

Suicide Prevention and Intervention

North Kitsap School District

Learning Targets:

- NKSD Staff will be able to identify warning signs of student safety and suicide risk
- NKSD Staff will be aware of the district protocol for Suicide Prevention and will follow the appropriate steps when necessary

Why are we here?

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington youth between the ages of 10 and 24.
- Suicide rates among Washington youth remain higher than the national average.
- Teachers and other school staff who interact with students daily are in a prime position to recognize the signs and emotional distress and make appropriate referrals.

New State Law and District Policy

- **New State Law-** Districts are required to adopt a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional and behavioral distress in students, including substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide (RCW 28A.320.127)
- **District Policy 2145-** District Policy requires training to help staff:
 - Respond to signs of emotional or behavioral distress
 - Partner with community organizations and agencies
 - Communicate appropriately with parents
 - Respond to crisis situations
 - Support students and staff after an incident

Legal Requirements

- **RCW 28A.320.127**. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, each school district must adopt a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional distress in students, including youth suicide.
 - Identification of training opportunities
 - How to use expertise of district staff
 - How to respond to warning signs
 - Partnerships with community organizations
 - Protocols for communication with parents
 - How to respond to a crisis
 - How to provide support to students and staff after an incident

Risk Factors

- Almost **20%** of teenage students struggle with a **mental health problem**
- **90%** of suicide victims had a history of **mental health problems**—diagnosed or undiagnosed
- **60% used drugs and/or alcohol** the day of their death
- Most frequent precipitating events:
 - Severe argument with parents
 - Break-up of a romance
 - Suspension from school

Risk Factors

- Risk Factors that increase likelihood of suicide:
 - Feelings of isolation
 - Ineffective coping mechanisms
 - Inadequate problem-solving skills
 - A history of being the victim of bullying
 - LGBT identity- when it results in rejection from friends or family

Risk Factors

- Easy access to lethal methods, especially non-secured firearms
- Exposure to suicide and/or a family history of suicide
- Loss (e.g., death; divorce; relationships)
- School crisis (e.g., disciplinary; academic)
- Family crisis (e.g., abuse; domestic violence; running away; child parental conflict)
- Influence of significant people who died by suicide (personal contact or media representation)

Warning Signs

- Warning signs staff members must look out for:
 - Suicide threats
 - Making out a will
 - Giving away prized possessions
 - Sudden changes in behavior, friends, or personality
 - Changes in physical habits and appearance
 - Preoccupation with death and suicide themes

Warning Signs

- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Symptoms of depression
- Increased use and abuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- Confiding thoughts of suicide to a friend or trusted adult
- Writing suicidal thoughts in a social networking web page, diary, journal, or class work

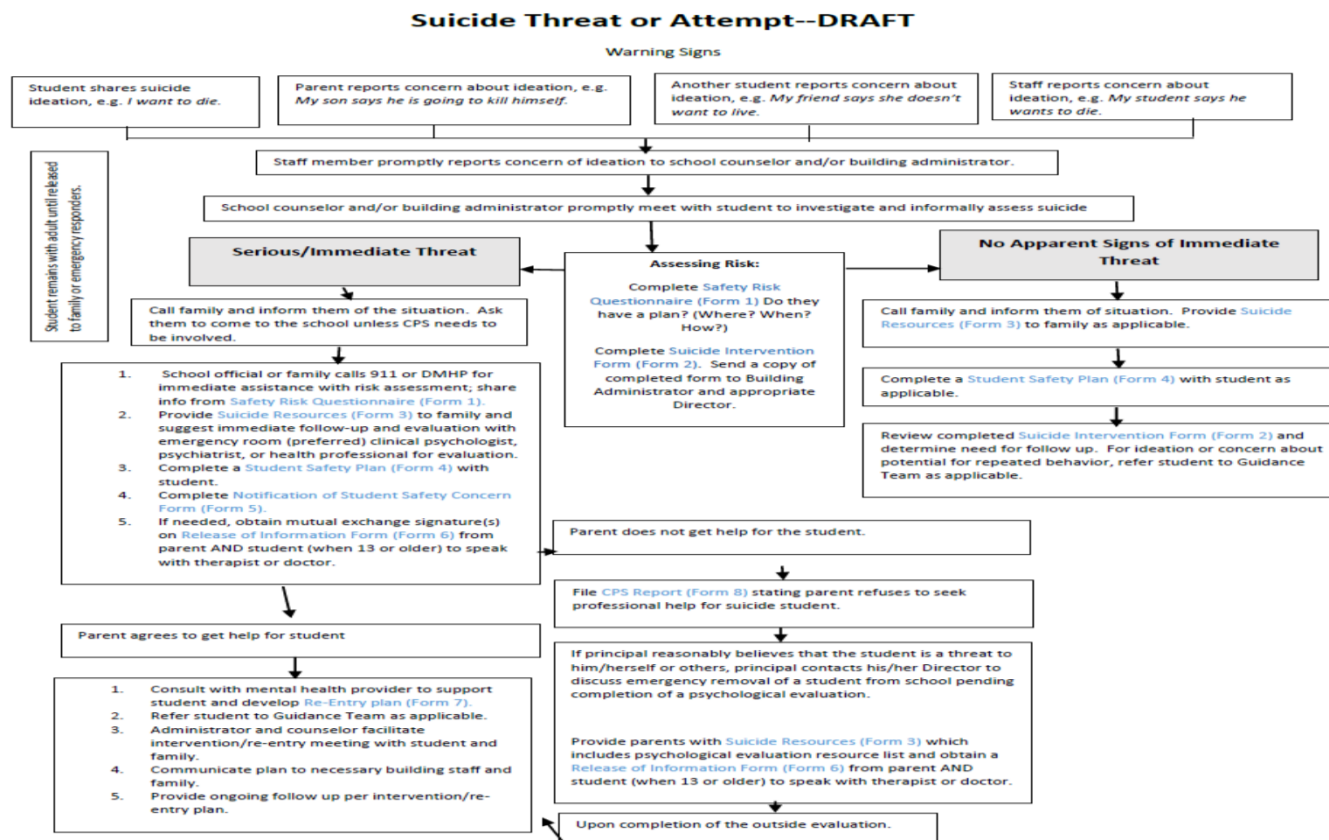
Protective Factors

- Family cohesion and stability
- Coping and problem-solving skills
- Positive self-worth and impulse-control
- Positive connections to school and extracurricular participation
- Good relationships with other youth
- Willingness to seek adult help, when needed
- Lack of access to suicidal means
- Access to mental health care
- Religiosity

Flow Chart—Response to Threat/Concern

- Initial Report
 - Student shares suicide ideation
 - Parent reports concern about ideation
 - Another student reports concern about ideation
 - Staff reports concern about ideation
- Staff member promptly reports concerns of ideation to school counselor and/or building administrator
- School counselor and/or building administrator promptly meet with student to investigate and assess suicide threat

Flow Chart



Questions??