

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





Policy to Practice: Suicide Intervention Toolkit

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)	3
Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention	4
Action Plan Documentation	5
Parent Information and Resources	6
Student Safety Plans	7
Student Re-Entry Plan	8
Treat With Care Memo	9
Student Self-Care Plan	10
Web of Support	11
Student Information and Resources	2-13

1

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.
- 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.



COLUMBIA-SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE

Screen with Triage Points for Schools

	Pa moi	
Ask questions that are in bold and underlined.	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 itand 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."		
 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	Lifet	ime
life2 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.	Past 3 Months	
If YES, ask: Was this within the past 3 months?		

Possible Response Protocol to C-SSRS Screening

*If all answers are no, there is no current risk identified.

Item 3 Behavioral Health Referral
Item 4 Student Safety Precautions and psychiatric evaluation by crisis team/EMT/Emergency room
Item 5 Student Safety Precautions and psychiatric evaluation by crisis team/EMT/Emergency room
Item 6 Behavioral Health Referral

C-SSRS

C-SSRS Spanish Version

C-SSRS Elementary Version (ages 6-11)

Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool

Adapted from Columbia Lighthouse Project

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 Flowchart for Suicide Intervention

REFERRAL FOR SUICIDE RISK

DO NOT LEAVE STUDENT ALONE

- Notify administrator
- Inform member of Intervention Team
- Screen for suicide risk

NO CURRENT RISK

Has no warning signs, intent or plans

- Notify parent/ caregiver
- Provide referrals for appropriate services if necessary
- Share mental health and suicide prevention information and resources with caregiver
- Document event on Action Plan Documentation form

LOW RISK

Has warning signs with no intent or plans

- Conduct a suicide risk assessment or refer out
- Notify parent/caregiver & have them sign ROI
 Develop Safety Plan with student and share with caregiver and involved staff
- Provide referrals for appropriate services
- Share mental health and suicide prevention information and resources with caregiver
- Develop follow-up plan to use the Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool, if needed
- Document event on
 Action Plan
 Documentation form

MODERATE to HIGH

Self-harm behaviors, threats, ideation, plan, means and/or prior attempts

- Do not leave student alone
- Notify nearest team member
- Identify severity of situation
 Conduct a suicide risk
- assessment or refer out
 Notify parent/ caregiver & have them sign ROI
- Call mobile crisis response team, PERT or 911 if applicable

No hospitalization:

- Develop Safety Plan with student and share with parent/ caregiver and involved staff
- Provide referrals for appropriate services
 Share suicide prevention
- Share suicide prevention information, resources and means restriction with caregiver
- Develop follow-up plan to use the Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool, if needed
- Document event on
 Action Plan
 Documentation form

EXTREME RISK

Immediate threat

- Do not leave student alone
- Call mobile crisis response team, PERT or 911
- Ensure safety
- Notify nearest team member
- Notify parent/caregiver & have them sign ROI

Hospitalization:

- Contact hospital directly and alert to an incoming assessment
- Arrange for student transport to hospital (release student only to parent/caregiver who agrees to transport – if refuse to transport, contact mobile crisis response team, PERT or 911)
- Follow up with caregiver & determine next steps for extended absence
- Document event on
 Action Plan
 Documentation form



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

Adapted from Comprehensive Suicide Toolkit for Schools, revised March 2025

After a hospitalization:

- Hold a re-entry meeting & develop Student Re-entry Plan
- Develop follow-up plan to use the Suicide Risk
 Monitoring Tool & determine follow-up/service referral
 - Document all steps



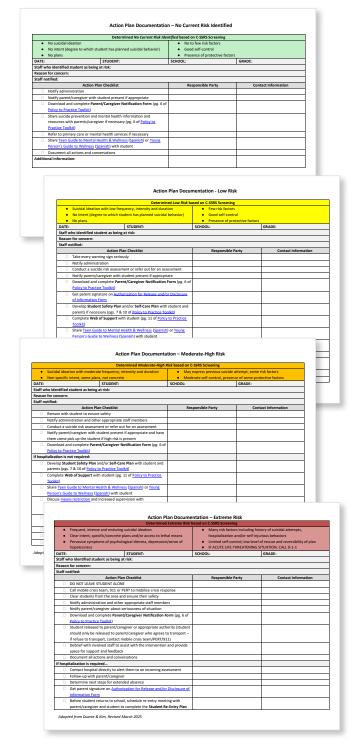
Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention

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 Acknowledg- ment 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



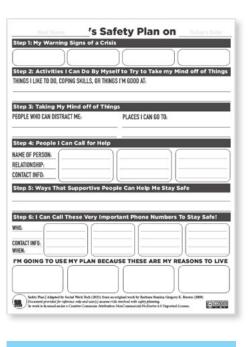
This website provides strategies and a checklist to keep youth safe during a crisis.

Student Safety Plans

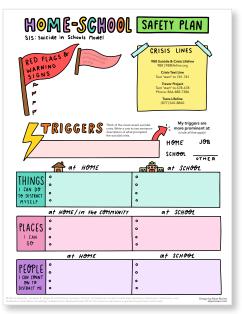
The Student Safety Plan can be used in conjunction with the Action Plan Documentation forms. It should be done with the student and parent/guardian and written in the student's own words.

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) This colorfully illustrated
Home-School Safety
Plan from Suicide in
Schools includes space for
identifying distractors and
support in school and at
home. It is recommended
to use the student's words
when developing the safety
plan. This version may be
visually appealing for younger
students.



Home-School Safety Plan

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 District	ict Info/Logo Student Re-Entry Checklist	
Mee	eeting Date: Follow-up Date: School Liaison:	
Completed	Action Items	
	Obtain Parent/Guardian Authorization for Release/Exchange of Information	
	Obtain releases of information from the parent so the mental health provider	can talk to school
	counselor or designated staff.	
	Physician/Mental Health Professional:	
	Name:	
	Contact Number:	
	 Parent/Guardian re-entry meeting with administrator, counselor, student (if a 	ppropriate), and
	additional staff as needed.	
	 Plan together what information the student wants shared and with whom. 	
	 Reassure the student and family that sharing information with school personn 	el will be done
	on a need-to-know basis.	
	Treat the student's return to school as you would have had the student been of	out sick for a few
	days. Let the student know you are glad they are back.	
	,,	n medical staff
	(e.g. <u>Stanley-Brown Safety Plan</u> or <u>Social Work Tech Safety Plan</u>):	
	It is important that staff and teachers who have direct contact with the students.	nt be a part of
	their safety plan.	
	 Ask student how school staff can best support them. 	
	Refer to and update the student's safety plan as needed.	
	Complete the Web of Support or other relationship map with the student to e	nsure they have
	a safety net of three caring relationships.	
	Provide relevant skill-building and coping strategy resources (e.g. <u>Teen Guide to</u>	to Mental Health
	Wellness, Spanish Teen Guide, Young Person's Guide to Wellness).	
	Notify student's teachers as appropriate using the <u>Treat with Care Memo</u> .	
		ded:
	HT Initials:	
		s (frequency to
	be determined by team and updated as needed):	
	Staff Name/s:	
	Start date:	
	End date:	
	Staff Name:	
	Date:	
	Ongoing Frequency:	
Comments:		

	Testing Accommodations
	Medical Staff: mark all suggested accommodations
	School Staff: mark final accommodations determined during re-entry meeting
Completed	Action Items
	Exams in alternate format (e.g. multiple-choice, essay, presentation, portfolio)
	Use of assistive computer software (e.g. optical character recognition)
	Extended time for test-taking
	Exam in a separate, quiet, and distraction-free place
Comments:	
Parent/Guard	lian Signature:
School Staff S	ignature:



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





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."









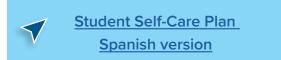
Student Self-Care Plan

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



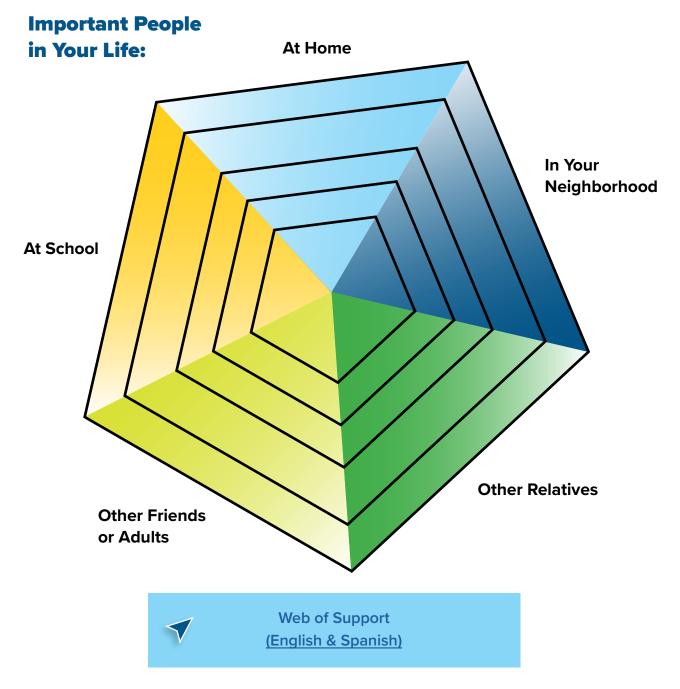




Web of Support

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.



Student Information and Resources

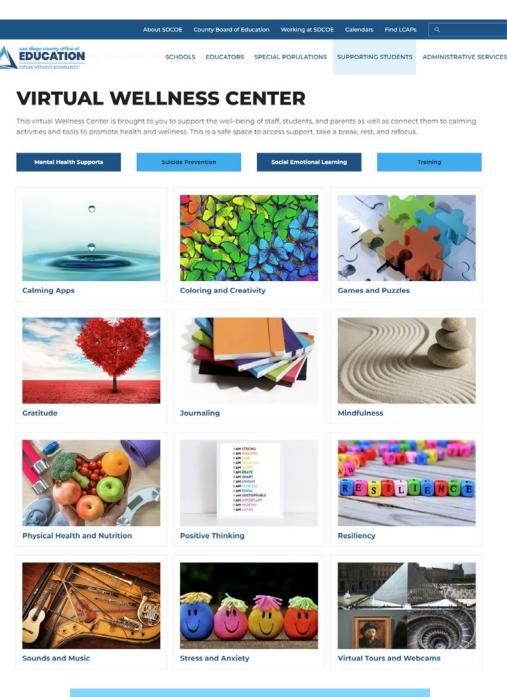
The **Young Person's Guide** and the **Teen Guide to Mental Health and Wellness** were created by SDCOE's Student Wellness and School Culture department. They provide information, tools, and resources to support students and their friends and peers. The Young Person's guide includes videos, apps, and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



Student Information and Resources

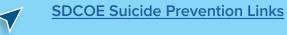
The SDCOE **Virtual Wellness Center** was created to support the well-being of staff, students, and parents as well as connect them to calming activities and tools to promote health and wellness. This is a safe space to take a break, rest, and refocus.







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



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