



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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Some linked documents in this toolkit are templates that LEAs 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.
- [Suicide Risk Screening in Schools and the Continuum of Care](#) is a 70-minute recorded webinar that aligns with the intervention practices and resources in this toolkit, allowing any adult in a school setting to be trained in the C-SSRS.
- [The SAFE-T Protocol with C-SSRS suicide risk assessment](#) is a clinical framework used by mental health professionals to assess suicide risk and determine immediate interventions. A [free training](#) is available.



THE COLUMBIA
LIGHTHOUSE
PROJECT

IDENTIFY RISK. PREVENT SUICIDE.

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

	Past month	
	YES	NO
Ask questions that are in bold and underlined.		
Ask Questions 1 and 2		
1) <u>Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?</u>		
2) <u>Have you actually had any thoughts of killing yourself?</u>		
If YES to 2, ask questions 3, 4, 5, and 6. If NO to 2, go directly to question 6.		
3) <u>Have you been thinking about how you might do this?</u> 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) <u>Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?</u> as opposed to "I have the thoughts but I definitely will not do anything about them."		
5) <u>Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?</u>		
6) <u>Have you ever done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life?</u>		Lifetime
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: <u>Was this within the past 3 months?</u>		Past 3 Months

Possible Response Protocol to C-SSRS Screening

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

- Item 1 Behavioral Health Referral
- Item 2 Behavioral Health Referral
- 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
- Item 6 3 months ago or less: Student Safety Precautions and psychiatric evaluation by crisis team/EMT/Emergency room



C-SSRS

[C-SSRS Spanish Version](#)

[C-SSRS Elementary Version \(ages 6-11\)](#)

[Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool](#)

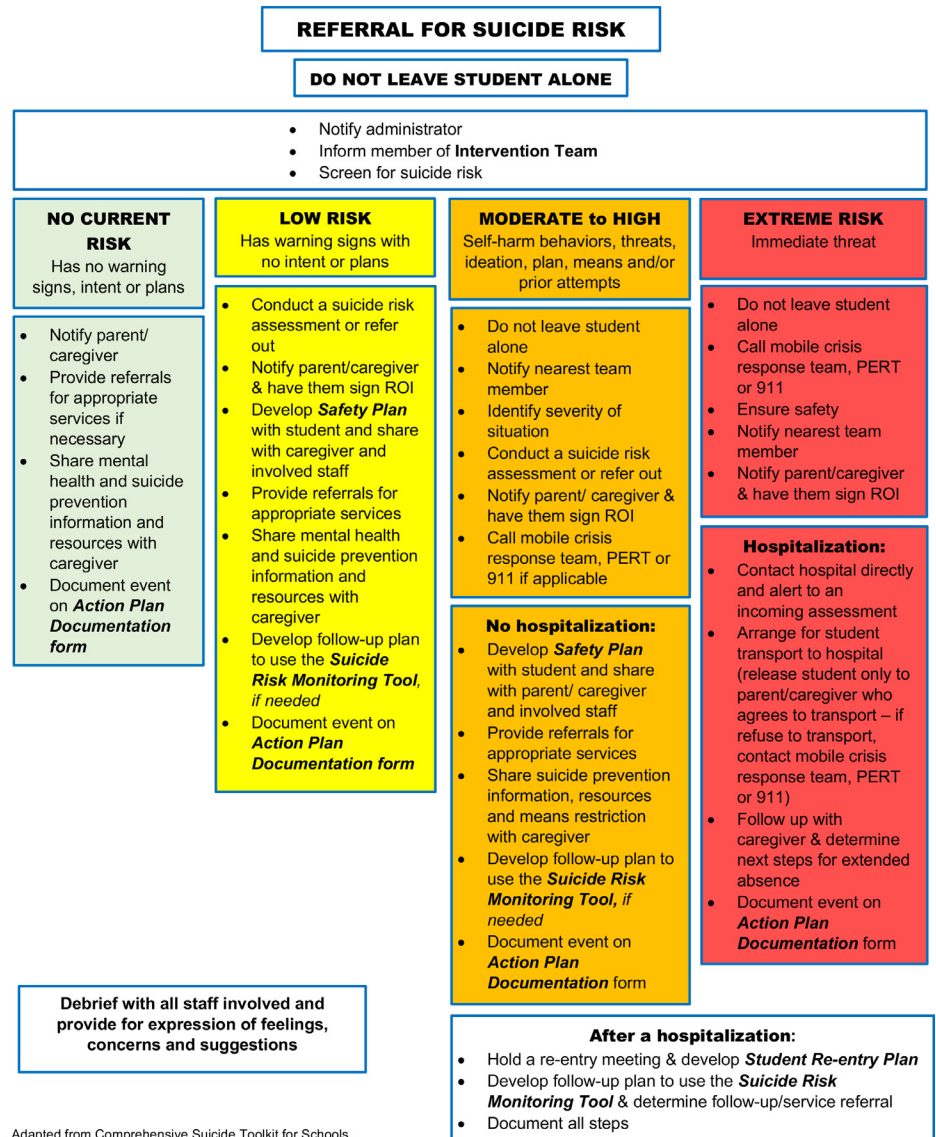
Adapted from Columbia Lighthouse Project

Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention

This customizable 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 screening, which is color coded to align with the C-SSRS color coding**
- **Staffing and resources available in the schools**

Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention



Adapted from Comprehensive Suicide Toolkit for Schools, revised March 2025



Protocol Flowchart for Suicide Intervention



Action Plan Documentation

These customizable **action plan templates** were adapted from *Duarte & Kim*. They provide a step-by-step checklist to document and guide the intervention process based on the severity level of a screening.

They are color-coded to align with the **C-SSRS** and the **Protocol Flowchart**. Space for additional documentation is included.



Action Plan Documentation – No Current Risk Identified

Determined No Current Risk Identified based on C-SSRS Screening			
- No suicidal ideation - No intent (degree to which student has planned suicidal behavior) - No plans		- No to few risk factors - Good self-control - Presence of protective factors	
DATE:	STUDENT:	SCHOOL:	GRADE:
Staff who identified student as being at risk:			
Reason for concern:			
Staff notified:			
Action Plan Checklist	Responsible Party	Contact Information	
☐ Notify administration			
☐ Notify parent/caregiver with student present if appropriate			
☐ Download and complete Parent/Caregiver Notification Form (pg. 6 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Share suicide prevention and mental health information and resources with parents/caregiver if necessary (pg. 6 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Refer to primary care or mental health services if necessary			
☐ Share Teen Guide to Mental Health & Wellness (Spanish) or Young Person's Guide to Wellness (Spanish) with student			
☐ Document all actions and conversations			
Additional Information:			

Action Plan Documentation – Low Risk

Determined Low Risk based on C-SSRS Screening			
- Suicidal ideation with low frequency, intensity and duration - No intent (degree to which student has planned suicidal behavior) - No plans		- Few risk factors - Good self-control - Presence of protective factors	
DATE:	STUDENT:	SCHOOL:	GRADE:
Staff who identified student as being at risk:			
Reason for concern:			
Staff notified:			
Action Plan Checklist	Responsible Party	Contact Information	
☐ Take every warning sign seriously			
☐ Notify administration			
☐ Conduct a suicide risk assessment or refer out for an assessment			
☐ Notify parent/caregiver with student present if appropriate			
☐ Download and complete Parent/Caregiver Notification Form (pg. 6 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Get parent signature on Authorization for Release and/or Disclosure of Information Form			
☐ Develop Student Safety Plan and/or Self-Care Plan with student and parents if necessary (pgs. 7 & 10 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Complete Web of Support with student (pg. 11 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Share Teen Guide to Mental Health & Wellness (Spanish) or Young Person's Guide to Wellness (Spanish) with student			

Action Plan Documentation – Moderate-High Risk

Determined Moderate-High Risk based on C-SSRS Screening			
- Suicidal ideation with moderate frequency, intensity and duration - Non-specific intent, some plans, not concrete		- Many previous suicide attempts, some risk factors - Moderate self-control, presence of some protective factors	
DATE:	STUDENT:	SCHOOL:	GRADE:
Staff who identified student as being at risk:			
Reason for concern:			
Staff notified:			
Action Plan Checklist	Responsible Party	Contact Information	
☐ Remain with student to ensure safety			
☐ Notify administration and other appropriate staff members			
☐ Conduct a suicide risk assessment or refer out for an assessment			
☐ Notify parent/caregiver with student present if appropriate and have them come pick up the student if high risk is present			
☐ Download and complete Parent/Caregiver Notification Form (pg. 6 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
If hospitalization is not required:			
☐ Develop Student Safety Plan and/or Self-Care Plan with student and parents (pgs. 7 & 10 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Complete Web of Support with student (pg. 11 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Share Teen Guide to Mental Health & Wellness (Spanish) or Young Person's Guide to Wellness (Spanish) with student			
☐ Discuss means restriction and increased supervision with			

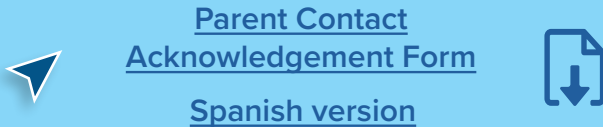
Action Plan Documentation – Extreme Risk

Determined Extreme Risk based on C-SSRS Screening			
- Frequent, intense and enduring suicidal ideation - Clear intent, specific/concrete plans and/or access to lethal means - Pervasive symptoms of psychological distress, depression/sense of hopelessness		- Many risk factors including history of suicidal attempts, hospitalization and/or self-injurious behaviors - Limited self-control, low level of rescue and reversibility of plan - IF ACUTE LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION, CALL 911	
DATE:	STUDENT:	SCHOOL:	GRADE:
Staff who identified student as being at risk:			
Reason for concern:			
Staff notified:			
Action Plan Checklist	Responsible Party	Contact Information	
☐ DO NOT LEAVE STUDENT ALONE			
☐ Call mobile crisis team, 911 or PERT to mobilize crisis response			
☐ Clear students from the area and ensure their safety			
☐ Notify administration and other appropriate staff members			
☐ Notify parent/caregiver about seriousness of situation			
☐ Download and complete Parent/Caregiver Notification Form (pg. 6 of Policy to Practice Toolkit)			
☐ Student released to parent/caregiver or appropriate authority (student should only be released to parent/caregiver who agrees to transport -- if refuse to transport, contact mobile crisis team/PERT/911)			
☐ Debrief with involved staff to assist with the intervention and provide space for support and feedback			
☐ Document all actions and conversations			
If hospitalization is required:			
☐ Contact hospital directly to alert them to an incoming assessment			
☐ Follow-up with parent/caregiver			
☐ Determine next steps for extended absence			
☐ Get parent signature on Authorization for Release and/or Disclosure of Information Form			
☐ Before student returns to school, schedule re-entry meeting with parent/caregiver and student to complete the Student Re-Entry Plan			

Adapted from Duarte & Kim, Revised March 2025

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 (if appropriate) that a suicide risk screening has been completed and asks them to follow up with the student's continuing care.



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 \(Spanish\)](#)

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

■ [Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators \(Spanish\)](#)

This infographic, created by NASP, is for parents/guardians 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.

STANLEY - BROWN SAFETY PLAN

STEP 1: WARNING SIGNS:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 2: INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES - THINGS I CAN DO TO TAKE MY MIND OFF MY PROBLEMS WITHOUT CONSULTING ANOTHER PERSON:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 3: PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DISTRACTION:

1. Name: _____ Contact: _____

2. Name: _____ Contact: _____

3. Place: _____ 4. Place: _____

STEP 4: PEOPLE WHOM I CAN ASK FOR HELP DURING A CRISIS:

1. Name: _____ Contact: _____

2. Name: _____ Contact: _____

3. Name: _____ Contact: _____

STEP 5: PROFESSIONALS OR AGENCIES I CAN CONTACT DURING A CRISIS:

1. Clinician/Agency Name: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

2. Clinician/Agency Name: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

3. Local Emergency Department: _____

Emergency Department Address: _____

Emergency Department Phone: _____

4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

STEP 6: MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER (PLAN FOR LETHAL MEANS SAFETY):

1. _____

2. _____

The Stanley-Brown Safety Plan is copyrighted to Barbara Stanley, PhD & Gregory K. Brown, PhD (2008, 2021). Individual use of the Stanley-Brown Safety Plan form is permitted. Written permission from the author is required for any change to this form or use of this form in the electronic medical record. Additional resources are available from www.suicidethoughts.com.

Stanley-Brown
Safety Planning Intervention

Student Safety Plan (English & Spanish)

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.

's Safety Plan on Today's Date

Step 1: My Warning Signs of a Crisis

Step 2: Activities I Can Do By Myself to Try to Take my Mind off of Things
THINGS I LIKE TO DO, COPING SKILLS, OR THINGS I'M GOOD AT:

Step 3: Taking My Mind off of Things
PEOPLE WHO CAN DISTRACT ME: _____ PLACES I CAN GO TO: _____

Step 4: People I Can Call for Help
NAME OF PERSON: _____
RELATIONSHIP: _____
CONTACT INFO: _____

Step 5: Ways That Supportive People Can Help Me Stay Safe

Step 6: I Can Call These Very Important Phone Numbers To Stay Safe!
WHO: _____
CONTACT INFO: _____
WHEN: _____

I'M GOING TO USE MY PLAN BECAUSE THESE ARE MY REASONS TO LIVE

Safety Plan | Adapted by Social Work Tech (2021) from an original work by Barbara Stanley Gregory K. Brown (2008).
Document provided for reference only and user(s) assume risk involved with safety planning.
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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
SIS: Suicide in Schools Model

RED FLAGS & WARNING SIGNS

CRISIS LINES
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
988 | 988lifeline.org
Crisis Text Line
Text "text" to 741-741
Trevor Project
Text "text" to 278-6786
Phone: 866-488-7386
Trans Lifeline
(877) 545-8860

TRIGGERS
Think of the most recent suicidal crisis. Write a note to two sentences describing what prompted the suicidal crisis.

My triggers are more prominent at:
HOME JOB SCHOOL OTHER

THINGS I CAN DO TO DISTRACT MYSELF

at HOME / in the COMMUNITY at SCHOOL

PLACES I CAN GO

at HOME at SCHOOL

PEOPLE I CAN COUNT ON TO DISTRACT ME

at HOME at SCHOOL

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Home-School Safety Plan

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/guardians, mental health professionals, and designated school professionals.

The customizable **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 guidelines
- Student accommodations
- Assignment accommodations
- Classroom accommodations
- Testing accommodations



Student District Info/Logo		Student Re-Entry Checklist	
Completed	Meeting Date:	Follow-up Date:	School Liaison:
☐	Obtain Parent/Guardian Authorization for Release/Exchange of Information		
☐	Physician/Mental Health Professional: - Name: - Contact Number:		
☐	Have a parent/guardian accompany the student for re-entry meeting: - Parent/Guardian re-entry meeting with administrator, counselor, student (if appropriate), 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 personnel will be done on a need-to-know basis. - Treat the student's return to school as you would have had the student been out sick for a few days. Let the student know you are glad they are back.		
☐	Develop a safety plan with student and parent/guardian if not already completed with medical staff (e.g. Stanley-Brown Safety Plan or Social Work Tech Safety Plan): - It is important that staff and teachers who have direct contact with the student 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 ensure they have a safety net of three caring relationships. - Provide relevant skill-building and coping strategy resources (e.g. Teen Guide to Mental Health & Wellness, Spanish Teen Guide, Young Person's Guide to Wellness).		
☐	Notify student's teachers as appropriate using the Treat with Care Memo .		
☐	Health Technician notified of return and transition instructions <u>if medications are needed</u> : HT Initials:		
☐	Identify school staff member/s to check in with student on a _____ basis (frequency to be determined by team and updated as needed): - Staff Name/s: - Start date: - End date:		
☐	Identified school staff will check in with parent/guardian on the following date: - Staff Name: - Date: - Ongoing Frequency:		
Comments:			

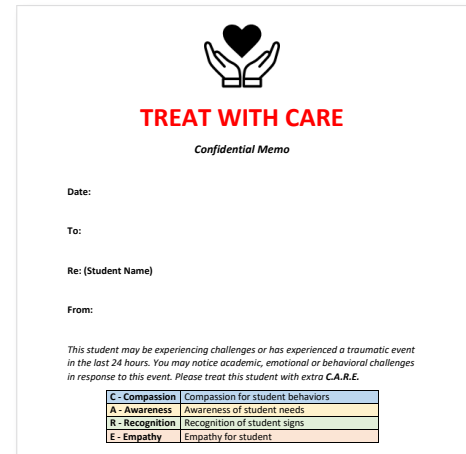
Testing Accommodations	
Medical Staff: mark all suggested accommodations	
School Staff: mark final accommodations determined during re-entry meeting	
Completed	Action Items
☐	Exams in alternate format (e.g. multiple-choice, essay, presentation, portfolio)
☐	Use of assistive computer software (e.g. optical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

Student Re-Entry Checklist

Treat With Care Memo

This confidential memo can be sent to notify appropriate school staff (eg. teachers, custodians) that a student may be experiencing challenges or has experienced a traumatic event and should be treated with extra care. The intent of the memo is for school staff to:

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




TREAT WITH CARE
Confidential Memo

Date: _____

To: _____

Re: (Student Name) _____

From: _____

This student may be experiencing challenges or has experienced a traumatic event in the last 24 hours. You may notice academic, emotional or behavioral challenges in response to this event. Please treat this student with extra CARE.

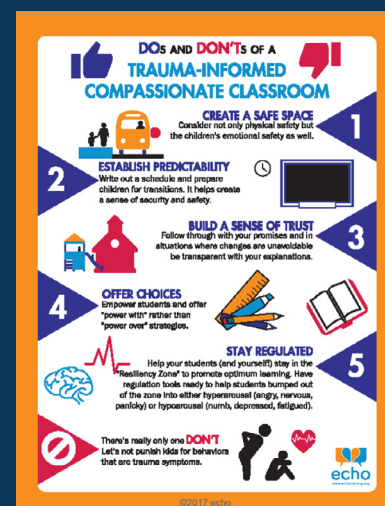
C - Compassion	Compassion for student behaviors
A - Awareness	Awareness of student needs
R - Recognition	Recognition of student signs
E - Empathy	Empathy for student

Treat With Care Memo

These supplemental infographic tips sheets 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

A blank template for a student self-care plan. It is titled "_____'s Self-Care Plan!". The template is divided into four main sections: MIND, BODY, SPIRIT, and SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE. There is also a section for "I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH". The template includes a small logo for Social Work Tech and a copyright notice.

An example of a completed student self-care plan for a student named Ignacio. The plan is titled "IGNACIO's Self Care Plan!". It is divided into four main sections: MIND, BODY, SPIRIT, and SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE. The MIND section includes "MEDITATE", "TAKE LOTS OF BREAKS", "MUSIC", "FUN!", and "LIFE LONG LEARNING". The BODY section includes "TEA", "NOURISHING FOOD", "EXERCISE", "SLEEP EIGHT HOURS", and "EVERYTHING IN MODERATION". The SPIRIT section includes "MEDITATE", "HUMAN CONNECTIONS", "SELF-REFLECTION", "FULFILLMENT THROUGH USING MY AWESOME SKILLS", and "PEACE SERENITY CONTROL HAPPINESS GOOD WORK BE A GOOD PERSON". The SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE section lists "GRETCHEN MOM", "MIE VIEJO ALBERTO", "LYNNE CAROLINE", "REED", and "DEBORAH".



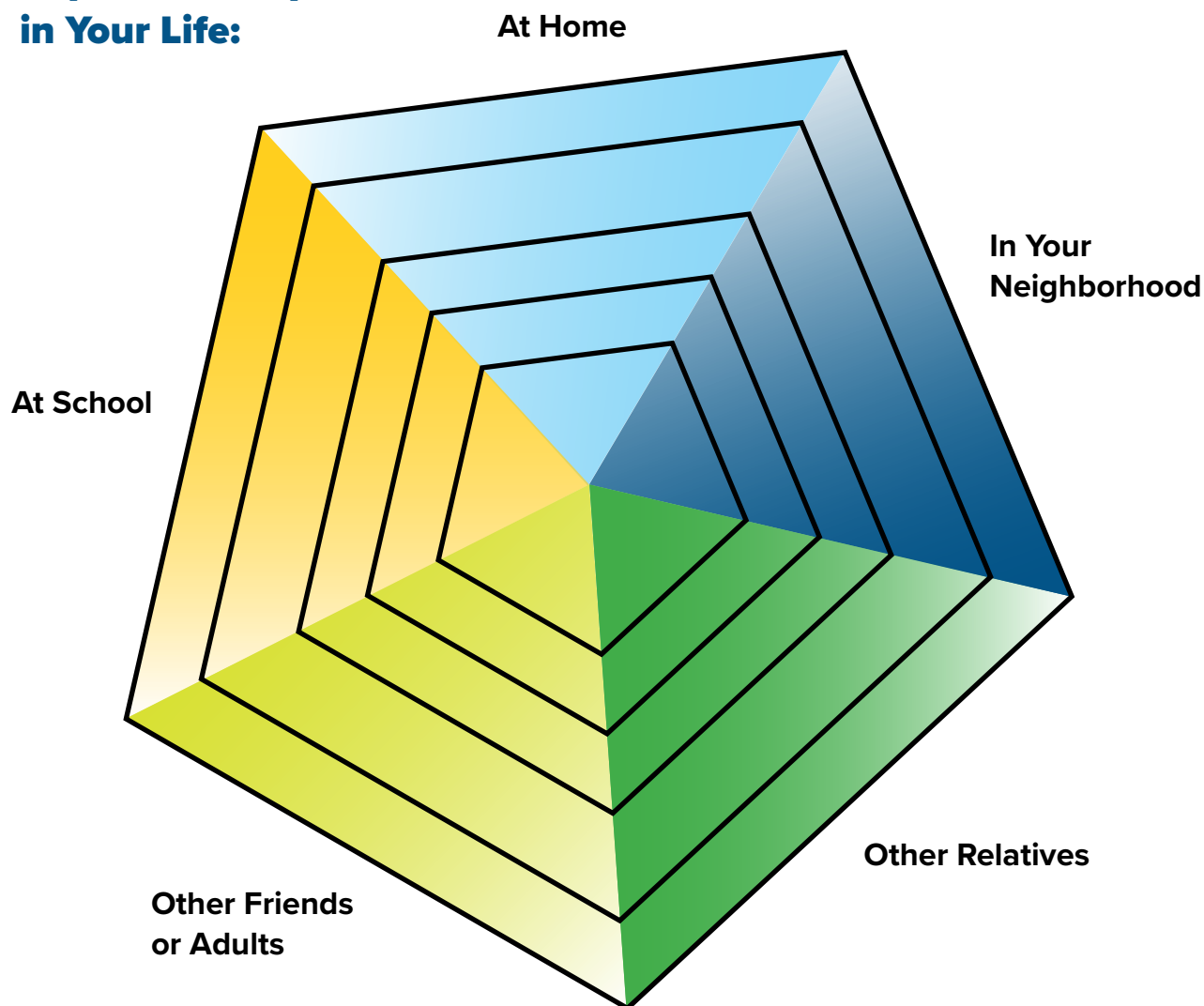
[Student Self-Care Plan](#)
[Spanish version](#)

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* that 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:

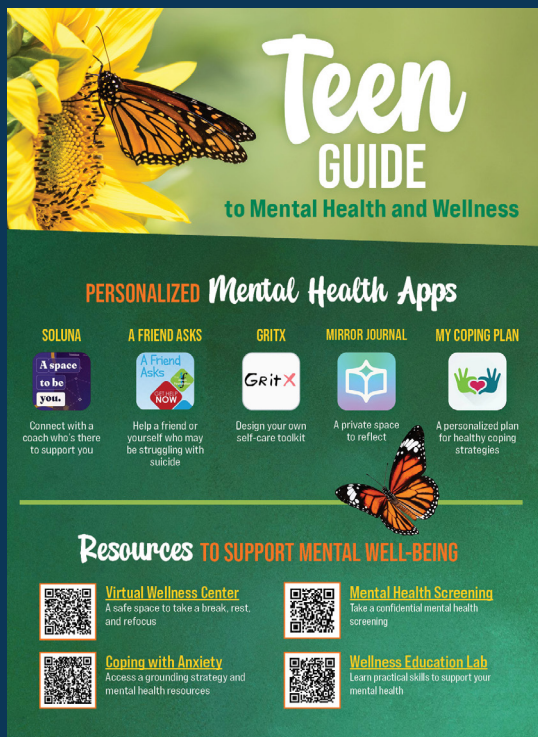


Web of Support
(English & Spanish)

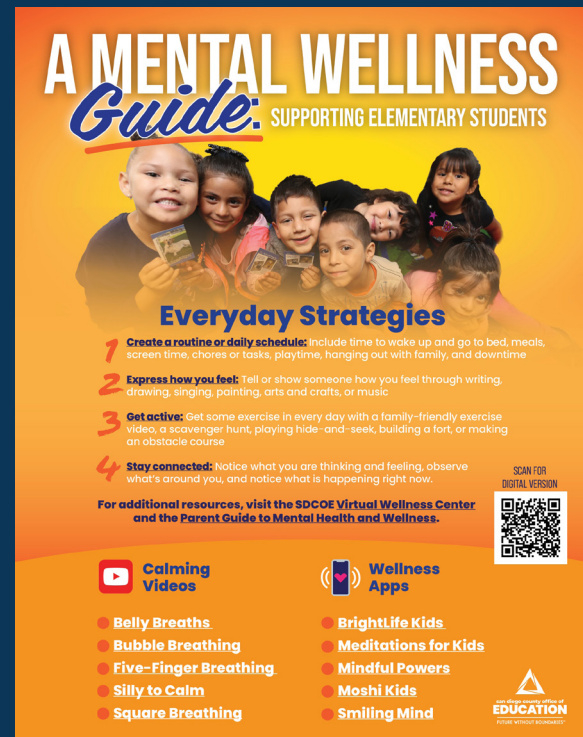
Student Information and Resources

A Mental Wellness Guide: Supporting Elementary Students 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 Elementary Guide includes videos, apps, and strategies for wellness. The Teen Guide is offered in English and Spanish and includes:

- Hotlines and warmlines
- Free apps for teens on wellness and self-care
- Resources to increase mental wellbeing

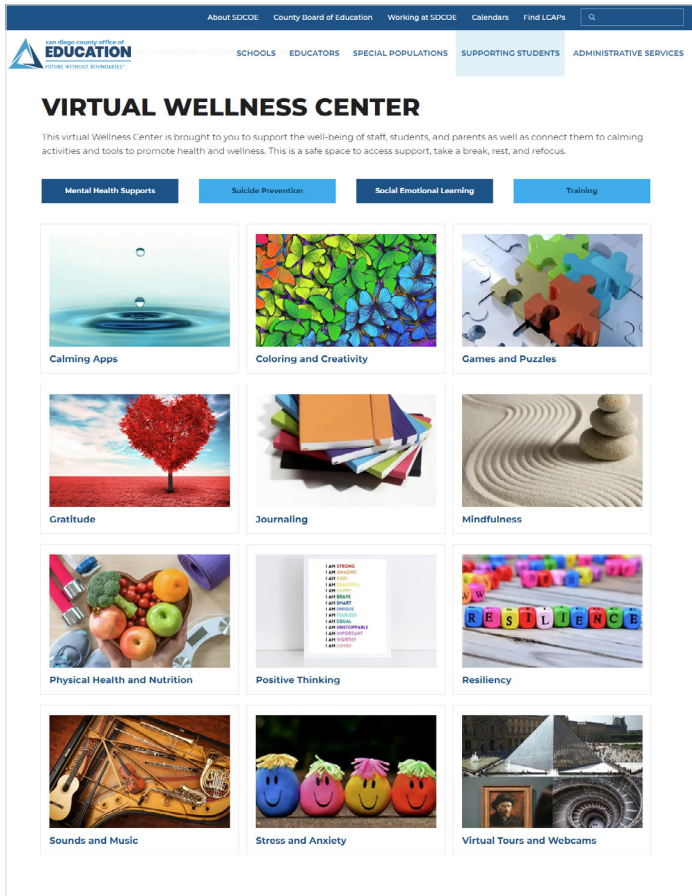


[Teen Guide to Mental Health and Wellness \(Spanish version\)](#)



[A Mental Wellness Guide: Supporting Elementary Students \(Spanish Version\)](#)

Student Information and Resources



The [SDCOE Virtual Wellness Center](#) was created to support the wellbeing of students and adults 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.

Suicide Prevention Apps



[A Friend Asks](#)

Includes warning signs and how to help yourself or a friend



[My Coping Plan](#)

Offers coping strategies and includes reminders to use the plan when feeling upset



[Safety Plan](#)

Offers a customizable safety plan that highlights reasons for living



[Suicide Safety Plan](#)

Build a customizable safety plan the includes warning signs, coping strategies, and people to reach out to



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



[SDCOE Suicide Prevention Resources](#)



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