

# Crisis Response Protocol for Suicide Ideation and Attempts

Behavioral Health Services  
University of the Incarnate Word

For faculty and staff of University of the Incarnate Word

This protocol provides guidance to faculty, staff, administrators, and other University of the Incarnate Word (“UIW” or the “University”) employees on how to respond to students experiencing suicidal ideation or suicide attempts. It is intended solely for informational purposes and does not replace professional medical advice. Although specific campus officials are designated to manage such situations, all University personnel are expected to maintain a working knowledge of these procedures. UIW aims to respond to crises in a consistent manner; however, the specific facts and circumstances of each situation may necessitate modifications to the actions outlined in this protocol by trained personnel.

*Acknowledgements:*

*Molloy University*

*Albany State University*

*Postvention: A Guide for Response to Suicide on University Campuses*

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## Introduction

According to the National Mental Health Association, more than 1,000 university students die by suicide each year. Data from the National Data on Campus Suicide and Depression indicate that approximately one in every twelve U.S. university students report having made a suicide plan. Tragically, no institution of higher education is immune to these realities. This guide represents a comprehensive effort to address suicide risk among university students and to promote a coordinated, informed response across the campus community.

If you encounter a student who is contemplating or threatening suicide, you are not expected to manage the situation alone. Knowledgeable and well-trained professionals are available to support both the student at risk and the faculty or staff member responding to the concern.

## Purpose

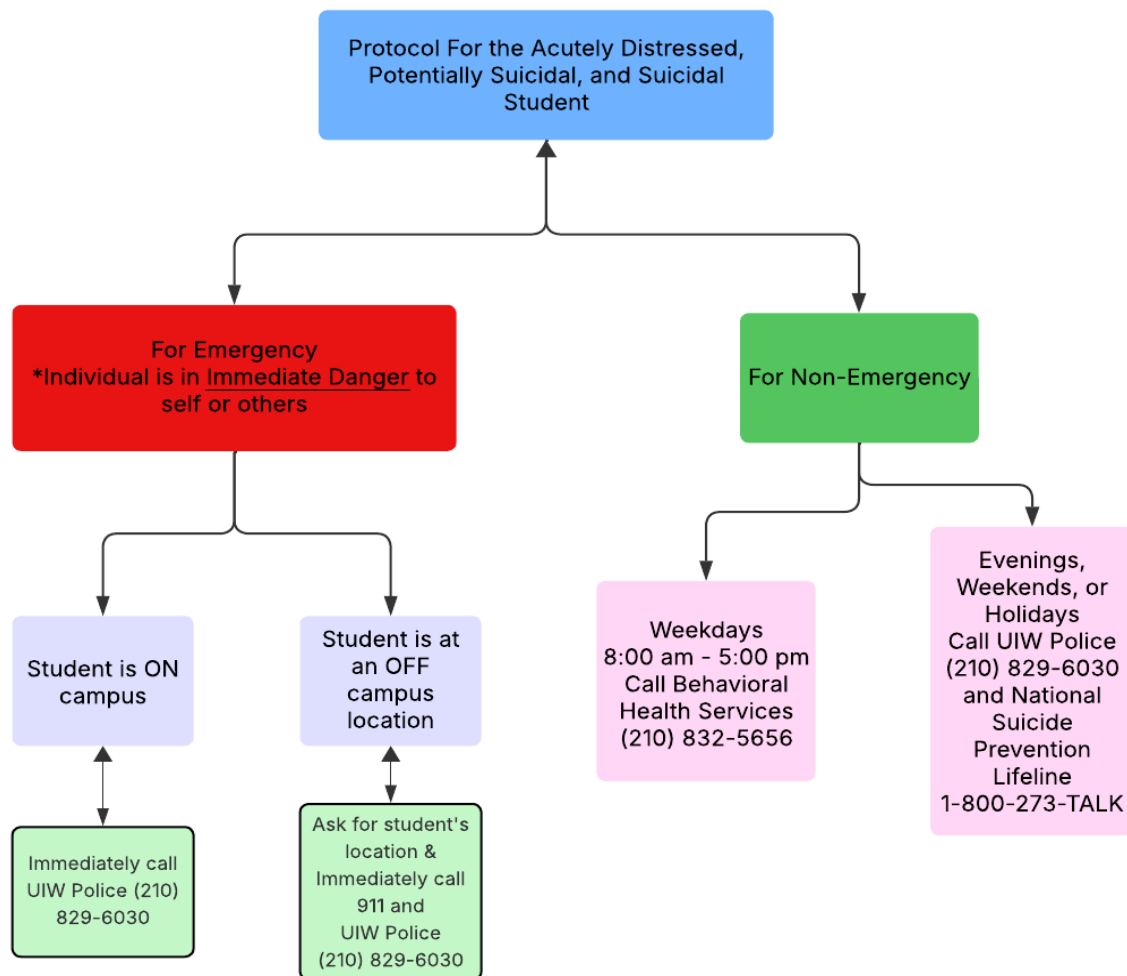
When a student is facing a crisis, the entire University community may be affected. Therefore, it is essential that a clear and coordinated protocol exists to protect the safety and well-being of the student in crisis, as well as that of the broader campus community. This protocol is intended to serve as a guide when a student is experiencing a crisis or exhibiting behaviors that may indicate emotional or psychological distress.

This protocol also supports the creation of a safe and supportive environment in which members of the UIW community feel cared for, and where mental health is recognized as a critical component of student well-being and academic success.

**Note:** UIW faculty and staff should be familiar with their immediate response obligations; however, they should not make determinations regarding treatment or care unless specifically designated by the University. Accordingly, the response undertaken by UIW Police Department (UIWPD), Behavioral Health Services, or other first-responder agencies may vary based on the specific facts and circumstances of each situation.

# Crisis Response Protocol Flowchart

The following flowchart outlines the basic protocol for responding to a student experiencing suicidal ideation, a suicide attempt, or another mental health crisis. If there is any uncertainty as to whether a situation constitutes an emergency or a non-emergency, it should be treated as an emergency.



**First Responder:** UIW Police Department (UIWPD) serves as the first responder for UIW’s main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, as well as the Feik School of Pharmacy and St. Anthony’s Catholic High School. The San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) is the first responder for all other UIW campuses, including the School of Osteopathic Medicine, Rosenberg School of Optometry, and the School of Rehabilitative Sciences.

**After-Hours Support:** UIW Behavioral Health Services (BHS) operates only when classes are in session. When BHS is closed, contact **UIWPD at (210) 829-6030** or **SAPD by calling 911**.

Additionally, the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is available 24/7 at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** to help connect individuals to local mental health resources.

## Suicide-Prevention Protocol and Procedures

All University of the Incarnate Word faculty and staff are required to follow these procedures. In cases where there is uncertainty as to whether a situation constitutes an emergency, **the situation must be handled as an emergency.**

### Emergency Response Protocols

On-Campus (UIW Broadway Campus, Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School)<sup>1</sup>

*Student has attempted suicide or poses imminent danger to self or others*

1. **Immediately call UIWPD at (210) 829-6030 (24/7 dispatch) and 911.**
  - a. Remain calm.
  - b. Take any threat of self-harm seriously.
2. Remain with the student until first responders arrive. **Do not leave the student alone.**
3. If you are not physically with the student, remain on the phone or in contact until UIWPD arrives.
4. UIWPD will report to the scene and take over management of the situation.
  - a. If the student requires transport to a psychiatric facility for further evaluation, UIWPD and the Director of Behavioral Health Services will coordinate.
  - b. UIWPD and the Director of Behavioral Health Services or his or her designee will make the determination as to who will accompany the student for further services.
5. UIWPD will contact applicable University personnel as required.
  - a. UIWPD will contact Behavioral Health Services.
  - b. UIWPD may contact Campus Life, Residence Life, the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing, and other members of university leadership, as applicable.
6. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able to leave the scene.
7. Reminders:

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<sup>1</sup> Broadway Campus includes UIW's main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, the Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School, as UIWPD is the first responder for those entities.

- a. Do not transport a student or students in a personal vehicle. If a student changes his/her mind about cooperating, you could be placed in a dangerous situation for yourself and the student.
  - b. Keep students away from the students in crisis. If in class, the instructor should dismiss the class. If in a public space, ask students to step aside until UIWPD can secure the location.
  - c. You should never make a statement to the media, and all statements will go through the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing.
8. UIWPD or Campus Life will contact the student's emergency contact as appropriate.
  9. Behavioral Health Services will provide community support and resources as needed.

*Student has threatened suicide or exhibited other concerning behaviors that present harm to self or others*

1. **Immediately call UIWPD at (210) 829-6030** (24/7 dispatch).
  - a. Remain calm.
  - b. Take any threat of self-harm seriously.
2. Remain with the student until first responders arrive. **Do not leave the student alone.**
  - a. While you wait for UIWPD, you may encourage the student to call UIW Behavioral Health Services at **(210) 832-5656** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
  - b. Reassure the student they are not alone and that you will remain with them until help arrives.
3. If you are not physically with the student, remain on the phone or in contact until UIWPD arrives.
4. UIWPD will report to the scene and take over management of the situation.
  - a. If the student requires transport to a psychiatric facility for further evaluation, UIWPD and the Director of Behavioral Health Services will coordinate.
  - b. UIWPD and the Director of Behavioral Health Services or his or her designee will make the determination as to who will accompany the student for further services.
5. UIWPD will contact Behavioral Health Services.
6. UIW PD will contact applicable University personnel as required.
  - a. UIWPD may contact Campus Life, Residence Life, the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing, and other members of university leadership, as applicable.
7. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able to leave the scene.

8. Reminders:
  - a. Do not transport a student or students in a personal vehicle. If a student changes his/her mind about cooperating, you could be placed in a dangerous situation for yourself and the student.
  - b. Do not leave the student alone or take the threat lightly or as a joke.
  - c. Do not suggest that the student go someplace else alone.
  - d. Do not pass on personal judgment or personal opinions.
  - e. Do not try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
  - f. Keep students away from the students in crisis. If in class, the instructor should dismiss the class. If in a public space, ask students to step aside until UIWPD can secure the location.
  - g. You should never make a statement to the media, and all statements will go through the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing.
9. UIWPD or Campus Life will contact the student's emergency contact as appropriate.
10. Behavioral Health Services will provide community support and resources as needed.

## Off-Campus (including UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine, Rosenberg School of Optometry, and School of Rehabilitative Sciences)<sup>2</sup>

*Student has attempted suicide or poses imminent danger to self or others*

1. **Immediately call 911.**
  - a. Remain calm.
  - b. Take any threat of self-harm seriously.
2. If physically with the student, remain with the student until first responders arrive.  
**Do not leave the student alone.**
3. If you are not physically with the student, ask the student if there is someone nearby, and remain on the phone with them until first responders arrive.
4. First Responders will report to the scene and take over management of the situation (SAPD).
  - a. SAPD will manage transport of the student, if needed, for further evaluation, and will contact next of kin.
5. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able to leave the scene or first responders take over management of the situation.

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<sup>2</sup> Broadway Campus includes UIW's main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, the Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School, as UIWPD is the first responder for those entities.

- a. CARE Team will notify the appropriate University personnel as appropriate including, UIWPD, Campus Life, Residence Life, the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing, and other members of university leadership, as applicable.
  - b. A designated member of the CARE Team will notify the student's emergency contact.
6. Reminders:
  - a. Do not transport a student or students in a personal vehicle. If a student changes his/her mind about cooperating, you could be placed in a dangerous situation for yourself and the student.
  - b. Keep students away from the students in crisis. If in class, the instructor should dismiss the class. If in a public space, ask students to step aside until UIWPD can secure the location.
7. Behavioral Health Services will provide community support and resources as needed.
8. You should never make a statement to the media, and all statements will go through the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing.

*Student has threatened suicide or exhibited other concerning behaviors that present harm to self or others*

1. **Immediately call 911.**
  - a. Remain calm.
  - b. Take any threat of self-harm seriously.
2. Remain with the student until first responders arrive. **Do not leave the student alone.**
  - a. While you wait for first responders, you may encourage the student to call UIW Behavioral Health Services at **(210) 832-5656** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
  - b. Reassure the student they are not alone and that you will remain with them until help arrives.
3. If you are not physically with the student, remain on the phone or in contact until first responders arrive.
4. First responders (SAPD) will report to the scene and take over management of the situation.
5. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able to leave the scene or first responders take over management of the situation.
  - a. CARE Team will notify the appropriate University personnel as appropriate including, UIWPD, Campus Life, Residence Life, the Office of General

Counsel, the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing, and other members of university leadership, as applicable.

- b. A designated member of the CARE Team will notify the student's emergency contact.
6. Reminders:
- a. Do not transport a student or students in a personal vehicle. If a student changes his/her mind about cooperating, you could be placed in a dangerous situation for yourself and the student.
  - b. Do not leave the student alone or take the threat lightly or as a joke.
  - c. Do not suggest that the student go someplace else alone.
  - d. Do not pass on personal judgment or personal opinions.
  - e. Do not try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
  - f. Keep students away from the students in crisis. If in class, the instructor should dismiss the class. If in a public space, ask students to step aside until UIWPD can secure the location.
7. Behavioral Health Services will provide community support and resources as needed.
8. You should never make a statement to the media, and all statements will go through the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing.

## Non-Emergency Response Protocol

While these are defined as “non-emergency” situations for purposes of these guidelines, **if you are ever in doubt whether a situation constitutes an emergency or not, always treat it as an emergency.** Moreover, because a scenario is listed here as non-emergency, it does not mean the same scenario cannot be considered or give rise to an emergency. **Accordingly, when in doubt, always follow emergency procedures.**

### On-Campus (UIW Broadway Campus, Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School)<sup>3</sup>

*A student expresses to you that he/she has thoughts of suicide*

1. If a student expresses to you that he/she has thoughts of suicide, or is experiencing mental health distress, **refer them to Behavioral Health Services in AD 438 and call (210) 832-5656.**
  - a. If Behavioral Health Services is unavailable, call **UIWPD at (210) 829-6030.**

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<sup>3</sup> Broadway Campus includes UIW's main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, the Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School, as UIWPD is the first responder for those entities.

- b. You may also call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** for further support.
2. Remain calm and talk to the student, reassure them that they are not alone.
3. Do not try to provide counseling to the student. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
4. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you connect the student with appropriate personnel.

*A student demonstrates concerning behavior to self or others*

1. If a student exhibits concerning behavior on campus, including suicidal behavior, or behavior that may put the student or community at risk, call **UIWPD at (210) 829-6030**.
  - a. While you wait for UIWPD, stay with the student and remain calm.
  - b. While you wait:
    - i. Encourage the student to speak with Behavioral Health Services at **(210) 832-5656**;
    - ii. Encourage the student to call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**; and
    - iii. Reassure the student that they are not alone, and you are there to keep them safe.
  - c. Do not try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
2. Once UIWPD is onsite, they will manage the situation.
  - a. UIWPD will contact Behavioral Health Services at **(210) 832-5656**.
2. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able so the appropriate personnel can follow up and provide support to the student.

**Off-Campus (including UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine, Rosenberg School of Optometry, and School of Rehabilitative Sciences)<sup>4</sup>**

*A student expresses to you that he/she has thoughts of suicide*

1. If a student expresses to you that he/she has thoughts of suicide, or is experiencing mental health distress, refer them to **Behavioral Health Services in AD 438**, or call **(210) 832-5656** and call **911**.
  - a. If Behavioral Health Services is unavailable, call **911**.
2. Remain calm and talk to the student, reassure them that they are not alone.

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<sup>4</sup> Broadway Campus includes UIW's main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, the Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School, as UIWPD is the first responder for those entities.

3. Do not try to provide counseling to the student. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
4. If you need assistance with an interaction, you may also call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
5. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able so the appropriate personnel can follow up and provide support to the student.

*A student demonstrates concerning behavior to self or others*

1. **Call 911.**
  - a. If needed, you may also call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline for support at **988** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
2. While you wait for first responders:
  - a. Remain calm and encourage the student to reach out to **Behavioral Health Services at (210) 832-5656**.
  - b. Reassure the student that they are not alone.
  - c. Do not try to provide counseling. Recognize the limits of your authority.
3. Once first responders have taken over to manage the situation, file a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) so the appropriate personnel can follow up and provide support to the student.

## Emergency Response for Suicide

### Suicide committed on campus (UIW Broadway campus, Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School)<sup>5</sup>

1. Immediately call UIWPD at **(210) 829-6030** (24/7 dispatch) **and 911**.
  - a. Try to remain calm, and do not move the student or anything in the vicinity.
  - b. Remain with the student until proper authorities arrive to secure the location.
2. UIWPD and EMS will arrive and take over management of the situation.
  - a. UIWPD will contact the Director of Behavioral Health, Dean of Campus Life, and the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing, and other key university leadership as applicable.
  - b. UIWPD will coordinate with Campus Life to notify the student's emergency contact.

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<sup>5</sup> Broadway Campus includes UIW's main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, the Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School, as UIWPD is the first responder for those entities.

3. Behavioral Health Services will provide counseling to those who may have been affected by the events and assemble a team to provide on-campus mental health support for those requiring services.
  - a. Behavioral Health Services may coordinate with the Office of Mission & Ministry as appropriate.
4. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able so the appropriate personnel can follow up and provide support to you and other personnel or community members, as applicable.
5. You should never make a statement to the media, and all statements will go through the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing.

### Suicide committed off-campus (including UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine, Rosenberg School of Optometry, and School of Rehabilitative Sciences)<sup>6</sup>

1. Immediately call **911**.
  - a. Remain calm and wait for first responders.
  - b. Remain with the student until proper authorities arrive to secure the location.
  - c. To the extent possible, if others are around, keep them on scene and away from the student.
  - d. Do not touch or move any items in the area or touch the student or vicinity, as the area may be designated as a crime scene.
2. First responders will manage the situation once they arrive. Please listen closely to their instructions.
3. Once first-responders give the green light, call UIWPD and notify them of the incident (in some instances, SAPD may contact UIWPD directly).
  - a. UIWPD will contact applicable University personnel, including Campus Life, Emergency Management, the Office of General Counsel, and senior leadership as appropriate.
4. File a [CARE Team Incident Report](#) as soon as you are able so the appropriate personnel can follow up and provide support to you and other personnel or community members, as applicable.
5. You should never make a statement to the media, and all statements will go through the Office of Communications and Brand Marketing.

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<sup>6</sup> Broadway Campus includes UIW's main campus at 4301 Broadway St., San Antonio, Texas 78209, the Feik School of Pharmacy, and St. Anthony's Catholic High School, as UIWPD is the first responder for those entities.

## Resources and Support

The following provides information and support for the university community. Additional information is located on Behavioral Health Services' website at <https://my.uiw.edu/counseling/index.html>. Additionally, you can reach Behavioral Health Services at **(210) 832-5656**. **For emergencies, please call 911.**

### University Resources

<b>UIW Police Department</b>	(210) 829-6030
<b>UIW's Employee Assistance Program</b>	(800) 437-0911
<b>CARE Team</b>	<a href="#">CARE Team Directory</a>
<b>Behavioral Health Services</b>	(210) 832-5656
<b>Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability</b>	(210) 829-3817

### San Antonio Area Resources

<b>Bexar County Crisis Line</b>	(210) 223-7233
<b>Center for Health Care Services</b> Crisis Care Center: 601 N Frio SATX Mobile Crisis Outreach	(210) 223-7233
<b>Laurel Ridge Treatment Center</b> 17720 Corporate Woods Drive, SATX 78259	(210) 491-9400
<b>Methodist Hospital Specialty and Transplant Behavioral Health</b> 8026 Floyd Curl Drive, SATX 78229 (inpatient) 8038 Wurzbach, SATX 78229 (outpatient)	(210) 575-0500
<b>San Antonio Behavioral Healthcare Hospitals</b> 8550 Huebner Rd, SATX 78240	(210) 541-5300
<b>Cedar Hills Behavioral</b> 1975 Babcock Road, SA TX 78229	(210) 876-5001
<b>United Way</b>	(210) 352-7000 or 211

## City of San Antonio 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

## University Health System Suicide Prevention

### Hotlines and Miscellaneous Resources

<b>CareConnect</b>	(888) 857-5462
<b>Teladoc</b>	<a href="https://www.teladochealth.com/">https://www.teladochealth.com/</a>
<b>National Suicide Prevention Hotline</b>	(800) 273-8255 or 988
<b>Crisis Text Line</b>	Text HOME to 741741
<b>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)</b>	(800) 662-4357
<b>Center for Health Care Services Helpline</b>	(800) 316-9241 or (210) 223-SAFE (7233)
<b>Battered Women &amp; Children's Shelter Crisis</b>	(210) 733-8810

### General Information on Suicide and Suicidal Ideation and Behaviors

#### Warning Signs of Suicide

These signs may mean someone is at risk of suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious, agitated, or behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings

#### Suicide Do's & Don'ts

- ✓ DO call 911

- ✓ DO call UIW Police
- ✓ DO remain calm
- ✓ DO send for help
- ✓ DO remain with the student until proper authorities arrive on the scene
- ✓ DO recognize the limitations of your authority
- ✓ DO encourage the student to go to UIW Behavioral Health Services or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline
- ✓ DO file a [CARE Team Report](#)
  
- ⊗ DO NOT leave student alone
- ⊗ DO NOT pass on personal judgment or personal opinions
- ⊗ DO NOT try and counsel the student
- ⊗ DO NOT transport student in personal vehicle for safety and legal liability
- ⊗ DO NOT delay reporting to appropriate authorities and/or UIW department

## Confidentiality Concerns

### HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”) Privacy Rule provides consumers with important privacy rights and protections as it relates to an individual’s health information. However, HIPAA recognizes that in times of crisis, certain health information may need to be shared to ensure an individual receives appropriate care. Still, information to friends or family of an individual in crisis should be managed by approved personnel or law enforcement agents, as it is iterated in this guide. Additional information is located here: [HIPAA Privacy Rule and Sharing Information Related to Mental Health](#).

If you are concerned about your obligations under HIPAA, or have questions or concerns related to a disclosure, please contact the Office of Quality Assurance and Compliance at (210) 802-3244 or [compliance@uiwtx.edu](mailto:compliance@uiwtx.edu).

### FERPA

University of the Incarnate Word employees who respond to crises must remain aware that students have a right to privacy and that, in some instances, they may not wish to have information shared with others. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) protects the privacy of Education Records, as defined by the statute, for Eligible Students. Note that some University records created during a crisis may become Education Records under FERPA. Accordingly, an employee should never share private information without the student’s consent, or without consulting the Office of the Registrar or Office of General Counsel.

Note, however, that FERPA provides an exception to disclosure in the event of a health or safety emergency. Accordingly, and as provided for in this resource, employees assisting with a crisis may provide student information to behavioral health or law enforcement

professionals in the assistance of a crisis. However, no other information should be shared with an outside party unless designated by university policy or procedure or in accordance with this guide.

If you are concerned about your obligations under FERPA, please contact the Office of the Registrar at **(210) 829-6006**, or the Office of General Counsel, at [uiwogc@uiwtx.edu](mailto:uiwogc@uiwtx.edu).

# Definitions

## **Suicide**

Suicide is death from injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is evidence that a self-inflicted act led to the person's death (SPRC, 2014).

Suicide is defined as the act of intentionally ending one's own life (Nock et al., 2008).

## **Suicide ideation**

Suicide ideation refers to thoughts of engaging in behavior intended to end one's life (Nock et al., 2008).

## **Suicide plan**

Suicide plan refers to the formulation of a specific method through which one intends to die (Nock et al., 2008).

## **Suicide attempt**

Suicide attempt is a potentially self-injurious behavior with a nonfatal outcome, for which there is evidence that the person intended to kill himself or herself; a suicide attempt may or may not result in injuries (SPRC, 2014).

A suicide attempt should possess the following characteristics: (a) self-initiated, potentially injurious behavior; (b) presence of intent to die; and (c) nonfatal outcome (Apter, 2010).

## **Suicide survivor(s)**

Suicide survivors are defined as "the family members and friends who experience the suicide of a loved one" McIntosh (1993).

A suicide survivor is someone who experiences a high level of self-perceived psychological, physical, and/or social distress for a considerable length of time after exposure to the suicide of another person (Jordan and McIntosh, 2011).

## **Suicidal behavior**

Suicidal behavior refers to a spectrum of activities related to thoughts and behaviors that include suicidal thinking, suicide attempts, and completed suicide (SPRC, 2014).

## **Suicide Threat**

A suicide threat is any interpersonal action, verbal or nonverbal, without a direct self-injurious component that a reasonable person would interpret as communicating or suggesting that suicidal behavior might occur in the near future (Silverman & Berman, 2007)