

# IS YOUR STUDENT...

- Sad most of the time?
- Acting out in class?
- Suddenly gaining/losing weight?
- Unable to stay awake?
- Complaining about not sleeping enough?
- Isolating self from friends and peers?
- Not doing well academically?
- Getting into fights?
- Feeling hopeless?
- Talking/Writing about death/dark themes?
- Looking disheveled, not caring about physical appearance?
- Making risky decisions?
- Not prepared for class, projects, or other assignments?
- Ignoring personal responsibilities?
- Saying that he/she wants to die?
- Appear to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol?
- Being inattentive, spacing out, unusual body language?
- Giving away valuable possessions?
- Engaging in self injury, cutting, burning, etc.?
- Using self-degrading statements, showing no self-confidence?
- Making statements such as “you’ll miss me when I’m gone”, “you’ll regret this”, “It won’t matter much longer”, etc.?



**IF YES...**

Make note of the signs you are seeing in the classroom.

***ALWAYS err on the side of caution.***

If you are concerned about your student, **IMMEDIATELY** contact the school counselor and let them know of your concerns.

The counselor will likely call the student in to speak with them one-on-one, and then decide whether or not it is necessary to contact the student’s parents based on school policy.

**1 in 7 high school students have seriously considered suicide in the past school year.**

**1 in 14 high school students have attempted suicide.**

## AFTER CONTACTING THE COUNSELOR...

Continue to keep an eye on your student and report any continuing behavior that you see to the counselor. Stay in communication with the counselor so that together, you two can watch out for your student. Follow up with the counselor to see if there is anything else that you, as a teacher, can do for this particular student.

Remember, your job as a teacher is to

**IDENTIFY & REFER**

Your role is **NOT** to counsel any of your students!

If you identify any of the above symptoms, make sure you refer your student to the guidance counselor. If you feel comfortable speaking with your at-risk student, see the back of this page for tips.

# SPEAKING ONE-ON-ONE WITH A STUDENT AT RISK

Always let the school counselor know about the student before you talk with them one-on-one. This way the counselor can help you identify risk factors and you can have a plan for what to do after the talk. Remember that it is NOT your job to counsel your student, but rather to identify and refer. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your student, it is perfectly acceptable to simply refer them to the guidance counselor.

## DO...

- Speak with them privately
- Listen to their concerns (even if they seem silly to you)
- Allow them to be emotional
- Tell them that what they say is between you and them (apart from direct threats to hurt themselves or others, which you must report to the school counselor)
- Ask clarifying questions to confirm what they said (“So, you feel like no one cares about you?” “You say that you’re having problems at home?” “You feel that you are crumbling under pressure, am I correct?”)
- Let them do most of the talking
- When the conversation ends, let them know that you are available if they need to talk again.

## DO NOT...

- Promise to keep their feelings about hurting themselves or others a secret
- Tell them that this is “just a phase”
- Assume that since they are talking to you that they are not in danger
- Give advice - rather, encourage them. (“you” messages versus “I” messages. Advice: “You should see the counselor.” Encouragement: “I really believe that the counselor would be able to help you. If you want, I will gladly come with you and talk to the counselor if that makes you feel more comfortable.”)
- Do most of the talking.
- Tell other teachers about what was discussed. The school counselor will let other teachers know what they need to know.
- Try to help the student without contacting the school counselor.

## IF THE STUDENT EXPRESSES A DESIRE TO HURT THEMSELVES...

Ask “Do you feel hopeless about your future?”

**IF YES >>** Ask “Have you thought about taking your life?”

**IF YES >>** Ask “Do you have a plan to do it?”

**IF YES >>** *(At this point, you cannot let the student go home without speaking to the school counselor. You must stay with this student until they can get help.)* Ask “Do you have the means to follow through with your plan?”

**IF YES >>** Ask “Have you attempted suicide before?”

**IF YES >>** This student is at extreme risk to die by suicide.  
**IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION IS REQUIRED.**

