

CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY AND INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

Policy on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion

I. RATIONALE

Suicide is one of the most alarming and complex problems faced by our society. It is often preventable, especially in situations where appropriate training allows individuals to intervene with a person at risk. Cambridge College recognizes the need to ensure that members of its community are aware of the resources available to appropriately respond when concerned about the suicide risk of a student exhibiting suicidal behaviors or thoughts, understand that seeking help is encouraged and that help is available. The policy and protocol that follows is intended to establish a culture of seeking and obtaining help for suicidal students among members of the College community.

II. POLICY

A. DEFINITIONS

Suicide: Death from a self-inflicted injury by which the student intended to kill themselves.

Suicidal Behavior: Any potentially injurious behavior which is self-inflicted and by which a student intends, or gives the appearance of intending, to kill themselves.

Suicidal Ideation: Any self-reported thoughts or feelings about engaging in suicidal behavior.

Suicide Plan: A proposed method of self-inflicted injury through which the potential and intentional outcome is death.

Active Suicidal Ideation with Specific Plan and Intent to Act: Thoughts of killing oneself with details of plan fully or partially worked out and student has some intent to carry it out.

Active Suicidal Ideation with Some Intent to Act, without Specific Plan: Active suicidal thoughts of killing oneself and student reports having some intent to act on such thoughts, as opposed to "I have the thoughts, but I definitely will not do anything about them."

Actual Knowledge: The direct and clear awareness of a fact or circumstance, as opposed to inferred or implied knowledge. What a person "must have known" as opposed to "should have known."

B. Cambridge College is committed to promoting the health and safety of its community. The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and well-being of all students by raising awareness of, having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide in our student population. The College recognizes:

- (1) that suicide is a problem in the locations we serve, and it is our obligation to confront it.
- (2) the effect of the social stigma associated with mental health conditions, which all too often prevents a person from seeking help when they are at risk of suicide.
- (3) that the social stigma also affects families and makes it difficult for them to return to a normal and productive life.
- (4) that suicide imposes emotional loss and economic burdens on the states and locations in which we deliver academic programs and serve.
- (5) that suicide is a complex multi-factorial (biological, psychological and social) problem.
- (6) that suicide is preventable and that we must develop more effective prevention programs.
- (7) that prevention efforts must be constantly examined and refreshed in light of new facts and deeper understanding.
- (8) the importance of developing a suicide prevention plan that is culturally responsive to the College's environment¹

III. SUICIDE PREVENTION GUIDELINES

The purpose for Suicide Prevention Guidelines is to ensure that members of the CC community are provided with educational opportunities that raise awareness for suicide prevention and to provide guidance to faculty, staff, students, and other members of the College community to help prevent suicide.

A. CRISIS INTERVENTION INFORMATION

The College will make suicide prevention information and mental health program resources, including but not limited to: guidelines for referral, assistance and immediate assistance; 24-hour assistance resources; and campus, local and national resources, available each semester. This information will be distributed through various means, which may include web pages, campus news sources, and literature distribution.

All incoming students will be provided with information on mental health services and support networks that address mental health topics, including depression, anxiety, stress and suicide prevention during orientation.

B. EDUCATION

Students and employees will receive educational material and training opportunities that focus on identifying suicide warning signs, protocols for helping someone in a mental health crisis, campus support networks, and local support resources. The College will:

- develop an educational campaign focused on suicide prevention
- provide student and employee training that will help participants identify someone in crisis, engage with them appropriately, and find assistance
- develop professional development programs on how to promote relationships and feelings of connectedness
- create programs that further a sense of connection on campus
- offer workshops that focus on coping skills.

C. OUTREACH

The College will maintain suicide prevention education outreach and engagement efforts, through the following outreach initiative:

- distribute appropriate information supported and/or developed by credible sources, such as the Jed Foundation and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, that are comprehensive and focus on educational components, helping components, national hotlines, local hotlines, suicide warning signs, and local resource information
- create a dedicated web page for Suicide Prevention efforts on campus
- utilize national and local initiatives to support on campus efforts
- establish and maintain partnerships with local community resources
- distribute printed material, such as brochures

IV. SUICIDE PREVENTION AND CRISIS RESPONSE PROTOCOL

A. PURPOSE

Cambridge College is committed to the safety and health of all members of the College community. The purpose of the Suicide Prevention Protocol is to provide members of the College community tools to respond to students who may be considering suicide.

ALL SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR OR THREATS SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE DIAL 911 IMMEDIATELY. IN CASE OF AN ON-CAMPUS EMERGENCY, ALSO NOTIFY CAMPUS SECURITY AS FOLLOWS:

Boston Campus 617-873-0111 (Ext. 1111 within Cambridge College)
Lawrence Campus 617-873-0474
Springfield Campus 413-733-6061
Southern California Campus 909-652-6911 (Chaffey College Police Dept.)
Puerto Rico Campus 787-641-0099 (Front Desk Security)

B. SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*, while there is no single cause for suicide, people at risk tend to exhibit one or more warning signs. Suicide most often occurs when stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair.

Risk factors

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take their life.

- Mental health conditions
 - Depression
 - Substance use problems
 - Bipolar disorder
 - Schizophrenia
 - Personality traits of aggression, mood changes and poor relationships

- Conduct disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Serious physical health conditions including pain
- Traumatic brain injury
- Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs
- Prolonged stress, such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems or unemployment
- Stressful life events, like rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss
- Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide
- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- Childhood abuse, neglect or trauma

Protective Factors

- Access to mental health care, and being proactive about mental health
- Feeling connected to family and community support
- Problem-solving and coping skills
- Limited access to lethal means
- Cultural and religious beliefs that encourage connecting and help-seeking, discourage suicidal behavior, or create a strong sense of purpose or self-esteem

Warning signs

Something to look out for when concerned that a person may be suicidal is a change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors. This is of greatest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.

Talk

If a person talks about:

- Killing or hurting themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

Behavior

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Prior suicide attempt
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

Mood

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement

*<https://afsp.org/risk-factors-protective-factors-and-warning-signs#risk-factors2>

C. Suicide Prevention Procedures for Puerto Rico Campus

A student should be immediately referred for assistance according to the procedures outlined below.

Student Active Suicidal Behavior

1. Any member of the College community who has actual knowledge that a student has just engaged in, is in the process of engaging in, or is about to engage in suicidal behavior on campus, shall immediately contact emergency personnel by **calling 911**.
2. Take the student seriously and, if possible, stay with them. Keep talking to them and call the emergency ASSMCA hotline at **1-800-981-0023** with them while you wait for emergency personnel to arrive. Keep yourself and others safe if the person is demonstrating signs of intense aggression or threatening behavior.
3. Notify Campus Security for the Puerto Rico Campus at **787-641-0099** (Front Desk Security).
4. Contact the Professional Counselor or designee at **787-296-1101 extension 5** as soon as practical to report the incident.
5. For off-campus emergencies, call 911 immediately, then the emergency **ASSMCA hotline** at **1-800-981-0023** or an emergency mental health center.
6. The Professional Counselor or designee shall immediately notify the student's emergency contact of record. (Contact information for emergency contacts can be found in Jenzabar under 'Work with Students' → 'Emergency Contacts'.)
7. The Professional Counselor or designee will follow up to provide resources, such as academic accommodations, phone numbers for crisis hotlines and emergency services providers, and additional resources.

8. Once the student is under the care of emergency personnel, College staff will not interfere with the professional judgment of emergency personnel, even if the student is uncooperative or refuses medical assistance.
9. A student who has engaged in active suicidal behavior shall be required to be assessed by a licensed mental health professional to determine the level of continued suicide risk posed and whether they are capable of continuing their education per the College's Readiness to Return Policy. Any documentation will be reviewed by the Professional Counselor or designee.

Stated Plans or Intentions to Attempt Suicide (Threats of Suicide)

1. Any member of the College community who has actual knowledge that a student has stated plans or intentions to attempt suicide shall take the threat very seriously and contact the Professional Counselor or designee immediately at **787-296-1101 extension 5**.
2. Talk to the student, if possible, and encourage them to call the emergency **ASSMCA hotline at 1-800-981-0023**.
3. The Professional Counselor or designee will meet with the student to assess the situation and assist them with obtaining appropriate care and support as necessary.
4. Based on the information received, the Professional Counselor or designee shall determine whether the protocol should be activated.
5. If the protocol is activated, the Professional Counselor or designee shall attempt to contact the student's emergency contact of record.
6. The Professional Counselor or designee may help identify support resources and strategies and/or develop a follow-up action plan for the student.
7. The Professional Counselor or designee may require that a student who has stated plans or intentions to attempt suicide be assessed by a licensed mental health professional to determine the level of suicide risk posed and whether they are capable of continuing their education per the College's Readiness to Return Policy. Any documentation will be reviewed by the Professional Counselor or designee.

SUICIDE PREVENTION CRISIS HOTLINES

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, please call one of the 24-hour crisis hotline numbers below right away:

- **Emergencias: 911**
- **Línea PAS de ASSMCA: 1-800-981-0023** <https://lineapas.assmca.pr.gov/>
La Línea PAS está disponible las 24 horas del día, los 365 días del año. La Línea PAS te ofrece: sesión de desahogo, consejería en crisis y apoyo emocional, cernimiento preliminar a nivel psicosocial, coordinación de evaluación psiquiátrica y psicológica, tele-enlaces y referidos.
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Red Nacional (TALK): 1-800-273-8255**
- **Centro de Control de Envenenamiento (Poison Help): 1-800-222-1222**

National resources

- [IMAlive](#) Suicide Prevention Hotline 800-784-2433
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Press # 1 if you are a Veteran
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) www.afsp.org
- Jed Foundation www.jedfoundation.org
- [Samaritans Statewide Hotline](#). Call or Text: 1-877-870-HOPE (4673)
- [The Trevor Helpline](#). 866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386)
Specifically for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender youth and young adults
- [National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide \(NOPCAS\)](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)
- [American Association of Suicidology](#)
- [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Partnership for Workplace Mental Health](#)
- [Stop A Suicide](#)

Links of interests:

1. Organización Mundial de la Salud. Sección de Prevención del suicidio: http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/es/
2. Project ATTEMPTERS. Devoted to Those Who Attempted Suicide: <http://projectattempters.com/>
3. Programa ConVida: <http://convidauprrp.wordpress.com/>
4. Asociación Internacional para la Prevención del Suicidio: <http://iasp.info/es/index.php>
5. American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org/home>
6. Instituto Hispanoamericano de Suicidiología: <http://www.suicidologia.com.mx/radio.html>
7. Asociación Mexicana de Suicidiología: <http://www.suicidologia.org.mx/>
8. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
9. SAMHSA: Suicide prevention: <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention/suicide.aspx>
10. Suicide Prevention Resource Center: http://www.sprc.org/about_sprc
11. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/suicide/index.html>

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3809451/>
<https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/risk-protective-factors-racial-ethnic-populations-us>