference room 120, and nurse's office – Admin offices if overflow. All students need to go through Registrar.

Administration - Be visible. Be compassionate. Be supportive. Balance normal protocol and procedures with student needs. Constantly check bathrooms, halls, etc. Move groups of students to Guidance wing. Make sure coverage in cafeteria for lunches. Contact Greg Marley for parent/family resources. **Parent contact** mid-day. Offer condolences; find out who the contact will be for dissemination of information / services/etc. **Contact again next day and offer resources (if appropriate.)**

Office Secretary – Will reschedule any meetings originally scheduled for conference rooms 119 and 120. Will let Admin know of any substitute teachers Will debrief any substitute teachers.

Homeroom Announcement

Homeroom teachers please read the following announcement to your homerooms.

Tragically one of our students, -----, died by suicide last evening. We are deeply saddened by this loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with -----'s family and loved ones. You may hear (and see posts) of all sorts of rumors surrounding this incident – we ask you, out of respect for your classmate and his/her family, not to contribute to or keep rumors going.

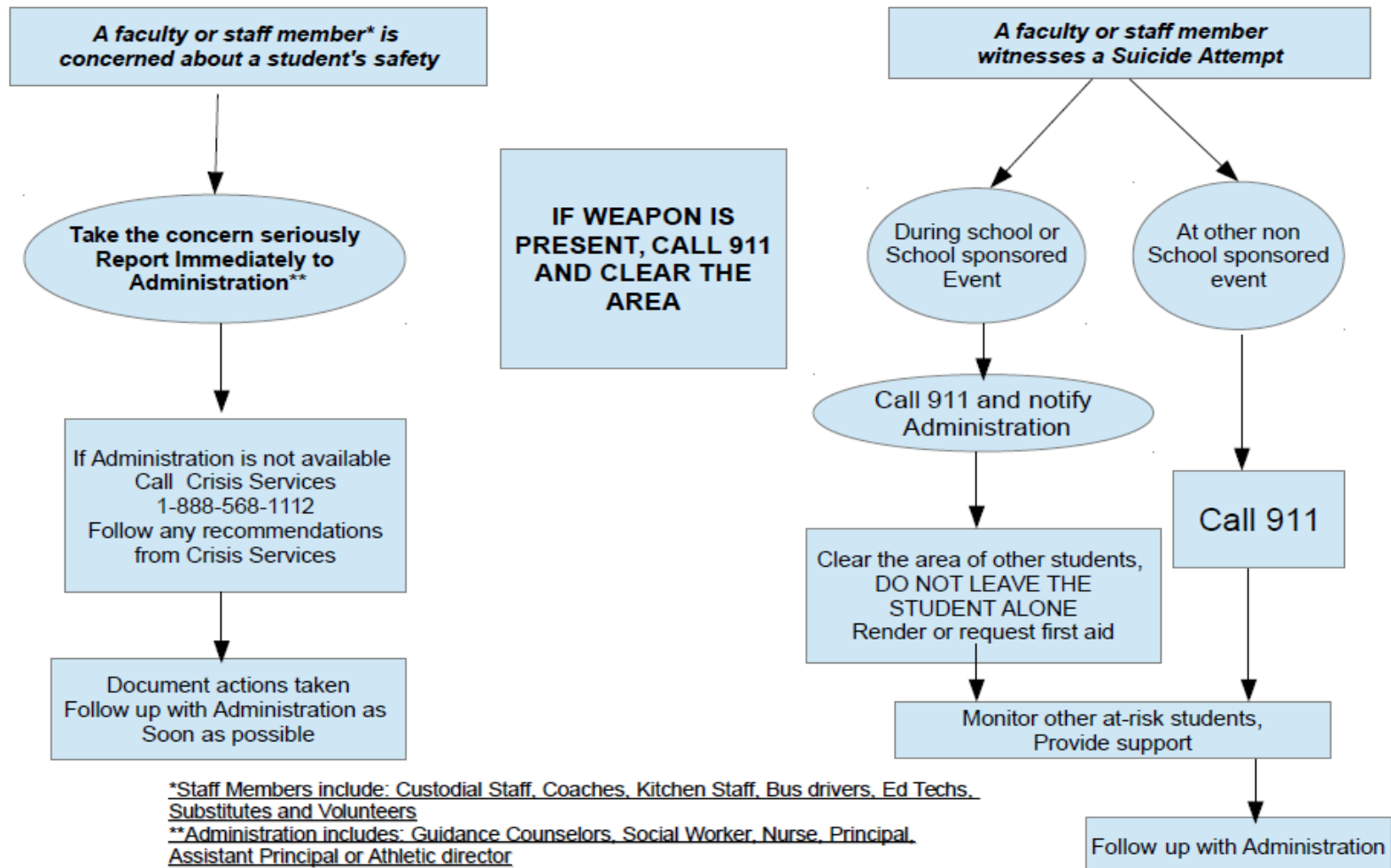
You may be feeling mixed emotions – it is normal to experience a wide array of emotions. Please know that counselors are available during the day for any student needing to talk to someone.

Counselors will be in the Guidance office and conference rooms. If you wish to see a counselor please just let your teacher know and then go directly to the Guidance office.

Homeroom teachers, please discuss with your homerooms as you see fit.

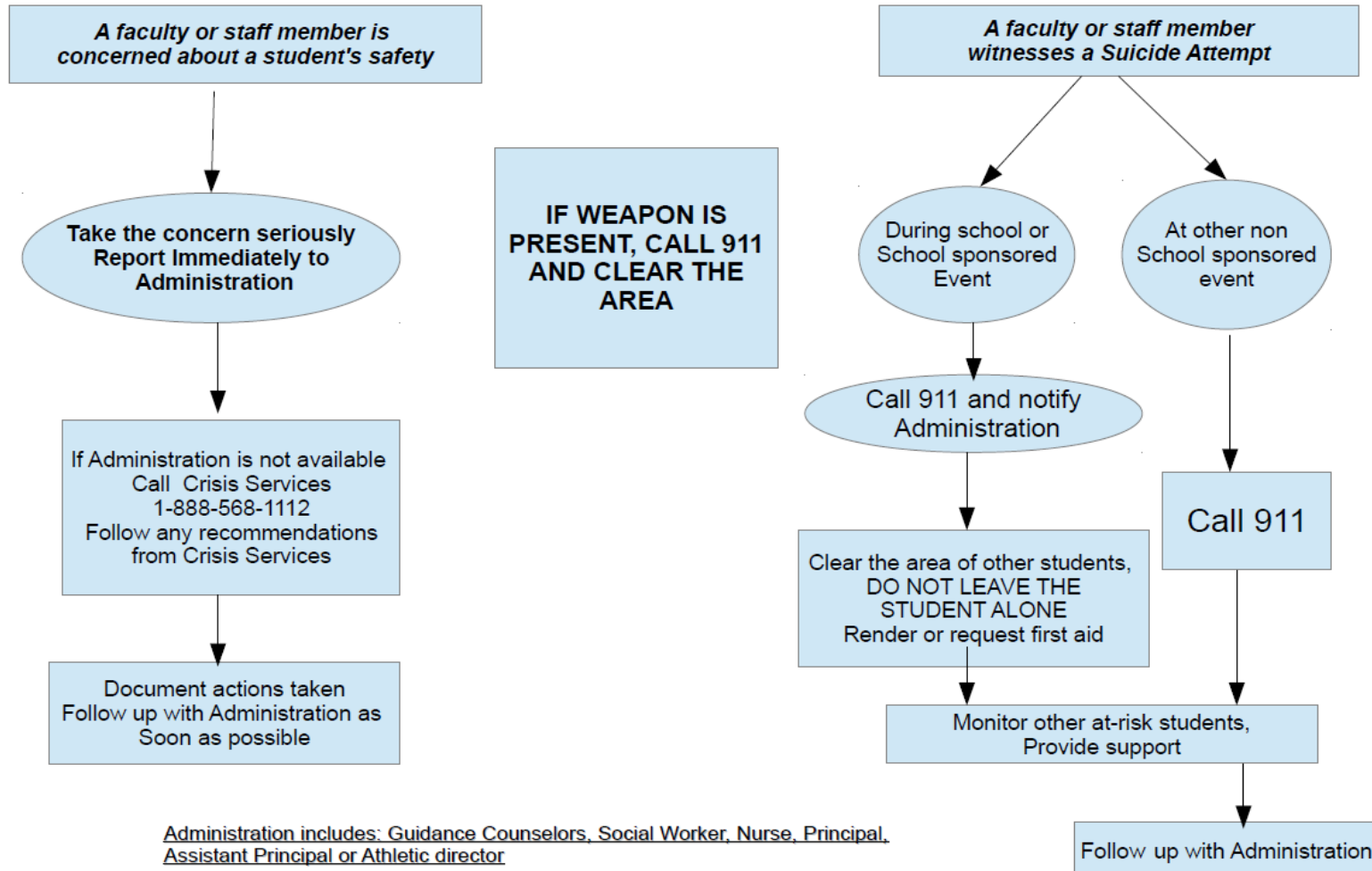
Hermion School Department

Suicide Intervention Protocol Chart



Hermon School Department

Suicide Intervention Protocol Chart



After A Suicide

Crisis Response

Denise Hamlin

School Counselor

Caribou High School

Crisis Response

Areas to Address

- Need a coordinated crisis response plan

What are the priority procedures

*Confirm the death and verify details

*Offer emotional support to school community to facilitate recovery

*Prevent further suicides

Plan should include an incident commander (Principal): Hold a team meeting to plan for notifying students/faculty/staff of death and to provide emotional support. Plan and schedule activities for the school day and week. Identify those affected, relatives, friends, those with a history of suicide, depression and/or substance abuse. Create a support Center in the building.

School Counselor

- Make home visits to affected families to offer support and referrals
- Provide outside psychological support- contact local mental health agency for additional support
- Follow up with continued counseling for those who need it
- Maintain ongoing contact and support to affected families.

Steps to Take

- Inform Superintendent of Death
- Contact deceased's family to offer condolences, inquire what school can do to assist and discuss what students should be told, inquire about funeral arrangements
- Call immediate meeting of Crisis Response Team assign responsibilities (will provide our checklist)
- Establish a plan to notify staff and schedule a all-staff meeting ASAP

* Arrange for students to be notified of death in small groups: Homerooms

- Provide a death notification statement for teachers to share with students
- Prepare a notification statement for parents
- Provide staff with information on Facts About Suicide and Talking About Suicide (Handouts will be shared)
- Maintain contact with Superintendent and Crisis Response Team throughout the day
- Determine if there is a need for additional resources: Contact Local Agencies when needed.

Aftermath of a Suicide

- Students and others in school community feel emotionally overwhelmed, strategies to utilize to help students balance their emotional response and restore the school's ability to function are:
- Staff can model calm, caring and thoughtful behavior
- Adjust the regular schedule to spend time with students to address needs
- If possible have counselors go to classrooms to provide students with accurate information about suicide: What can be expected after hearing about the death, and coping strategies to utilize over the next days and weeks.

- Group meetings should be structured, time limited and provide each student with an opportunity to speak.
- Focus on helping students identify and express feelings, discuss coping skills (Identify appropriate ways to memorialize the loss). This will be helpful in them refocusing to their regular routine.
- Reach out to parents: Parents need guidance on how to support their child.
- Anniversary of the Death: Anticipate this for the future, may stir up emotions.

Working with the Community

- Suicide impacts the community, it is important to work collaboratively with the law enforcement, mental health professionals, clergy, funeral directors, hospitals etc.
- A collaborative approach allows for sharing of important information and to coordinate strategies

Recovery Evaluation Questionnaire

Which classroom-based interventions proved most successful and why? _____

Which assessment and referral strategies were the most successful and why? _____

What were the most positive aspects of staff debriefings and why?

Which recovery strategies would you change and why? _____

Do other professionals need to be tapped to help with future crises?

What additional training is necessary to enable the school community and the community at large to prepare for future crises?

What additional equipment is needed to support recovery efforts?

What other planning actions will facilitate future recovery efforts? _____

Social Media

- Social media (Internet, texting, facebook, twitter) Is frequently used to communicate information rapidly. Following a suicide, schools are inclined to try and control it and stop such communication by students.

This is virtually impossible: What we can do is utilize social media to effectively disseminate information and promote suicide prevention efforts.

Collaborate with students and utilize these tools to disseminate important and accurate information to the school community.

Identify students who may be in need of additional support or further intervention

Share resources for grief support and mental health care, promote safe messages that emphasize suicide prevention and minimize risk of suicide contagion.

- Involve students: designate a member of the Crisis Response Team to reach out to friends of deceased and work collaboratively. This can enhance the effectiveness of social media efforts. Students are in the best position to help identify media favored by the student body, engage peers in honoring friend's life appropriately and inform school staff about online communications that may be worrisome.
- Reassure students that we want to support a healthy response to peer's death. Make them aware of staff that are available to intervene if communications reveal there is cause for concern

School Website

- This can be used to communicate proactively with students, teachers and parents about:
- The funeral or memorial service (check with student's family first)
- Where students can go for help or meet with counselors
- Mental illness and the causes of suicide (emphasize help—seeking and prevention)
- Local mental health resources
- The Suicide Hotline: 888-568-1112 (refer to Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention Handout)

Monitor and Respond

- To the extent possible, monitor social media sites for:
- Rumors
- Information about upcoming or impromptu gatherings
- Derogatory messages about deceased
- Messages that bully or victimize current students
- Comments indicating students who may be at risk

On occasion, schools become aware of posted messages indicating another student may be at risk of suicide.

- In these instances, it may be necessary to alert the student's family, contact suicide helpline, and/or police to request a safety check!
- (Provide example of how social media prevented a suicide)

Going Forward

- In the ensuing months, schools should consider implementing:
- Suicide awareness programs to educate teachers and other school personnel about the symptoms of depression and the causes of suicidal behavior in young people
- Programs to educate students themselves about the symptoms and risks of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and conduct disorder (Don't wait to educate, we go into health classes, this brings up emotions for students, have staff available to support students who are struggling)

End of the Day

It can also be helpful for the Crisis Response Team Leader and/or the Team Coordinator to have an all- staff meeting at the end of the first day. This meeting provides an opportunity to take the following steps:

- Offer verbal appreciation of the staff.

- Review the day's challenges and successes.

- Debrief, share experiences, express concerns, and ask questions.

- Check in with staff to assess whether any of them need additional support, and refer accordingly.

- Disseminate information regarding the death and/or funeral

- Discuss plans for the next day.

- Remind staff of the importance of self-care.

- Remind staff of the importance of documenting crisis response efforts for future planning and understanding. (See Recovery Evaluation)

Suicide Prevention Strategies

Melissa McStay
Deering High School

Preventing Suicide through Connectedness

Getting Students Involved In The Work

Lifelines Classes
Transitions Classes
Natural Helpers

Special Considerations

- [Cultural Context
- [Use of Interpreters
- [Social Media

Connectedness As Prevention

— **Connectedness between individuals.** Greater degrees of social integration (e.g., number of prosocial friends, contact with trusted, caring adults, low levels of social isolation or loneliness) serve as protective factors against suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

What current programs or activities are currently offered in your community/organization?

What can be added to existing programs or activities?

Connectedness As Prevention

— [**Connectedness of individuals
and their families to community organizations.**

Positive attachments to community organizations like schools and faith-based organizations can increase an individual's sense of belonging.

What is currently available in your community/organization?

What can be added to existing programs or activities?

— [

Connectedness As Prevention

— **Connectedness among community organizations and social institutions.** Formal relationships between support services and referring organizations help ensure that services are appropriately delivered and promote a clients' well- being—as in the case of the primary care system and the mental health system.

What is currently available in your community/organization?

What can be added to existing programs or activities?

To learn more about connectedness and prevention of self-directed violence, please visit www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Suicide_Strategic_Direction_Full_Version-a.pdf

Resources

- o <http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/LifelineOnlinePostventionManual.pdf>
- o <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3477910/>
- o <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/gethelp/my3-app.aspx>

Resources

- o <http://www.maine.gov/suicide/>
- o <http://www.namimaine.org/?page=SPMain>
- o [http://www.namimaine.org/?page=Training Calendar](http://www.namimaine.org/?page=TrainingCalendar)
- o <http://www.namimaine.org/?page=LD609ToolkitVideo>
- o <http://www.maine.gov/doe/health/laws/index.html>