



Suicide Prevention

Carroll County Public Schools

Why Be Concerned?



■ Statistics

- 3rd leading cause of death for adolescents (15-24 yrs. old)
- 6th leading cause of death for children (5-14 yrs. old)
- In Carroll County, during the 2007-08 school year, school counselors provided 389 interventions for students
 - » Elementary
 - » Middle
 - » High



Why it Matters



- During the last few school years, we have lost several students to suicide. (2 in the 07-08 school year)
- Our obligation is to keep all children safe so they can be healthy and successful.



OBJECTIVES

- To increase our ability to recognize students who may be at risk.
- To empower our school community to intervene effectively.



How does suicide present itself?

- Suicidal ideation, threats, and attempts may be a student's desperate effort to find a solution to his/her overwhelming problems and stress.





Signs and Symptoms

Youth often face multiple problems, which they find difficult to handle.

- Students who are suicidal may:

- Talk about feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless, that life is too painful, boring, or has no meaning.
- Talk about death, ways to die, or plans to hurt themselves.
- Talk about making wills or giving away cherished belongings.

Signs and Symptoms (cont.)

- Suicidal Students may:
 - Look depressed, sad, or moody
 - Look preoccupied
 - Look unusually unkempt or neglect their personal hygiene
 - Look unfocused or unable to concentrate





Signs and Symptoms (cont.)

- Suicidal students may exhibit behavioral changes:
 - Eating or sleep habits may change.
 - They may be irritable, aggressive, or angry.
 - Attendance in class or school may decrease.
 - They may engage in high risk, unsafe, impulsive behavior, like substance abuse or running away.
 - The quality of their school work may suffer.
 - They may suddenly become happy after a period of depression, visit loved ones, and seem at “peace.”



Risk Factors

- Additional Risk Factors to consider:
 - Major depression or significant psychiatric illness.
 - Personal or family history of substance abuse or addiction.
 - History of family or friend suicide.
 - Recent changes in family structure, significant relationships, academic status, or status in extracurricular activities.

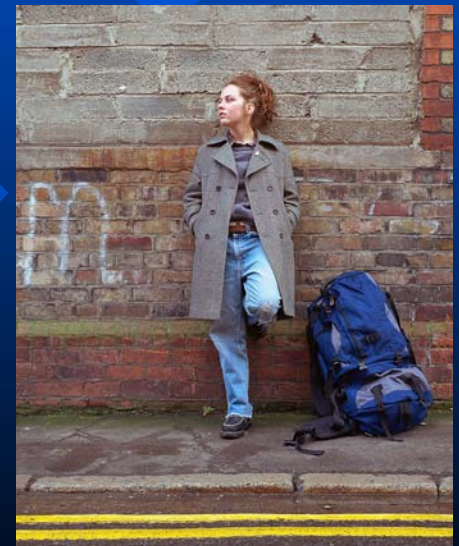


Same Day Crisis

For young people, suicide often followed a crisis. The findings from the National Violent Death Reporting System noted that for over one in three suicides, the police or medical examiner had indicated that a crisis such as an argument with a parent or a relationship break-up occurred the same day or shortly before the suicide.

Indicators of Student Behavior

- Artwork
- Writing
- Student report
- Self report
- Extreme isolation



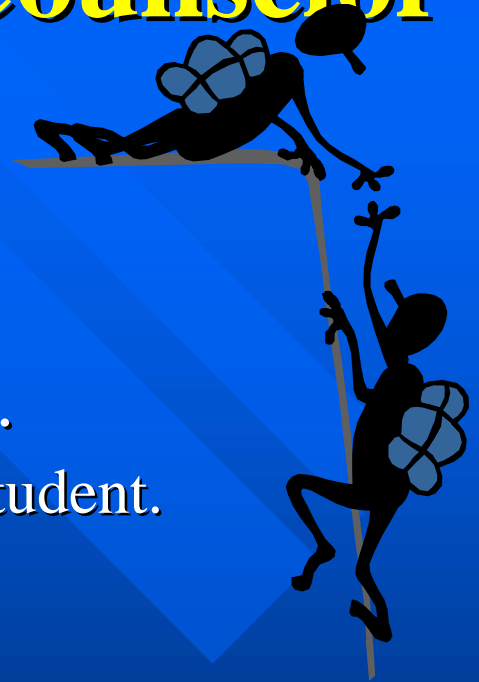


Staff Role & Responsibility

- All staff are required to report any student's suicidal threats or attempts to the counselor.
- If you hear or see a suicidal threat or gesture...
 - Inform the student that you must notify the counselor.
 - Listen to the student and validate his/her feelings.
 - Notify the counselor immediately.
 - Keep the student under constant adult supervision until the counselor makes contact with the student.
 - Once the student has seen the counselor, your responsibility in reporting is complete.

The Role of the School Counselor

- School counselor takes the lead.
- School counselor's responsibility to...
 - Arrange appropriate supervision of the student.
 - Meet with the student.
 - Contact parent/guardian.
 - Make necessary referrals to community agencies such as Youth Service Bureau.
 - Inform school administration.
 - Follow up and plan for student's return to school.
 - Maintain confidentiality & respect for student's issues.



Self Injury

- An attempt to manage negative emotions through self-inflicted physical pain
 - Involves: cuts, bruises, scratches and/or burns.
 - May be confused with simple attention-seeking behaviors.
 - Usually not suicidal.
 - Dangers:
 - » Interference with learning coping skills
 - » Habit formation
 - » Accidental suicide
 - Response- follow suicide prevention procedures.





For more information:

www.sprc.org

**Suicide Prevention
Resource Center**