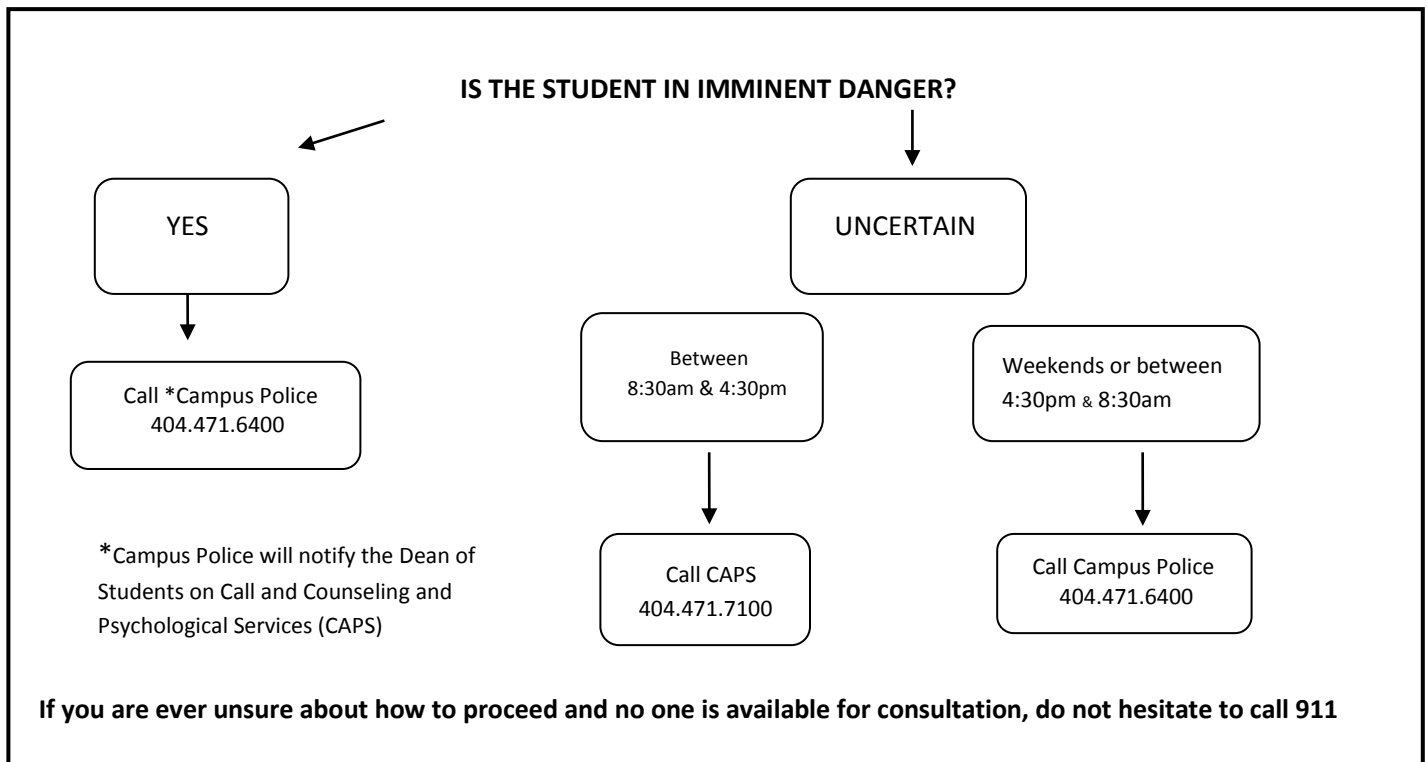


Suicide Prevention & Response Protocol

A Resource for Faculty and Staff at Agnes Scott College



INTRODUCTION

Suicides, and the threat of suicide, are issues that every college campus in America faces. According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, suicide is the third leading cause of death among Americans 15 – 24 years of age.

Your response is simple:

- Call for assistance by following the guidelines in the Suicide Prevention and response Protocol in the chart above and also described on the following pages.

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

Any member of the ASC community who is concerned about a student with suicidal ideation, suicidal behavior, or related issues can consult with the Intervention Team by initiating contact with a member of the team.

Intervention Team Members

Wellness Center – 404.471.7100
Executive Director
Director, Counseling and Psychological Services
Student Support Coordinator
Clinical Director, Student Health
Director, Residence Life - 404.471.6409
Athletic Director 404.471.6496

Coordinator, Disability Services - 404.471.6174
Associate Dean of Students - 404.471.6075

Any member of the ASC community (faculty, staff or student) who has concern about a particular student can consult with a team member. The team member will discuss the signs and symptoms noticed, give advice about how to talk to the student of concern and discuss how to refer the student for an assessment. The College considers this a best practice for referral of a student.

CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENT WELLNESS

- Take every complaint or reference to suicide very, very seriously.
- Be supportive.
- Avoid being judgmental or argumentative about moral issues regarding suicide.

**Recognize the limits of your expertise and responsibility.
Get help from the Suicide Prevention Treatment Team**

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Some common warning signs exist that can indicate that a student may be considering harming her/himself. These signs may be clear or subtle, and may or may not predict suicidal behavior.

Evaluate the immediate risk of suicide by engaging the student in a conversation. Use the following warning signs to guide your conversation (list is not all-inclusive):

Depression

- Feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness
- Social isolation
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Significant appetite loss or gain
- Decreased interest or pleasure in previously enjoyable activities
- Themes of death in artwork, poetry, or conversation

Previous attempts

- 4 out of 5 individuals who actually die by suicide have tried to do so at least once previously. Therefore, it is important that you inform a member of the Suicide Prevention Intervention Team of a student who is exhibiting behavior that may indicate suicidal ideation.

Significant loss

- Any real or perceived loss such as relationship breakup, loss of status/prestige, or physical impairment

Alcohol or other drug abuse

- Alcohol and drug abuse are second only to depression and other mood disorders as the most frequent risk factors for suicidal behavior
- Alcohol and some drugs can result in a loss of inhibition, may increase impulsive behavior, can lead to changes in the brain that result in depression over time, and can be disruptive to relationships—resulting in alienation and a loss of social connection
- According to a 2007 study, alcohol was a factor in one third of all suicides
- If a person cannot say “no” to a drug or control the amount used, there is a substance abuse problem

Suicide plan

- The more specific the plan, the more serious the risk

Talking about suicide

- This may be stated directly: "I'm going to kill myself"
- This may be stated indirectly: "you would be better off without me" or "soon you won't have to worry about me anymore" "I just have no reason to go on"

SIGNS OF IMMEDIATE DANGER (list is not all-inclusive)

- The student has inflicted harm to self that a reasonable person would regard as serious.
- The student is believed to have ingested substance(s) of which the amount and effects are uncertain.
- The student has threatened harm to self or talked openly about wanting to harm self, and is suspected of using alcohol or drugs.
- The extent of self-injury is unknown and the student is apparently unconscious and unresponsive to stimuli.

For more information about suicide or how to recognize the signs and symptoms you may utilize the following resources

Mayo Clinic <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/basics/definition/con-20033954>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention <https://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide>

CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/>

RESPONDING TO STUDENT'S EXPERIENCING SUICIDAL IDEATION/BEHAVIORS

A) If a student appears to be in imminent danger of harming him/herself, take the following immediate action:

1. Call Campus Police at 404.471.6400 for the student to be transported to the hospital emergency room.
2. Call CAPS 404.471.7100 to inform them of the situation.
3. Campus Police will notify the Dean of Students on call.

B) If a student threatens suicide (verbal or written), and/or evidence of recent superficial wounds are observed, and the degree of imminent danger is unclear:

1. Call the CAPS at 404.471.7100.
2. If it is after business hours or on a weekend, call Campus Police at 404.471.6400.