

STUDENT SUICIDE INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to provide education, guidance and resources to faculty, staff, students, and other members of the UMass Boston community to help students at risk of self-harm. All suicidal behavior or threats should be taken seriously and immediately referred in accordance with this protocol. Please know that FERPA does not prevent you from reporting concerns of self-harm.

In case of an emergency, call UMass Boston Police at 911.

DEFINITIONS

Suicide: Death from self-inflicted injury and by which a person intended to kill themselves.

Suicidal Behavior: Behavior which is self-inflicted and by which a person intends or gives the appearance of intending to kill themselves.

Suicidal Ideation: Thoughts or feelings about engaging in Suicidal Behavior.

Suicide Plan: A proposed method of self-inflicted injury resulting in death.

Actual Knowledge: The direct and clear awareness of a fact or circumstance, as opposed to constructive (inferred or implied) knowledge. What a person “must have known” as opposed to “should have known.”

PROTOCOL

This Protocol outlines steps that must be followed if a UMass Boston community member has Actual Knowledge – received directly and/or indirectly (e.g. from a third party) – that a student is engaged in the following behavior:

1. **ACTIVE SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR OR SUICIDE PLAN:** Student is actively engaged in Suicidal Behavior.
2. **SUICIDAL IDEATION:** Student has stated (either verbally or in writing, including social media) thoughts, plans or intentions of Suicidal Behavior.
3. **PREVIOUS SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR OR IDEATION:** The student engaged in Suicidal Behavior while enrolled, or recently (within a year) before matriculation¹.

1. ACTIVE SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR OR SUICIDE PLAN: When a student has indicated a plan (*either verbally or in writing*) to harm themselves or is *actively engaged* in Suicidal Behavior:

- Immediately contact UMass Police by calling 911 or 617-287-7777.
- If you are physically present with the student as they have disclosed this to you, stay with the student while waiting for UMass Boston Police to respond.
- UMass Boston Police will conduct an initial assessment to determine next steps.
- Police will escort the student to the UHS Counseling Center or dispatch off-campus emergency responders if after-hours.
- Following the initial evaluation, UMass Boston Police will provide an incident report to the Dean of Students Office and University Health Services (UHS) within 24 hours.
- The Dean of Students Office, or the designee, shall attempt to contact the student and/or their emergency contact of record at the earliest opportunity.

2. SUICIDAL IDEATION: When a student has indicated (either verbally or in writing, including social media) current thoughts or feelings about engaging in Suicidal Behavior or self-harm:

- Offer to escort the student to the UHS Counseling Center. Once at the Counseling Center, the student will be evaluated immediately. OR

¹ “Matriculation” should be interpreted broadly and not be limited to full-time students.

- Contact UMass Boston Police by calling 911 or 617-287-7777. OR
- Call the University Health Services 24/7 crisis line at 855-634-4135 or 617-287-5690.
- *Important: If your offer to help the student is declined, call the UHS 24/7 crisis line at 855-634-4135 or UMass Boston Police at 617-287-7777.*

3. PREVIOUS SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR OR IDEATION: When a student has indicated (either verbally or in writing) that they have previously had thoughts or feelings about engaging in Suicidal Behavior or self-harm:

- Submit a [CARE Case Management Referral Form](#) to the Dean of Students Office.
 - Based on the information received, the Dean of Students Office, or designee, will review the available information and determine what next steps are appropriate (e.g., meeting student to offer support and resources, referral to Counseling Center, etc.).
- Inform the student of the University Health Services 24/7 crisis line: 855-634-4135 or 617-287-5690 to schedule an initial consultation.

Note: When a UMass Boston community member has Actual Knowledge that a student has engaged in Suicidal Behavior and is currently hospitalized, this protocol shall be followed (under procedures for Previous Suicidal Behavior or Ideation) in the event the student seeks to return to the University.

EMPLOYEES SHOULD DEFAULT TOWARDS REPORTING & FOLLOWING THE PROTOCOL

When in doubt, the default should always be to follow the protocol and report concerning behavior.

It can be difficult to distinguish between a student's "stated plans or intentions" and generalized statements about Suicide. The difficulty in trying to provide clear guidelines around this distinction should be reserved for trained mental health clinicians, who know how to assess whether, or the degree to which, a student may pose a threat to themselves. Therefore, the following framework is suggested: when you become aware of information that meets the criteria outlined above, you do not have an obligation to assess or probe the student for further information. Instead, you have an obligation to follow the appropriate protocol steps as described above. When in doubt as to whether the behavior meets one of these criteria, follow the above protocol and report the behavior.

RESOURCES / CONTACT INFORMATION

UHS Counseling Center

Quinn Administration Building, 2nd floor.

617.287.5690

24/7 Crisis Line 855.634.4135

counseling.center@umb.edu

UMass Boston Police

Quinn Administration Building, 1st Floor, Room 100

Emergency: DIAL 911

General Information & Dispatch: (617) 287-7777

Dean of Students Office

Campus Center, 2nd Floor, 2100 Suite

617.287.5800