



## How Can I Tell If Someone Is Suicidal?

### *Assessment To Determine If Someone Is A Danger To Themselves*

*Because of the mentoring relationship you have with your Life Group members, you will likely be one of the first people they come to with serious issues. You will also be able to pick up on other serious issues lingering beneath the surface. They may initiate the conversation, but more likely these issues will come up as you gain their trust and ask questions. If you are concerned that someone may be depressed or thinking about taking their own life, do the following assessment.  
**If you need help, talk to the staff immediately.***

#### **If you are concerned that someone is struggling with depression, ask the following questions:**

1. Have you been feeling sad or unhappy? If they say yes, they may be depressed.
2. Do you feel depressed? Where would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10? If it's an 8 or above, be concerned.
3. Do you ever feel hopeless? Does it seem as if things can never get better? Suicide is often associated with hopeless thoughts.
4. Do you have thoughts of death? Yes = suicidal wishes, but not necessarily suicide plans. Many depressed people say they think they'd be better off dead and wish they'd die in their sleep or get killed in an accident; however, most of them say they have no intention of killing themselves.
5. Do you ever have actual suicidal impulses? Do you have any urge to kill yourself? Yes = actual desire to die. This is a more serious situation.
6. Do you have any actual plans to kill yourself? If yes, then ask for their specific plans. What steps have they taken to put their plans into action? The more specific the plan, and the more preparations that have taken place, which means more actual danger.
7. When do you plan to kill yourself?
8. Is there anything that would hold you back, such as family or religious convictions? If the person says that people would be better off without them, then suicide is more likely.
  - a. If they say something would hold them back, emphasize that.
    - i. Ex. "Yes, your family would be completely devastated if anything were ever to happen to you...."

**If at the end of these questions you feel like this person is suicidal, then you need to follow the steps on the "What To Do In An Emergency" .**

# “What To Do In An Emergency”

*Because of the mentoring relationship you have with your Life Group members, you will likely be one of the first people they come to with serious issues. They may initiate the conversation, but more likely these situations will come up as you gain their trust and ask questions. These are the steps you need to follow if you are concerned about a student's safety.*

***There is no confidentiality when someone is a danger to themselves or others.*** If you are made aware that someone intends to harm themselves or someone else, you are *legally obligated* to report it.

- **It is better to overreact than underreact—Contact someone IMMEDIATELY.**
- **Do not leave them alone.**

**First, do an assessment (See “How Can I Tell If Someone Is Suicidal?” resource on the next page).**

**If you believe that someone is suicidal and has plans to take their life:**

**If they live on campus:**

1. You need to let their RA know *immediately*. Try to take the student with you, but if they refuse to come, you still need to go.
2. Take them to a counselor on campus.
  - a. Counseling center: \_\_\_\_\_ (Fill in this #)
  - b. Know the location of this office/center: Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**If they do not live on campus:**

1. Call the National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255
2. Calling 911 is an alternative to the hotline, but you need to call one of the two.
  - a. Be prepared to take them to the hospital

**After you call or contact the appropriate person above, or if you are unsure of what to do:**

3. Call the director and/or other staff to let them know what's going on. It doesn't matter what time it is.
  - a. Most use the “Do Not Disturb” feature on our phones between 10 PM and 7 AM, but you can call through it in an emergency by calling twice back-to-back.
4. You need to let the director/staff know, but since you were the one the person told, it will ultimately be your job to handle the situation by following the above instructions.

**If someone makes a threat to harm themselves or someone else that you think is sincere:**

1. If they are on campus, follow the same steps as above. ***Immediately.***
2. If they are not on campus, call 911.
3. Call the director/staff.

**If someone is inflicting injury on themselves:**

1. Tell them they need to get help, or you are going to have to talk to someone.
  - a. If they are a student, take them to the counseling center.
  - b. If they are not a student, then the staff will help connect them with someone.
2. Tell the staff ***immediately***, and they will walk you through the process of what to do next.
3. Continue meeting with them, but it is with the understanding that they need to get professional help. *You are not qualified to handle this by yourself.*