Policy to Practice:
Suicide Intervention Toolkit

The aim of this toolkit is to share protocols, templates and resources that align with best practices in suicide intervention.

CREATED BY THE SDCOE STUDENT WELLNESS AND SCHOOL CULTURE DEPARTMENT

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Policy to Practice:
Suicide Intervention Toolkit

Some linked documents in this toolkit are templates that districts can adapt and modify to meet the unique needs of their school communities.

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale

The Columbia Protocol, also known as the **Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)**, supports suicide risk screenings through a series of simple, plain-language questions that anyone can ask. The answers help users identify whether someone is at risk for suicide, assess the severity and immediacy of that risk, and gauge the level of support that the person needs. It is evidence based, free, and universally used for all ages and settings.

- **C-SSRS Education Brochure** provides an overview of utilizing the screener in an educational setting.

- **C-SSRS Screener Free Online Training** can be used to train any adult in a school setting on using the tool through a prerecorded webinar in less than 30 minutes. (available in Spanish).

- **Suicide Risk Assessment and the C-SSRS** is a training for conducting the assessment and screener scales that can be completed in under an hour. This assessment can be used after the screener to help with treatment planning that includes risk and protective factors.

Adapted from Columbia Lighthouse Project

COLUMBIA-SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE
Screen with Triage Points for Schools

Ask questions that are in bold and underlined.	Past month	
	YES	NO
Ask Questions 1 and 2		
1) *Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?*		
2) *Have you actually had any thoughts of killing yourself?*		
If YES to 2, ask questions 3, 4, 5, and 6. If NO to 2, go directly to question 6.		
3) *Have you been thinking about how you might do this?* e.g. "*I thought about taking an overdose but I never made a specific plan as to when where or how I would actually do it….and I would never go through with it.*"		
4) *Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?* as opposed to "*I have the thoughts but I definitely will not do anything about them.*"		
5) *Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?*		
6) *Have you ever done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life?* Examples: Collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, took out pills but didn't swallow any, held a gun but changed your mind or it was grabbed from your hand, went to the roof but didn't jump; or actually took pills, tried to shoot yourself, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, etc. **If YES, ask:** *Was this within the past 3 months?*	Lifetime / Past 3 Months	

C-SSRS
C-SSRS Spanish Version
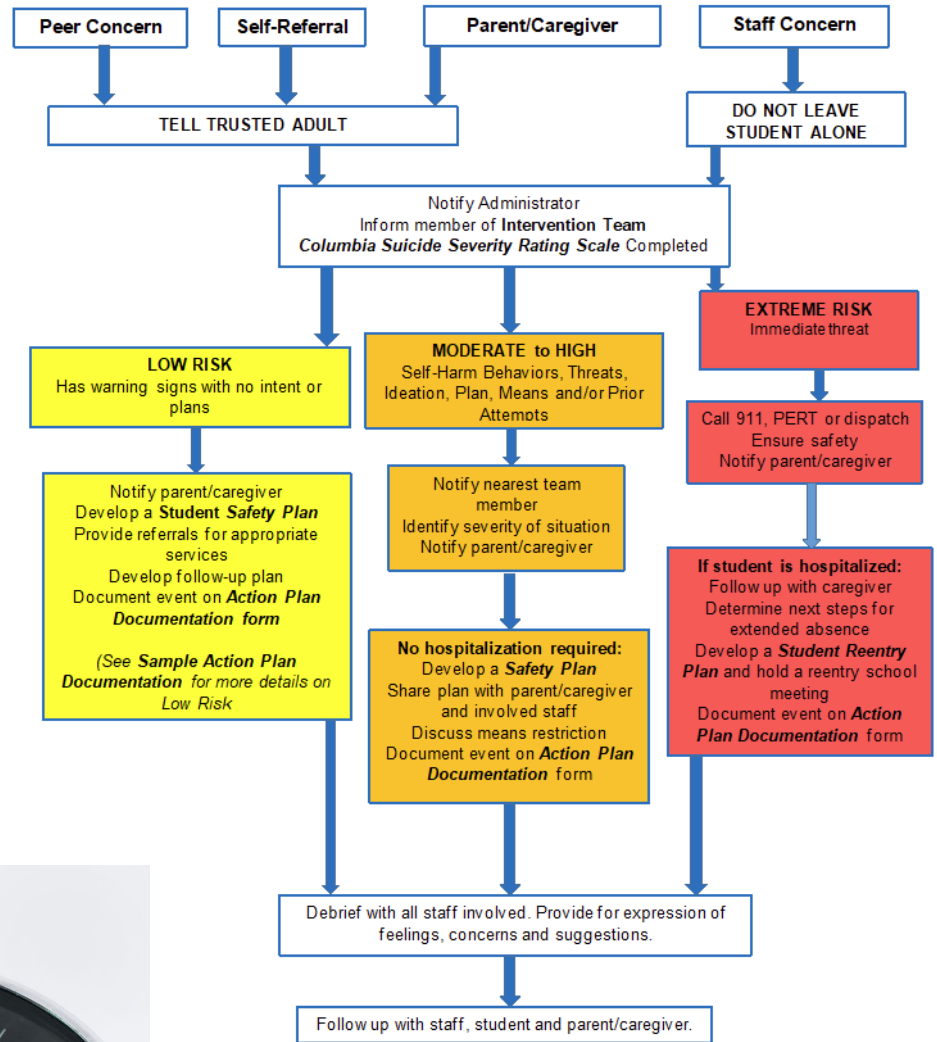**C-SSRS Elementary Version (ages 6-11)**

Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention

This flowchart is adapted from the Comprehensive Suicide Toolkit for Schools-HEARD Alliance 2018. The protocol is determined by the following:

- Role of person that initiates the concern

- Severity level of risk assessment, which is color coded to align with the C-SSRS color coding

- Staffing and resources available in the schools

Protocol Flow Chart for Suicide Intervention

| Peer Concern | Self-Referral | Parent/Caregiver | Staff Concern |

TELL TRUSTED ADULT

DO NOT LEAVE STUDENT ALONE

Notify Administrator
Inform member of **Intervention Team**
Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale Completed

LOW RISK
Has warning signs with no intent or plans

MODERATE to HIGH
Self-Harm Behaviors, Threats, Ideation, Plan, Means and/or Prior Attempts

EXTREME RISK
Immediate threat

Notify parent/caregiver
Develop a **Student** *Safety Plan*
Provide referrals for appropriate services
Develop follow-up plan
Document event on **Action Plan Documentation** form

(See Sample Action Plan Documentation for more details on Low Risk)

Notify nearest team member
Identify severity of situation
Notify parent/caregiver

Call 911, PERT or dispatch
Ensure safety
Notify parent/caregiver

No hospitalization required:
Develop a **Safety Plan**
Share plan with parent/caregiver and involved staff
Discuss means restriction
Document event on **Action Plan Documentation** form

If student is hospitalized:
Follow up with caregiver
Determine next steps for extended absence
Develop a **Student Reentry Plan** and hold a reentry school meeting
Document event on **Action Plan Documentation** form

Debrief with all staff involved. Provide for expression of feelings, concerns and suggestions.

Follow up with staff, student and parent/caregiver.

Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention

Action Plan Documentation

This **Action Plan Documentation** was adapted from Duarte & Kim. It provides a step-by-step checklist to document and guide the intervention process based on the severity level.

It is color coded to align with the **Protocol Flow Chart** and **C-SSRS** based on severity level of low (yellow), moderate (orange) and high risk (red), and identifies a staff person for each step along with responsible external contacts and phone numbers. On the bottom of the plan there is space for additional documentation.

Action Plan Documentation

Parent Information and Resources

The fillable **Parent Contact Acknowledgment Form** adapted from *2009 Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program* is used to notify the parent/guardian that a suicide risk assessment has been completed (if appropriate) and asks them to follow up with the student's continuing care.

[Parent Contact Acknowledgement Form](#)

[Spanish version](#)

Links to Parent Information and Resources

The following resources are to ensure parents/guardians are equipped with the information and resources needed to keep their child safe.

- **[Suicide Prevention Resource for Parents Brochure](#)**
- **[Suicide Prevention Resource for Parents Brochure (Spanish)](#)**

This brochure, created by Each Mind Matters, includes key questions parents/guardians can ask themselves to identify warning signs, know what to do, and learn about resources.

- **[Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators](#)**
- **[Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators (Spanish)](#)**

This infographic, created by NASP, is for parents and teachers who are in a key position to identify warning signs and get youth the help they need.

- **[Suicidal Thinking and Threats: Helping Handout for Home](#)**

This handout is to prepare parents/guardians to respond to youth who have thoughts of ending their life.

- **[Means Safety: Striving to Keep a Loved One Safe from Suicide](#)**

This website provides strategies and a checklist to keep youth safe during a crisis.

Student Safety Plans

The **Student Safety Plan** can be used in conjunction with the **Action Plan Documentation** forms. It should be done with the student and parent/guardian and written in the student's own words.

This safety plan was adapted from *Safety Plan Template ©2008, 2021 Barbara Stanley and Gregory K. Brown* and it has six steps that include a list of internal coping strategies, sources of supports and a list of resources that the student can use in a crisis.

Social Work Tech adapted the work of *Barbara Stanley and Gregory K. Brown's (2008)* **Student Safety Plan** and modified it to include contemporary language and future-oriented talk by listing the students' reasons for living. This plan provides an additional option to the one on the left.

Social Work Tech Safety Plan 2021 (English & Spanish)

Student Safety Plan (English & Spanish)

Student Re-Entry Plan

When a student re-enters the school after a suicide attempt or hospitalization, it is critical that the student is monitored by parents, mental health professionals, and designated school professionals.

The **Student Re-Entry Checklist** template outlines best-practice procedures to ensure staff provide a supportive and caring environment and monitor for continuing risk. The checklist includes:

- Re-entry school meeting
- Student accommodations
- Assignment accommodations
- Classroom accommodations
- Testing accommodations

Student Re-Entry Checklist

Treat With Care Memo

After a student has been assessed for risk of suicide, this confidential memo can be sent to the teacher (leaving out specific details) stating that the student may be experiencing challenges or has experienced a traumatic event and to treat with care (specific messaging should be determined by the team). The intent of the memo is for the teacher to:

- Serve as a silent observer
- Practice compassion and empathy
- Increase awareness of student's needs

TREAT WITH CARE MEMO

These supplemental infographic tips sheets created by Echo can be sent to teachers along with the Treat with Care Memo. They include **"What do I do?"** a step-by-step guide to a trauma-informed response, and **"Dos and Don'ts of a Trauma-Informed Classroom."**

What do I do? Trauma-Informed Support for Children

Trauma-Informed Compassionate Classroom

Student Self-Care Plan

This tool, adapted from Social Work Tech, was designed for students to develop a balanced self-care plan to promote wellness and reduce vulnerability to exhaustion and hopelessness. Here is the Student Self-Care Plan with an example plan and a blank plan that include:

1. **Mind:** Pleasurable activities that promote a sense of accomplishment

2. **Body:** Basic physical needs such as sleep, exercise, healthy eating, and hydration

3. **Spirit:** Social connection, meditation, prayer or gratitude practice

Student Self-Care Plan
Spanish version

Web of Support

Protective factors such as positive relationships at home, school, and in the community are essential to creating webs of support.

Below is a relationship mapping tool adapted from *Fallin 2001* and is intended to be completed with the student to identify caring adults or peers that can be a part of their **Web of Support** and included in their safety and self-care plans.

Important People in Your Life:

At Home

In Your Neighborhood

At School

Other Relatives

Other Friends or Adults
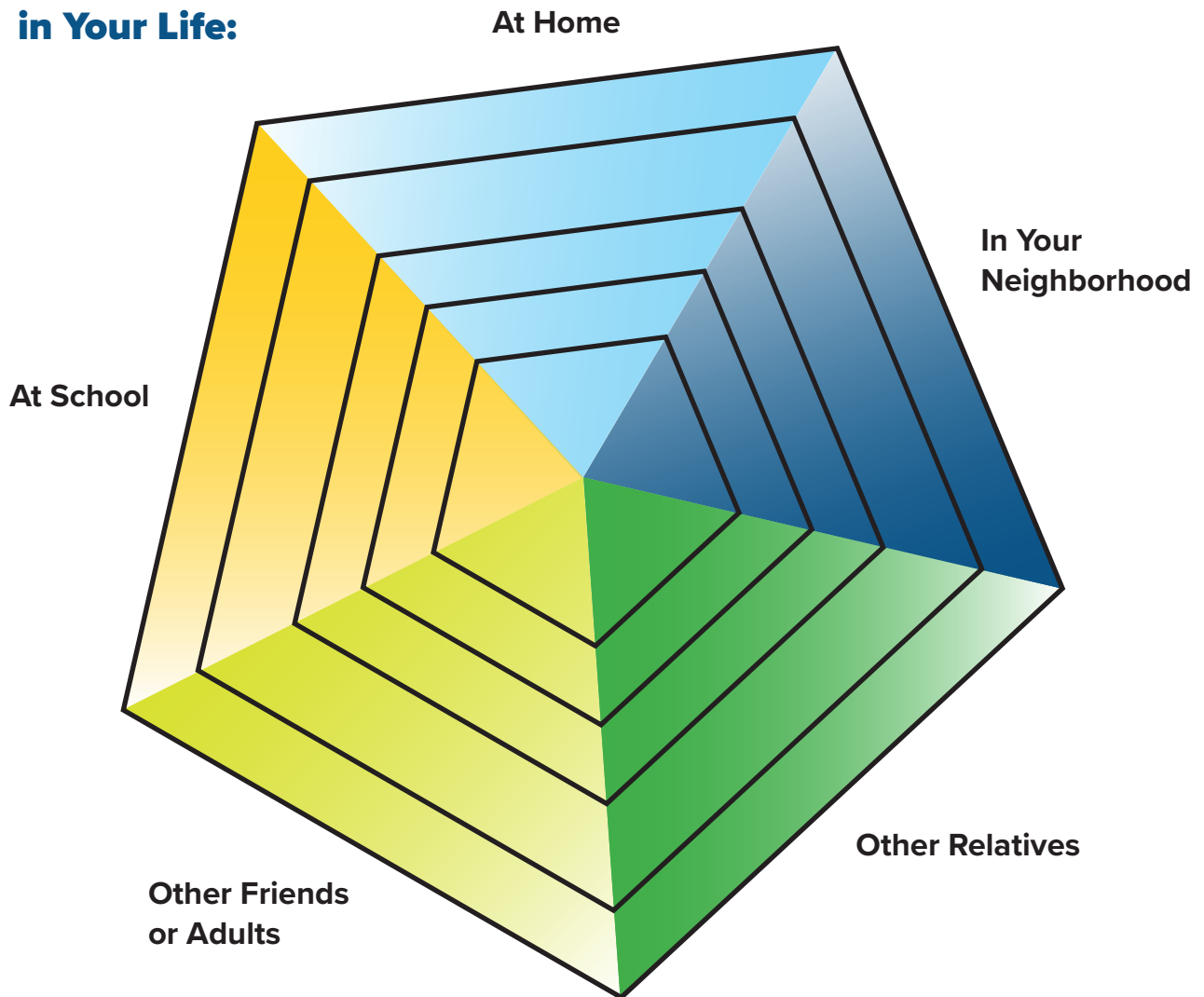
[Web of Support (English & Spanish)](#)

Student Information and Resources

The **Young Person's Guide** and the **Teen Guide to Mental Health and Wellness** were created by SDCOE's Student Wellness and School Culture department. They provide information, tools, and resources to support students and their friends and peers. The Young Person's guide includes videos, apps, and strategies for wellness. The Teen Guide is offered in English and Spanish and includes:

- Hotlines and warm lines
- Free apps for teens on wellness and self-care
- Resources to increase mental health literacy
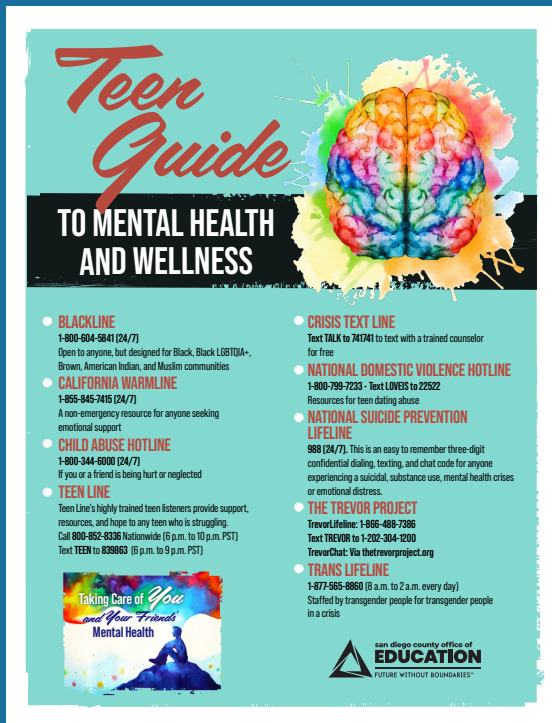
[Young Person's Guide To Wellness](#)

[Teen Guide to Mental Health and Wellness](#) (Spanish version)

Student Information and Resources

The SDCOE **Virtual Wellness Center** was created to support the well-being of staff, students, and parents as well as connect them to calming activities and tools to promote health and wellness. This is a safe space to take a break, rest, and refocus.

SDCOE Virtual Wellness Center

For more information and resources on suicide prevention, visit the San Diego County Office of Education's Suicide Prevention website.

SDCOE Suicide Prevention Links

Note: *This material is not intended to provide medical advice and is not a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis or treatment.*