



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Annual Model Notice For Youth Suicide Prevention

2026 - 2027

Youth Suicide Prevention Resources

Visit [DPI's website](#) to access online training modules, suicide prevention requirements in state law, curriculum and teaching materials, and peer-to-peer grant opportunities. Additional resources include suggestions for school board policy and memorials, screening resources, and information and toolkits on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

Resources for emergency situations

[988](#) – National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Talk, text, or chat for immediate assistance in a suicide or mental health crisis.

[HOPELINE](#)

Text "HOPELINE" to 741741

[TREVOR PROJECT](#)

Text 678-678 or Call 1-866-488-7396

Resources for non-emergency situations

[Prevent Suicide Wisconsin](#)

[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

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All Staff Play a Role

[Gatekeeper training](#)

helps all staff with recognizing the signs and symptoms of suicidal thoughts and behavior and taking appropriate steps to keep a student safe.

Know the Signs

There are signs or symptoms often shown that can indicate potential need for concern. Get the **FACTs** and know the signs of suicidal thoughts and behavior in students, friends, and family members (see *FACTs chart on right*).

Suicide is a Complex Problem

Suicide is a complex problem that is often misunderstood when oversimplified ([American Foundation for Suicide](#)). Oversimplifying the reasons someone dies by suicide is not helpful. For instance, saying bullying “caused” someone to end their life is not accurate. Not all students who experience bullying will attempt or die by suicide. Research suggests many factors contribute to suicide. These include biological factors, social determinants of health, precipitating factors, and activating events. Examples of biological factors and social determinants of health include mental illness, losing a family member to suicide, neighborhood violence, or food security. Precipitating factors include poor grades, attending an unsafe school, victimization, or family rejection. Crisis or activating events include experiencing a major loss, humiliation or bullying, and having access to lethal means.

Identifying the factors of disproportionate risk for youth suicide is vital to prevention.

Youth identifying as LGB have consistently reported more suicide ideation and attempts than their heterosexual peers based on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Also at higher risk are female students who have self-reported rates of suicide attempts that are twice as high as their male counterparts.

**Sexuality, sex, and gender data are collected separately on the YRBS. As a result, LGB is used instead of LGBT or similar acronyms to most accurately reflect how student data was collected.*

Lethal means safety can save lives.

(see [Lethal Means Safety](#) and [Be Smart for Kids](#))

The most lethal means of suicide are firearms, hanging, and poisoning. Encouraging secure storage of all lethal means is a critical prevention strategy. A suicide attempt is often an impulsive act. Reducing access to lethal means of suicide provides a significant reduction in youth suicide rates. Most often, youth who attempt suicide use a gun or drugs kept in the home. Securing lethal means and making the environment safer saves lives.

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SUICIDE PREVENTION SIGNS or SYMPTOMS (FACTs)

FEELINGS

- Hopelessness
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Feeling trapped – like there’s no way out
- Having no sense of purpose in life

ACTIONS

- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Withdrawing from friends, family, society, and typical activities
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Giving away prized possessions

CHANGES

- Decline in quality of schoolwork
- Dramatic mood changes
- Anxiety, agitation, change of eating/sleeping habits

THREATS

- Threatening/talking about hurting self

From American Association of Suicidology



Suicide is a Complex Problem (cont'd)

What can you do if you are concerned about a student?

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem; but for kids, their problems can sometimes seem endless and overwhelming. All staff, peers, and family members play a key role by noticing concerns, showing care, and helping connect youth to appropriate supports. IACTT is one model that can be utilized when a concern is noticed, or a report or disclosure of self-harm occurs. IACTT stands for **Identify, Ask, Communicate, Take action, and Take care.**

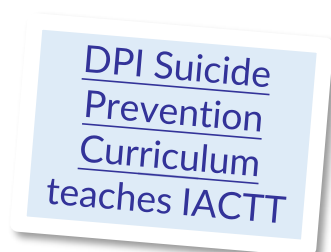
Identify the signs and symptoms of someone who is struggling with their mental health. Reaching out to others with an empathetic *"Thank you for sharing with me. It sounds really hard"* can be the first step in helping them through their crisis.

Ask questions to learn more about what is going on and ask the person directly if they are thinking about suicide. Use open questions (e.g., "Tell me what's going on.") to gather information and context. Don't be afraid to ask the hard question (e.g., "Have you had thoughts about suicide?")

Communicate care and compassion for the student by taking the next step. (e.g., *"I am worried about you. I don't want anything bad to happen to you or for you to be hurt."*)

Take action and tell a member of your crisis team.
(e.g., *"Let's go talk with someone in the counseling office."*)

Take care of yourself. You have helped and supported someone, now give yourself that same care. Seek support from your network.



Common Concerns

Can I be sued for intervening when a student shows suicidal thoughts or behaviors?

State Law, [Wis. Stat. Sec. 118.295 Suicide intervention; civil liability exemption](#) insulates all public and private school district employees and volunteers from civil liability for their acts and omissions when trying to intervene in a student's possible suicide.

If a student tells me they are thinking about suicide or harming themselves, can I keep it confidential?

No. Disclosures of self-harm or suicidal thoughts must be shared promptly with the appropriate school mental health professional or administrator according to school policy. Parents need to be involved. Do not discuss these sensitive disclosures with other students or adults who do not have a need to know.

Seeing Urgent Signs or Symptoms? Here's What to Know and Do

All children and adolescents can experience moodiness and will take time to ask life's big questions. As they grow, question, and struggle, it can be overwhelming. The best role for staff is to support students and use IACTT if signs or symptoms of suicide are observed, shared, or relayed.

Below are some ideas and reminders on how to respond.

Validate Feelings

"You seem to be struggling with something. I'm wondering what I can do to support you."

"It sounds like you've been carrying a lot."

"That sounds really difficult, and I appreciate your trust in telling me."

"I can hear that things have felt overwhelming for you."

Provide Support

"I care and want to be here to help."

"I'm glad you told me."

"I'm listening."

**These statements are most effective when delivered calmly and without judgment.*

Act Now

When you have worries or concerns, talk with your pupil services staff or administrator.

When you see urgent signs or symptoms, *get help immediately*. Don't wait.

Let students know you will be connecting them with someone who can help. "Let's get some additional support for you right now."

Every role matters in suicide prevention. Every connection matters.



Anything
that's human
is mentionable,
and anything
that is mentionable
can be
more manageable."
— Fred Rogers

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Division of Academics

Student Services Section

608-266-8960

[DPI Suicide Prevention Webpage](#)

2026 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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