

# NON-SUICIDAL SELF INJURY (NSSI) & SUICIDE THREAT

Any member of campus could be the first person in contact with a student in extreme distress. If you learn that a student is either self-harming or suicidal, it is important to recognize that these are two different concerns that call for different responses. The following protocols outline possible steps to deal with these situations. These steps are meant as a general guide and will need to be modified to fit each situation and student.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

### NSSI

- Wounds or scars, especially in patterns
- Wearing long sleeves or pants, even in hot weather
- Frequent reports of accidental injury
- Marked behavioral and emotional instability and impulsivity

### ELEVATED RISK

- Mentions suicide but adamantly denies intent to attempt
- Vague or no plan for acting on thoughts of suicide
- Thoughts of suicide are not persistent or longstanding
- Readily agrees to use personal supports or crisis options if needed

### IMMINENT RISK

- Threat of suicide is made with intent to act on the threat
- Specific, concrete, and plausible plan
- Thoughts of suicide may be persistent
- Known prior suicide attempts
- Makes known they already have taken steps to act
- Highly emotional, impulsive, agitated, or functionally impaired

## RESPONDING TO NSSI:

- Remain calm and nonjudgmental
- Listen, validate, and understand they are doing their best to cope in that moment despite the potentially dangerous nature of their coping
- Ask directly if they are self-harming as a means of coping or means of suicide
- Attempt to determine the severity of any injury and encourage appropriate medical follow-up
- For life-threatening situations, contact BUPD or call an ambulance
- For non-life-threatening situations, listen and support the individual, encouraging them to follow up with a mental health professional
- Encourage the individual to remove tools used to self-injure while respecting their autonomy if they refuse
- Follow up with the individual to check on their welfare
- Consider reporting the incident to your supervisor or to the Assessment and Care Team

## RESPONDING TO ELEVATED RISK OF SUICIDE:

- Slow your pace and remain calm
- Listen to the individual, demonstrating care and understanding by validating and offering assistance
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Encourage them to contact a mental health provider or family/peer supports
- Help them plan their next 24-48 hours to include structure and contact with others
- Encourage the individual to remove any means of suicide they are considering, while respecting their autonomy if they refuse
- Provide 24-hour crisis options if available to you
- Offer to help them schedule an appointment at CCS
- Consider reporting to the Assessment and Care Team through the Dean of Students
- Follow up with the individual to check on their welfare and use of resources

## RESPONDING TO IMMINENT RISK OF SUICIDE:

- Speak calmly and directly with simple phrasing
- Listen to the student's concerns, demonstrate care and understanding, and let them know you need to contact someone to take them to the hospital to ensure their safety
- Call BUPD or 911 for transport to a hospital
- Do not leave the student alone
- Encourage the individual to remove any means of suicide while respecting their autonomy if they refuse and avoid putting yourself in danger
- Report the incident to the Dean of Students

## RESOURCES:

### OFF-CAMPUS

- St. Vincent Stress Center: (317) 338-4800
- Community Health Network: (317) 621-5700
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
1-800-273-8255
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386
  - For LGBTQ+ youth
- The Steve Fund: Text STEVE to 741741
  - For college students of color
- Marion County Emergency Services: 911

### ON-CAMPUS

- Counseling and Consultation Services: (317) 940-9385
- Office of the Dean of Students:  
(317) 940-9470
- BUPD: (317) 940-9999