



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM**

TITLE: Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training

NUMBER: MEM-6910.3

ISSUER: Pia V. Escudero, Executive Director
Student Health and Human Services

DATE: July 31, 2019

ROUTING
All Employees
All Locations
Co-located Charter Schools

PURPOSE: The Los Angeles Unified School District (L.A. Unified) is committed to providing a safe, civil, and secure school environment. L.A. Unified recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth ages 6-18 (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2018). A large number of youth considered attempting suicide (25% of middle school and over 13% of high school students) and attempted suicide (10% of middle school and 8% of high school students) in 2017 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. It is each employee’s responsibility, as well as the District’s charge to know the signs that a student may be heading down a pathway towards violence or self-harm, provide an appropriate and timely response in preventing and addressing suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and deaths by suicide. Suicide prevention involves school-wide activities and programs that enhance connectedness, contribute to a safe and nurturing environment, and strengthen protective factors that reduce risk for students.

Recognizing that it is the duty of the District and schools to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students, the District has developed an online *Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training*. This training aims to assist all employees to better understand the warning signs and risk factors for suicide, as well as have information and guidelines about what to do if they are concerned about a student’s suicidal ideation or behaviors. This training is part of a District-wide focus on school safety, supporting efforts to ensure all District employees clearly understand their duty to protect our students and make appropriate referrals for support and mental health services, as needed. Additionally, this training fulfills the requirement indicated in the California Education Code Section 215, Assembly Bill 2246, (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2016).

After completing this training:

- All employees will be aware of the risk factors and warning signs for suicide.
- All employees will know whom they can go to at their school site or the District for support, as well as what mental health supports and resources they can access.



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MAJOR CHANGES: This Memorandum is being revised to update the training requirement for the 2019-2020 school year.

INSTRUCTIONS: **I. Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training**

All L.A. Unified employees will be auto-enrolled and required to complete the *Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training* and assessment annually. The course is available on My Professional Learning Network (MyPLN). The training must be completed no later than October 31, 2019. Substitutes who have completed the hiring process will be auto-enrolled in the course. New employees hired after September 16, 2019 are required to complete the *Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training* within 45 days of receiving the enrollment email.

Employees will receive an email from the MyPLN system indicating that they have been enrolled in the course with instructions for accessing it via their transcript.

Employees who fail to complete this mandatory training may be subject to disciplinary action. Updates will be provided regularly to the Local District Superintendents, Administrators of Operations, District leadership, and School Principals regarding employee training completion.

II. Accessing the Assessment

After viewing the *Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training*, all employees must pass the assessment with a 100% to demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension. The assessment will be available after the training concludes.

III. Printing Certificates of Completion

After passing the assessment, the course will be complete for the employee who will receive an email confirmation. Step-by-step instructions to print the certificate will be provided in the completion email.

Employees may print the certificate from the “Completed” section of their transcript by using the following steps:

- A. From the MyPLN main page, click on Transcript.
- B. Click the drop-down arrow at the top right of the Transcript “Active” button and select “Completed”.
- C. For the Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training, select the “View Certificate” button to the far right of the course title.
- D. The certificate will appear in a separate window; it can be printed or saved.



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IV. Administrator Certifications

Administrators are to certify, once per year, via the online Administrator Certification Form, that employees have received training on suicide prevention and awareness, as well as information about the resources available in the school and in the community to support students. For a review of the information provided in the *Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training*, please refer to Attachment A – Suicide Prevention Awareness for Staff and Attachment B – Self-Injury Awareness for Staff.

Administrators should ensure that Suicide Prevention Liaisons identified in the Integrated Safe School Plan (ISSP) receive Local District training on how to assess students for suicide risk, as well as how to implement safety and re-entry plans.

Suicide Prevention Liaison(s) are the administrator/designee and/or mental health professionals (e.g., Psychiatric Social Worker, Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor, School Psychologist, Student Health and Human Services Counselor, or School Counselor) identified in the ISSP's *School Site Suicide/Threat Assessment Team*. The school site administrator designates these individuals annually. School staff may seek support from the Suicide Prevention Liaison(s) when they are concerned about a student's suicidal ideation/behavior.

V. Additional Training and Resources

A. Training Videos

1. The *Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training* video will be accessible throughout the year on MyPLN by accessing the course via the Transcript. Once completed, use the Transcript "Active" drop-down arrow and select "Completed". The course will appear in the "Completed" section. Click on the down arrow to the right of the "View Certificate" button and select "Launch".
2. An optional training, *Protective Factors and Psychological First Aid for Students*, will also be accessible on MyPLN. This training provides an overview of strategies all employees may use to assist students who might be in crisis or feeling suicidal. It can be accessed by using the following steps:
 - a. From the MyPLN main page, click on Search.
 - b. In the Global Search box, type any of the following keywords – *Suicide Prevention, Protective Factors, Psychological First Aid, or PFA*.
 - c. Click the "Request" button to select the training titled *Protective Factors and Psychological First Aid for Students*.
 - d. From the Transcript, click the training's "Launch" button to view the video.



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B. Highly Recommended Local District School Site Crisis Team Training

It is highly recommended that the Suicide Prevention Liaisons and School Site Crisis Team members identified by each school site in the ISSP receive an in-person training in their respective Local Districts. Training should include guidelines for responding to and assessing students who exhibit suicidal ideation/behaviors. Additionally, the training should include a case review, which will provide participants an opportunity to complete a risk assessment and develop a safety plan, as well as identify re-entry plan considerations for the student. After completing this training, Suicide Prevention Liaisons and School Site Crisis Team members will know how to respond to and assess a student who is exhibiting suicidal ideation/behaviors.

Local District School Mental Health Coordinators, Mental Health Consultants, CCIS Psychiatric Social Workers (PSWs), and Central CCIS staff will be available to assist with the in-person training requests, as well as the Local District School Site Crisis Team Trainings.

RELATED RESOURCES:

MEM-6128 Administrator Certification On-Line System

BUL-2637 Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention

ASSISTANCE:

ITD Helpdesk - For technical support with accessing the online training.

- For assistance by telephone, call (213) 241-5200. When prompted, select Option 8.
- For online support, visit <https://achieve.lausd.net/helpdesk> to open a ticket or initiate a chat.

Student Health and Human Services, School Mental Health (213) 241-3841 - For consultation and support related to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

- Monday-Friday
- 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Los Angeles School Police Department, Watch Commander (213) 625-6631 - for assistance with any law enforcement matters, 24 hours/day.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255 - a 24-hour crisis line for individuals who are contemplating, threatening, or attempting suicide, including their family and friends.



Suicide Prevention Awareness for Staff

Suicide is a serious public health problem that takes an enormous toll on families, friends, classmates, co-workers, and communities, as well as on our military personnel and veterans. Suicide prevention is the collective effort of all adults that support and work with students, including parents/caregivers, families, local community organizations, mental health practitioners, and related professionals. The aim is to reduce the incidence of suicide through education, awareness, and services.

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE.

Suicide Warning Signs

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” These warning signs signal the need to inquire directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide. If so, then suicide prevention strategies will be required.



- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness
- Significant changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Suicide threats (direct and indirect)
- Suicide notes and plans
- History of suicidal ideation/behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- Preoccupation with death
- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions, posting plans on social media, sending text messages to friends)

Suicide Risk Factors

While the path that leads to suicidal behavior is long and complex and there is no “profile” that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty, there are certain risk factors associated with increased suicide risk. In isolation, these factors are not signs of suicidal thinking. However, when present they signal the need to be vigilant for the warning signs of suicide.

- Access to means (e.g., firearms, knives, medication)
- Stressors (e.g., loss, peer relations, school, gender identity issues)
- History of depression, mental illness, or substance/alcohol abuse
- History of suicide in the family or of a close friend
- History of mental illness in the family

Here's What You Can Do:

LISTEN

- Assess for suicide risk.
- Listen without judgment.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as:
 - *Tell me what happened?*
 - *How long have you been feeling this way?*
 - *Have you thought about suicide?*



PROTECT

- Take action immediately.
- Do not leave the student alone. Student should be supervised/monitored by a staff member, not a peer.
- Consider developing a safety/re-entry plan.

CONNECT

- Collaborate with an administrator, crisis team member, or the Suicide Prevention Liaison(s) at your school site.
- Contact the Local District School Mental Health Coordinator or Mental Health Consultant for consultation and support.
- Contact Department of Mental Health or law enforcement, as needed.
- Contact the appropriate child protective services agency when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse (see BUL-1347).
- Inform the parent/caregiver.
- Identify a staff member to monitor the student.

MODEL

- Remain calm. Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.
- Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and reactions as you listen without judgment.

TEACH

- Provide information and education to parents/caregivers about suicide and self-injury.
- Teach students how to ask for help and identify adults they can trust at home and at school.
- Teach healthy ways to cope with stress, including deep breathing, writing/drawing, exercise, or talking.
- Provide options for school and community resources including referrals to professional mental health services.

Mental Health (MH) and Wellness Centers



North

Valley MH Center

6651A Balboa Blvd., Van Nuys 91406
Tel: 818-758-2300

West

Crenshaw MH and Wellness Center

3206 W. 50th St., Los Angeles 90043
Tel: 323-290-7737

Washington MH and Wellness Center

1555 West 110th St., Los Angeles 90043
Tel: 323-241-1909

South

97th Street MH Center

Barrett Elementary School
439 W. 97th St., Los Angeles 90003
Tel: 323-754-2856

San Pedro MH Center

704 West 8th St., San Pedro 90731
Tel: 310-832-7545

Locke MH and Wellness Center

316 111th St., Los Angeles 90061
Tel: 323-418-1055

Carson MH and Wellness Center

270 East 223rd St., Carson 90745
Tel: 310-847-7216

East

Bell/Cudahy MH Center

Ellen Ochoa Learning Center
7326 S. Wilcox, Cudahy 90201
Tel: 323-869-1352

Ramona MH Center

231 S. Alma Ave., Los Angeles 90063
Tel: 323-266-7615

Gage MH and Wellness Center

2880 E. Gage Ave., Huntington Park 90255
Tel: 323-826-1520

Elizabeth LC MH and Wellness Center

4811 Elizabeth St., Cudahy 90201
Tel: 323-271-3650

Central

Belmont MH and Wellness Center

180 Union Place, Los Angeles 90026
Tel: 213-241-4451

Roybal MH Center

1200 West Colton St., Los Angeles 90026
Tel: 213-580-6415

For clinic referrals visit:
smh.lausd.net

**School Mental Health
(213) 241-3841**

Understanding Suicide: Myths & Facts

To understand why people die by suicide and why so many others attempt to take their own lives, it is important to know the facts. Read the facts about suicide below and share them with others.

Myth: *Suicide can't be prevented. If someone is set on taking their own life, there is nothing that can be done to stop them.*

Fact: Suicide is preventable. The vast majority of people contemplating suicide don't really want to die. They are seeking an end to intense mental and/or physical pain. Most have a mental illness. Interventions can save lives.

Myth: Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide will put the idea in their head and cause them to act on it.

Fact: When someone you know is in crisis or depressed, asking them if they are thinking about suicide can actually help. By giving a person an opportunity to open up and share their troubles you can help alleviate their pain and find solutions.

Myth: Someone making suicidal threats won't really do it, they are just looking for attention.

Fact: Those who talk about suicide or express thoughts about wanting to die, are at risk for suicide and need your attention. Most people who die by suicide give some indication or warning. Take all threats of suicide seriously. Even if you think they are just, "crying out for help"— it is in fact a cry for help — so help.

Myth: Talk therapy and/or medications don't work.

Fact: Treatment can work. One of the best ways to prevent suicide is by getting treatment for mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder or substance abuse and learning ways to solve problems. Finding the best treatment can take some time; the right treatment can greatly reduce the risk of suicide.

If you or someone you care about is at risk for suicide help is available.

Resources for Suicide Prevention

Resources For Supporting and Responding to Students

For assistance/support, contact your Local District School Mental Health Coordinator or Mental Health Consultant.

For consultation, Monday-Friday from 8am-4:30pm, contact LAUSD School Mental Health at (213) 241-3841.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION / After Hours Services

If you need IMMEDIATE help, call 911. Los Angeles School Police Department (213) 625-6631

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771.

Resources to Distribute to Students & Parents/Guardians

Community Hotlines

Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Hotline
(877) 727-4747 (24 hours)
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
(800) 273-TALK (8255) (24 hours)
Trevor Lifeline (866) 488-7386 (24 hours)
Teen Line (800) 852-8336 (6pm-10pm daily)

Text and Chat Resources

Crisis Text Line – Free, 24/7, confidential
Text LA to 741741
Crisis Chat (11am-11pm, daily)
<http://www.crisischat.org/chat>
Teen Line - text "TEEN" to 839863
(6pm-10pm)

Online Resources

<http://www.didihirsch.org/>
<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
<http://teenline.org/>
<http://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide>

Smartphone Apps

MY3
Teen Line Youth Yellow Pages



Los Angeles Unified School District
Student Health and Human Services
 School Mental Health

333 S. Beaudry Avenue, 29th Floor
 (213) 241-3841
 smh.lausd.net | ccis.lausd.net



Self-Injury Awareness for Staff

Self-injury is a complex behavior, separate and distinct from suicide that some individuals engage in for various reasons such as: to take risks, rebel, reject their parents' values, state their individuality, or merely to be accepted. However, others may injure themselves out of desperation or anger to seek attention; to show their feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness; or because they have suicidal thoughts. Such individuals may suffer from serious mental health disorders such as depression or Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Some young children may resort to self-injurious acts from time to time but often grow out of it. Children with an intellectual disability or autism, as well as children who have been abused or abandoned may also show these behaviors. If you become aware that a student or someone you know is engaging in self-injurious behavior, take action and get help.

General Information

- Self-injury provides a way to manage overwhelming feelings and can be a way to bond with peers (rite of togetherness).
- Self-injury is defined as intentional tissue damage that can include cutting, severe scratching, pinching, stabbing, puncturing, burning, and ripping or pulling skin or hair.
- Tattoos and body piercings are not usually considered self-injurious behaviors unless they are done with the intention to hurt the body.
- Individual mental health services (therapy) can be effective when focused on reducing the negative thoughts and environmental factors that trigger self-injury.

Here's What You Can Do:

LISTEN

- Assess for suicide risk.
- Listen without judgment.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as:
 - *Tell me what happened?*
 - *How long have you been feeling this way?*
 - *Have you thought about suicide?*

PROTECT

- Take action immediately and get help.
- Do not leave the student alone. Student should be supervised/monitored by a staff member, not a peer.
- Consider developing a safety/re-entry plan.
- Be cautious about giving punishments or negative consequences for the self-injurious behavior, as these may unintentionally encourage the behavior to continue.

CONNECT

- Connect the student with an administrator, crisis team member, or the Suicide Prevention Liason(s) at your school to access and determine level of risk.
- Contact the Local District School Mental Health Coordinator or Mental Health Consultant for consultation and support.
- Contact the Department of Mental Health, law enforcement, or child protective services, as needed.

- Inform the parent/caregiver.
- Identify staff to monitor the student, as needed.

MODEL

- Remain calm and establish a safe environment to talk about self-injury.
- Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and reactions about this behavior.
- Be aware of your tone. Displaying judgment, expressing anger or shock can cause the student to feel guilt or shame.

TEACH

- Provide information and education to parents/caregivers about suicide and self-injury.
- Teach students how to ask for help and identify adults they can trust at home and at school.
- Teach healthy ways to cope with stress, including deep breathing, writing/drawing, exercise, or talking.
- Provide options for school and community resources, including referrals to professional mental health services.

**Follow the protocols and guidelines
 in BUL 2637 Suicide Prevention,
 Intervention and Postvention**

Mental Health (MH) and Wellness Centers



North

Valley MH Center

6651A Balboa Blvd., Van Nuys 91406
Tel: 818-758-2300

West

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3206 W. 50th St., Los Angeles 90043
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Tel: 323-241-1909

South

97th Street MH Center

Barrett Elementary School
439 W. 97th St., Los Angeles 90003
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704 West 8th St., San Pedro 90731
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Roybal MH Center

1200 West Colton St., Los Angeles 90026
Tel: 213-580-6415

For clinic referrals visit:
smh.lausd.net

School Mental Health
(213) 241-3841

Signs and Symptoms of Self-Injury

- Frequent or unexplained bruises, scars, cuts, or burns
- Frequent inappropriate use of clothing designed to conceal wounds (often found on the arms, thighs, or abdomen)
- Unwillingness to participate in activities that require less body coverage (swimming, physical education class)
- Secretive behaviors, spending unusual amounts of time in the bedroom, bathroom, or isolated areas
- Bruises on the neck, headaches, red eyes, ropes/clothing/belts tied in knots (signs of the “choking game”)
- General signs of depression, social-emotional isolation, and disconnectedness
- Possession of sharp objects (razor blades, shards of glass, thumb tacks)
- Evidence of self-injury in drawings, journals, pictures, texts, and social networking sites
- Statements of helplessness, hopelessness, or worthlessness

Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

There is a difference between self-injury and suicidal acts, thoughts, and intentions. With suicide, there is an intent to die; whereas, with non-suicidal self-injury the reasons may include to:

- Feel emotionally better
- Express desperation or anger
- Manage painful feelings of current or past trauma
- Punish oneself
- Feel pain or relief
- Have control of one’s body

A professional clinical assessment may be necessary to determine risk.



What should I do if a student is engaging in self-injurious behavior?

- Respond immediately
- Supervise the student
- Escort the student to a Crisis Team Member
- Contact the appropriate child protective agency when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse (see BUL-1347)

EMERGENCY INFORMATION / After Hours Services

If you need IMMEDIATE help, call 911.

Los Angeles School Police Department (213) 625-6631.

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771.

Resources for Parents/Caregivers & Children/Adolescents

Community Hotlines

Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Hotline

(877) 727-4747 (24-hour)

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Text and Chat Resources

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Teen Line - text “TEEN” to 839863 (6pm- 10pm)

Online Resources

<http://www.didihirsch.org/>

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

<http://teenline.org/>

<http://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide>

Smartphone Apps

MY3

Teen Line Youth Yellow Pages

