



NOVEMBER: SUICIDE AND SELF-HARM PREVENTION

– What Staff Need to Know –

The Basics

As a teacher, you are often the first to notice changes in your students. Responding to a student in distress can be overwhelming and scary, even for experienced teachers. If a student discloses thoughts of suicide or self-harm, know that you have support. Read on for more information about navigating these situations, and always reach out to a member of your wellness team for help.

Suicidality and non-suicidal self-harm: what is the difference?

Self-harm is often seen as a sign of suicidality. However, self-harming does not always mean that a person is suicidal. Non-suicidal self-harm can be an attempt to cope with sadness or anger, relieve stress, or ask for help. This behavior is most common among teens and young adults; the times in life when emotional changes happen quickly and social pressure increases. Although students engaging in this behavior may not be suicidal or harm themselves, they still need mental health support. If you have concerns about self-harm with any of your students, talk to your wellness team.

Self-harm or suicidality: First steps to take

1. Stay aware: some students are at a higher risk. Students who have been bullied have had a recent loss, and LGBTQIA students have a higher risk of suicide. See more risk factors in the links attached.

Additional Resources

- [Suicide Warning Signs](#)
- [More About Self-Harm](#)
- [Supporting LGBTQIA students](#)

2. Stay calm: reassure the student that telling someone was the right thing to do.
3. Keep the student supervised: discreetly call or text a colleague to stay with the student if you need to leave to get help.
4. Communicate: share what you have observed with the wellness team to determine next steps.
5. Afterwards: maintain your relationship with the student. Continue to check in as you usually would: the crisis does not have to define your relationship with the student.

Remember to take care of yourself after you connect the student to the school wellness team. Take deep breaths, connect with your loved ones, and connect with your Employee Assistance Program.