Continued Monitoring of Suicide Risk

School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students is a project by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness an applied research center at The Pennsylvania State University and is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity Grant number HE1254-19-0009.

For more information click on the links below:

https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

https://www.psu.edu/

https://dodeagrants.org/

Our goal is to provide school personnel with free, evidence-based resources to support military-connected students. This training is part of our *Suicide Prevention* series.

Important Reminders

Before starting this training, please read the items below carefully and check the box in front of each item to indicate your understanding.

- The following content discusses suicide and may be upsetting to some individuals.
- Follow all district, local, state, and federal regulations. This training is **NOT** intended to replace or override existing procedures or laws.

Introduction

What is the purpose of this training?

Monitoring the student's suicide risk is an important element of care coordination. Suicide risk can fluctuate, and there are few tools well-suited for short yet effective monitoring of this risk. One exception is the Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool provided by Erbacher, Singer, and Poland (2015), which comes in an elementary/middle school version and a middle/high school version.

The elementary/middle and middle/high versions of the Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool can be downloaded on the "Resources" page later in this training.

Objective

The goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Monitor students following a suicide risk assessment.

How confident are you in your ability to do this now?

Please click on the link below to submit your response.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gp3iBHlvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide28

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below before proceeding with this training.

Answered the survey question in the link.

Clicked the arrow underneath the survey question to submit your response.

Recorded the ID number provided after you submitted your answer to the survey question. You will need it to complete the survey at the end of this training.

Research

What is most important for me to know?

The elementary/middle and middle/high versions of the Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool can be downloaded on the "Resources" page later in this training.

According to Erbacher, Singer, and Poland (2015), the Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool is designed to be used on a regular basis, whether daily, weekly, or monthly, to monitor ongoing suicidality of students that have already been assessed. By administering the monitoring tool regularly, student support personnel (i.e., school psychologists, school counselors, and school nurses) can use the information to track any spikes in risk as well as change over time. Be aware that this tool is not a comprehensive suicide risk assessment measure.

Note that there can be discrepancies between face-to-face and written responses, so redundancy can be helpful in some situations. It may also be useful to incorporate contacts such as follow-up letters, post cards, texts, or short reminder phone calls expressing concern to reduce the likelihood of a suicide attempt. Gathering information from other sources (with consent) may also serve to provide important monitoring information. In accordance with the Action Plan developed during the re-entry meeting, progress reports, changes to the safety plan, and any other appropriate information should be regularly shared with the parents while monitoring the student.

Teachers should be informed if they are responsible for monitoring suicide warning signs, while respecting the student's confidentiality.

Note from the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors:

A.2. Confidentiality

m. Advocate for appropriate safeguards and protocols so highly sensitive student information is not disclosed accidentally to individuals who do not have a need to know such information. Best practice suggests a very limited number of educators would have access to highly sensitive information on a need-to-know basis.

Sensitive information should be shared only on a need-to-know basis, including documentation in educational records that are accessible to other school personnel.
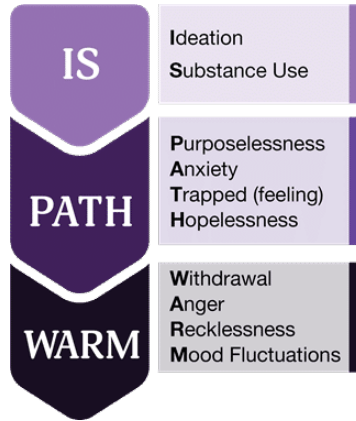

Note from the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors:

A.12. Student Records

f. Establish a reasonable timeline for purging sole-possession records or case notes. Suggested guidelines include shredding paper sole-possession records or deleting electronic sole-possession records when a student transitions to the next level, transfers to another school or graduates. School counselors do not destroy sole-possession records that may be needed by a court of law, such as notes on child abuse, suicide, sexual harassment or violence, without prior review and approval by school district legal counsel. School counselors follow district policies and procedures when contacting legal counsel.

Please note that administrators are often responsible for resources and safety, and therefore have a clear need-to-know. When sharing information on a need-to-know basis, it is recommended that they be given enough information to responsibly monitor the student without sharing extraneous details. For example, a school counselor might say to a teacher, "Cameron has been depressed and thought of suicide. Please keep this confidential but watch him closely in your

class. If you observe any major stressors or warning signs, escort him to my office." The counselor and teacher would then review relevant warning signs, such as those in the acronym, IS PATH WARM and precipitating stressors.

IS	**I**deation **S**ubstance Use
PATH	**P**urposelessness **A**nxiety **T**rapped (feeling) **H**opelessness
WARM	**W**ithdrawal **A**nger **R**ecklessness **M**ood Fluctuations

Precipitating Stressors

- Breakup from boyfriend or girlfriend
- Disappointment and rejection (college admission, romantic relationship or dispute)
- Getting in trouble with authorities (school or police)
- Death of a loved one/significant other
- Conflict with family, family dysfunction
- Disappointment with school results, school failure
- High demands at school during examination periods
- Bullying or victimization
- Unwanted pregnancy, abortion
- Sexually-transmitted infection, HIV
- Anniversary of the death of a friend or loved one
- Physical/emotional separation from friends, boyfriend/girlfriend
- Relational, social, work or financial lows
- Severe or terminal illness
- Serious injury that may change the individual's life course

Application
How might this look in my professional practice?

The objective of this training is to:

Monitor students following a suicide risk assessment.

Compare your school's suicide risk monitoring policy to the recommendations below that have been presented in this training. Check the box next to recommendations that you feel your school already does well. Any boxes left unchecked would be a logical place to begin implementing this content in your school.

- Students who have showed suicidal ideation should be monitored regularly, on a basis that should be decided based on severity (daily, weekly, monthly).

- Teachers and other personnel should be informed about student risk on a need- to-know basis- a statement such as "(student) is feeling very depressed. You should take extra care to monitor (them) for risk factors and warning signs of suicide" is generally enough information.

- Administrators, school therapists, school counselors, and homeroom teachers who do not know about a student's suicide should be made aware, at minimum.

- Sensitive information about a student's mental state should be documented and kept according to district policy.

- Schools should establish a reasonable timeline for purging case notes written by counselors and psychologists.
- Schools should establish procedures for transferring notes and information about a student's risk when a student moves to a new school or district.
- When in doubt about who needs to know about a student's suicidality, or when there are questions about keeping or transferring of records, the school's legal contact should be consulted.

Implementation

How can I effectively implement this content in my professional practice?

Please review the considerations below regarding potential implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, and collaboration strategies related to this content. This will help you coordinate the next steps as you begin to incorporate the information presented in this training into your professional practice.

This information can also be found on a handout that you will be able to download at the end of this training.

Implementation Strategies

- During regular suicide prevention training be sure to include information about ongoing monitoring so that school personnel will be prepared to participate in ongoing monitoring.

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

- Forms, procedures, and plans should be developed and designated in advance and tailored for each student's circumstances.
- Be sure to review with all involved personnel the need for privacy for the student and who to report to in the event that they are concerned about increased risk.

Collaboration Strategies

- Schedule regular meetings to discuss students who are being monitored (e.g., biweekly or monthly meetings).

Resources

Are there any resources available to help me implement this content?

Click on the link below to download a tool that you can use to implement this content in your professional practice.

https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:c419109b-42a5-444e-8848-fb58b616fc69

Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool – Elementary/Middle School Version
Click the links below to download a sample Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool developed by Dr. Terri Erbacher. This resource and many others can be downloaded from https://erbacherconsulting.com/.

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/6f351b1d-5ae1-4308-855c-eacec363cfc2/downloads/06%20Suicide%20Risk%20Monitoring%20Tool%20K-8.pdf?ver=1600961345810
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/6f351b1d-5ae1-4308-855c-eacec363cfc2/downloads/06%20Suicide%20Risk%20Monitoring%20Tool%20HS.pdf?ver=1600961345810

Feedback

How can I help improve this training?

The objective of this training was to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Monitor students following a suicide risk assessment.

Answer the questions in the link below to let us know how well this training increased your confidence in your ability to accomplish this objective. Once you have answered all of the questions, click the blue arrow button underneath to submit your responses.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide28

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below.

> Answered all of the survey questions above. You may have to scroll to see all of the questions.
> Clicked the arrow underneath the last survey question to submit your responses.

Additional Readings

Where can I learn more about this content?

The following resources were used to create this training. If you would like more information about the information presented in this training, we encourage you to start here.

> Erbacher, T. A., Singer, J. B., & Poland, S. (2015). School-based practice in action. Suicide in schools: A practitioner's guide to multi-level prevention, assessment, intervention, and postvention. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this training. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at schoolresources@psu.edu.

Proceed to the next training

Click on the link below to move on to the next training titled *Documentation of Suicide Prevention Efforts*. In this training, you will increase your confidence in your ability to identify and implement best practices for documenting the suicide prevention process.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_29-documentation-of-suicide-prevention-efforts_201022/

Return to the module directory

Click on this button to return to the module directory.

https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/modules/