

Methodist University Suicide Prevention Plan

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The Problem of Suicide Among College Age Adults

Sadly, the problem of suicide among college age adults has increased in recent years. Some facts about this growing problem include:

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college and university students in the United States (CDC, 2022).
- 25% of college age adults reported having seriously considered suicide in the past month. This is a higher percentage than any other adult age group (CDC, 2020).
- There are more than 1,000 students who die by suicide on college campuses per year.
- College men are 3-4 times more likely to die by suicide, and college women are 2-3 times more likely to attempt suicide using non-lethal means (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2022).

Suicide Risk Factors

Risk factors include personal, social, and environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide. Young adults who are affected by one or more risk factors may have a greater probability of suicidal behavior. Some of these risk factors include:

- Depression
- Low self esteem
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse or dependence
- Eating disorders
- Family history of suicide
- Self-mutilation
- Prior suicide attempt
- Situational crisis
- Students who are at increased risk of injuries due to athletics, intense pressure, or success/failure mindset.

Methodist University Suicide Prevention Plan

In response to the increased rate of suicide among young adults in the U.S., Methodist University has implemented the following suicide prevention strategies and protocol to protect the safety of the campus community. The Methodist University Suicide Prevention Plan includes comprehensive strategies that follow an evidence-based model for mental health promotion and suicide prevention for universities developed by the JED Foundation and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). This model includes seven core components:

1. Identify students at risk.
2. Provide mental health and substance misuse services.
3. Increase help-seeking behavior.
4. Promote social connectedness.
5. Develop life skills.
6. Restrict access to potentially fatal means.
7. Follow crisis management procedures.

This plan is updated and approved annually.

ONE - Identify Students at Risk

As part of a four-year partnership with the JED Foundation, Methodist University will implement a Healthy Minds survey in the Fall of 2023 to collect data on the mental health needs and experiences of students. This data will provide valuable information about the incidence of mental health problems, how students feel about using campus counseling services, and who they rely on for help. This data will be used to inform suicide prevention campaigns and programs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.

TWO - Provide Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services

Methodist University cares about the mental health needs of all students by providing in-person counseling services through The Well. Counselors at The Well also provide referrals for counseling services in the community when appropriate. All incoming students are informed about the counseling services available to them. The University communicates a message of caring by publishing the following statement in the Student Handbook, and on the University website homepage:

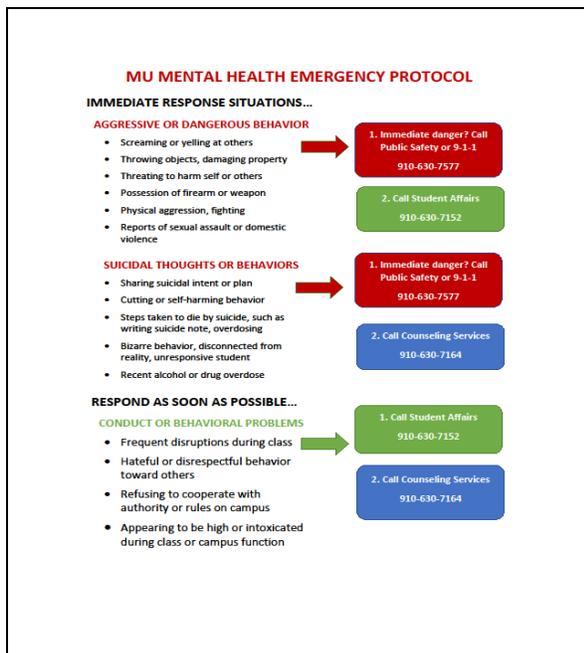
Methodist University cares about the well-being of all students. Counseling services are available for any student who is experiencing feelings of overwhelm, hopelessness, substance problems, thoughts of suicide, or who is otherwise in need of support. To schedule a counseling appointment, please call The Well at 910-630-7164. For immediate help, contact MU Public Safety 910-630-7577 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 9-8-8. Veterans may wish to call the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 9-8-8 then pressing 1, or texting 838255.

Additionally, this message is posted on flyers in every building, and shared with students by email at least twice every year. All staff and faculty are encouraged to include this information below their email signatures as well.

Lastly, the University informs students about emergency mental health resources available to them at the time of enrollment (see Addendum A), which are accessible by scanning the QR code on the back of student and staff ID cards. This list of Mental Health Resources is also available by link on the Counseling Services webpage.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A SUICIDAL INDIVIDUAL

All staff, faculty, and students must follow the MU Mental Health Emergency Protocol as described in the flowchart below (see Addendum B):



The MU Mental Health Emergency Protocol also includes specific steps to follow when someone expresses suicidal thoughts or behaviors:

1. **Call 9-1-1** immediately when someone has made a suicide attempt (for example, taking an overdose of medication or cutting themselves) and follow their instructions. You should also have someone else call MU Public Safety (910-630-7577), as well as the person's emergency contact if applicable. *If there are no immediate threats to your own safety, stay with the person until help arrives.*
2. **Call 9-1-1** immediately when someone has expressed suicidal intent and they have access to lethal means (firearm, knife, medication) and follow their instructions. You should also have someone else call MU Public Safety (910-630-7577). *If there are no immediate threats to your own safety, stay with the person until help arrives.*
3. **Emergency Calls** - If someone expresses suicidal thoughts to you by phone, ask them for their name and location, and *continue talking with them until they are connected with help.* Ask them if they are injured, if they have consumed an overdose of medication, or if they have access to a firearm, knife, or other lethal means.
 - If they say *yes*, have someone else call 9-1-1 to report their location.
 - If they say *no*, assure them that they will receive help, and have someone else contact MU Public Safety (910-630-7577). Resident Assistants and the Director of Housing, Nan Fiebig (910-630-7370), can also connect the student with a counselor on-call.
4. **Emergencies In-Person** - If you are talking with someone who expresses suicidal thoughts or feelings, engage them in completing the Columbia Suicide Severity Screening (see Addendum C).
 - For low-risk (yellow) and moderate (orange) responses, please connect the person with a counselor in West Hall (910-630-7164), or a counselor on-call after hours (Public Safety 910-630-7577).
 - For high risk (red) responses, please call 9-1-1 and follow their instructions. You should also contact MU Public Safety (910-630-7577). *Please stay with the person until they are connected with help.*
5. **Notify Student Affairs** - Following any call to 9-1-1, Public Safety, or any other emergency situation, please contact the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. William Walker (910-630-7030).

The MU Mental Health Emergency Protocol includes the Columbia Suicide Severity Screen, which should be administered when possible to determine the appropriate referral for suicidal individuals (see Addendum C).

THREE - Increase Help-Seeking Behavior

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, more than 50% of all college students with a mental health condition do not get treatment, even when symptoms persist for over two years. Sadly, over 85% of students who die by suicide never have contact with campus counseling services. To increase help-seeking behavior on campus, Methodist University provides annual suicide prevention training for staff, faculty, and students through two evidence-based programs: Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR); and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

QPR is the most widely taught gatekeeper training in the world. QPR training consists of 60 minutes of online instruction. This program explains common causes of suicidal behavior, warning signs of suicide, and strategies for questioning, persuading, and referring someone who may be suicidal to support services.

Mental Health First Aid training is a more comprehensive and consists of two-hour group meetings over three days. This program covers information about mental health symptoms, suicide risk factors, and a 5-step approach for connecting someone at risk with appropriate support. Certification is provided for two years following completion of the training. To register for Mental Health First Aid training, please contact The Well at 910-630-7164. To learn more about the program, please visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

FOUR - Promote Social Connectedness

The importance of peer support for suicide prevention on campus is critical. In fact, 67% of young adults tell a friend they are struggling before anyone else (Active Minds, 2022). Therefore, Methodist University promotes social connectedness on campus through peer support programming provided by two student-led organizations, Morgan's Message and Roaring for Recovery.

The Methodist University chapter of Morgan's Message (MM) was newly formalized in the fall of 2022. The goal of MM is "to amplify stories, resources, and expertise to confront student-athlete mental health, build a community by and for athletes and provide a platform for advocacy." Proudly, the Methodist University chapter of MM is now one of over 400 chapters throughout that nation addressing the needs of college athletes who are at increased risk of mental illness and suicide. If you are interested in joining Morgan's Message, please contact the Director of Student Belonging and Inclusion, Gavin Myrick, at gmyrick@methodist.edu.

Additionally, Methodist University promotes social connection for students through the Roaring for Recovery (R4R). R4R strives to provide an informative, non-judgmental, supportive space for anyone concerned about their own - or a friend or loved one's - alcohol or substance misuse. R4R also provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to attend ally training. These educational events provide best practice language and stigma reduction information. For more information about Roaring for Recovery, please contact Diana Garcia, at dgarcia@methodist.edu.

FIVE - Develop Life Skills

Methodist University promotes the development of life skills, which protect young adults from suicide risk, through various tabling events and educational programming in collaboration

with various university departments. Examples of life skills that enhance resiliency for young adults include stress management, healthy relationships, effective communication, career readiness, as well as self-understanding and self-esteem.

Counseling Services at The Well also provides educational resources such as videos, podcasts, posts, and articles on mental health topics published on social media and the University website, as well as educational presentations to groups on campus.

SIX - Restrict Access to Potentially Lethal Means

According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, firearms are the most common means of suicide in the United States for men and women, followed by suffocation and poisoning (2022). Methodist University maintains policies that restrict access to lethal means on campus, including prohibition of firearms and illegal drugs on university property.

Additionally, students living on campus who need safe storage of medication to prevent access to lethal means may request assistance from the Director of Housing as part of their counseling safety plan. Lastly, the University works to restrict access to lethal means on campus through the “See Something, Say Something” campaign that promotes anonymous reporting of safety concerns to the Public Safety Department by phone or through the University website.

SEVEN - Follow Crisis Management Procedures

Methodist University follows suicide postvention procedures to effectively and sensitively respond to campus deaths after they occur. The goals of postvention include facilitating the grieving or adjustment process, stabilizing the campus environment, reducing the risk of negative behaviors, and limiting the risk of further suicides. Crisis management is provided through the Case Management Team (CMT) which acts as the postvention committee. This committee includes university leadership and Student Affairs staff, who respond in the event of a death by suicide.

The office of Student Affairs in concert with the postvention team coordinates with resources on and off campus to provide immediate response (within 72 hours) and long-term response (anniversaries) after a death by suicide. Examples of these resources include the student’s family, departments of public safety, counseling services, housing, campus media and legal affairs offices, local law enforcement, etc. The office of Student Affairs is responsible for managing communications including condolences to family and friends; providing support for those who are impacted; safety planning with individuals at risk of suicide; coordinating memorial services; and communicating any changes in athletic, academic, or social activities on campus.

An example letter for communicating a death by suicide to the university follows:

Dear Members of the Methodist Community:

I am deeply saddened to inform you of the tragic loss of a member of our university, [name of student]. We offer our deepest condolences to [the student]’s family, friends and loved ones. During this time of great loss, we are reminded of the importance of community. Losing a fellow student and member of our University can be very difficult. I

encourage those who need additional support to contact The Well (910-630-7164), the Ministry Center (910-630-7157), or the Student Affairs Office (910-630-7152) for any emotional or academic assistance you may need.

Sincerely,

President

The postvention committee will follow other communication guidelines and action steps included in the guide, *Postvention: A Guide for Response to Suicide on College Campuses* published by the Higher Education Mental Health Alliance (see Addendum D).

Addendum A: Mental Health Resources



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

THE WELL: (910) 630-7164, M-F 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
University Police: (910) 630-7577, after-hours help.
University Chaplain: (910) 630-7515

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 9-8-8:** Call or text 9-8-8 / <https://988lifeline.org>. Online chat available. For TTY users, use your preferred relay service or dial 7-1-1 then 9-8-8. For help in Spanish call 1-888-628-9454.
- **HopeLine NC:** 1-877-235-4525 / Call or Text 1-919-231-4525 / <https://hopeline.org>. Crisis Line is available 24/7. The text line is open Monday-Friday from 3pm to 9pm.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741 / www.crisistextline.org. 24/7 text support with a trained crisis counselor.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- **Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-422-4453 / www.childhelp.org
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway:** 1-800-394-3366 / www.childwelfare.gov

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-7233 / www.thehotline.org
- **The National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline:** 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) to connect with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area.
- **Victim Connect:** 1-855-484-2846 / www.victimconnect.org. Confidential referrals for crime victims to learn about their rights and obtain resources.
- **Love is Respect:** 1-866-331-9474 / Text LOVEIS to 22522 / Webchat / www.loveisrespect.org. Provides information on maintaining healthy intimate relationships.
- **Women's Law:** (800) 799-7233 / <https://hotline.womenslaw.org/public>. Provides an email hotline service for basic legal information, referrals, questions, concerns and emotional support for domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

LGBT RESOURCES

- **The Network La Red:** 1-800-832-1901(toll free) / 1-617-742-4911 (voice) / www.tnir.org. LGBTQ community-based organization led by survivors to end partner abuse.
- **Trevor Lifeline:** 1-866-488-7386 / Text START to 678-678 / www.thetrevorproject.org. 24/7 hotline, text-line and online chat; provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for LGBTQ youth ages 13-24, as well as free online educational modules.
- **Fayetteville Pride:** 200 Mason Street, Fayetteville, NC 28301 / <https://fayettevillepride.org>

Addendum B: MU Mental Health Emergency Protocol Flowchart

MU MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE SITUATIONS...

AGGRESSIVE OR DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR

- Screaming or yelling at others
- Throwing objects, damaging property
- Threatening to harm self or others
- Possession of firearm or weapon
- Physical aggression, fighting
- Reports of sexual assault or domestic violence



1. Immediate danger? Call
Public Safety or 9-1-1
910-630-7577

2. Call Student Affairs
910-630-7152

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR BEHAVIORS

- Sharing suicidal intent or plan
- Cutting or self-harming behavior
- Steps taken to die by suicide, such as writing suicide note, overdosing
- Bizarre behavior, disconnected from reality, unresponsive student
- Recent alcohol or drug overdose



1. Immediate danger? Call
Public Safety or 9-1-1
910-630-7577

2. Call Counseling Services
910-630-7164

RESPOND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...

CONDUCT OR BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

- Frequent disruptions during class
- Hateful or disrespectful behavior toward others
- Refusing to cooperate with authority or rules on campus
- Appearing to be high or intoxicated during class or campus function



1. Call Student Affairs
910-630-7152

2. Call Counseling Services
910-630-7164

Addendum C: Columbia Suicide Severity Screening

COLUMBIA-SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE Screen Version - Recent

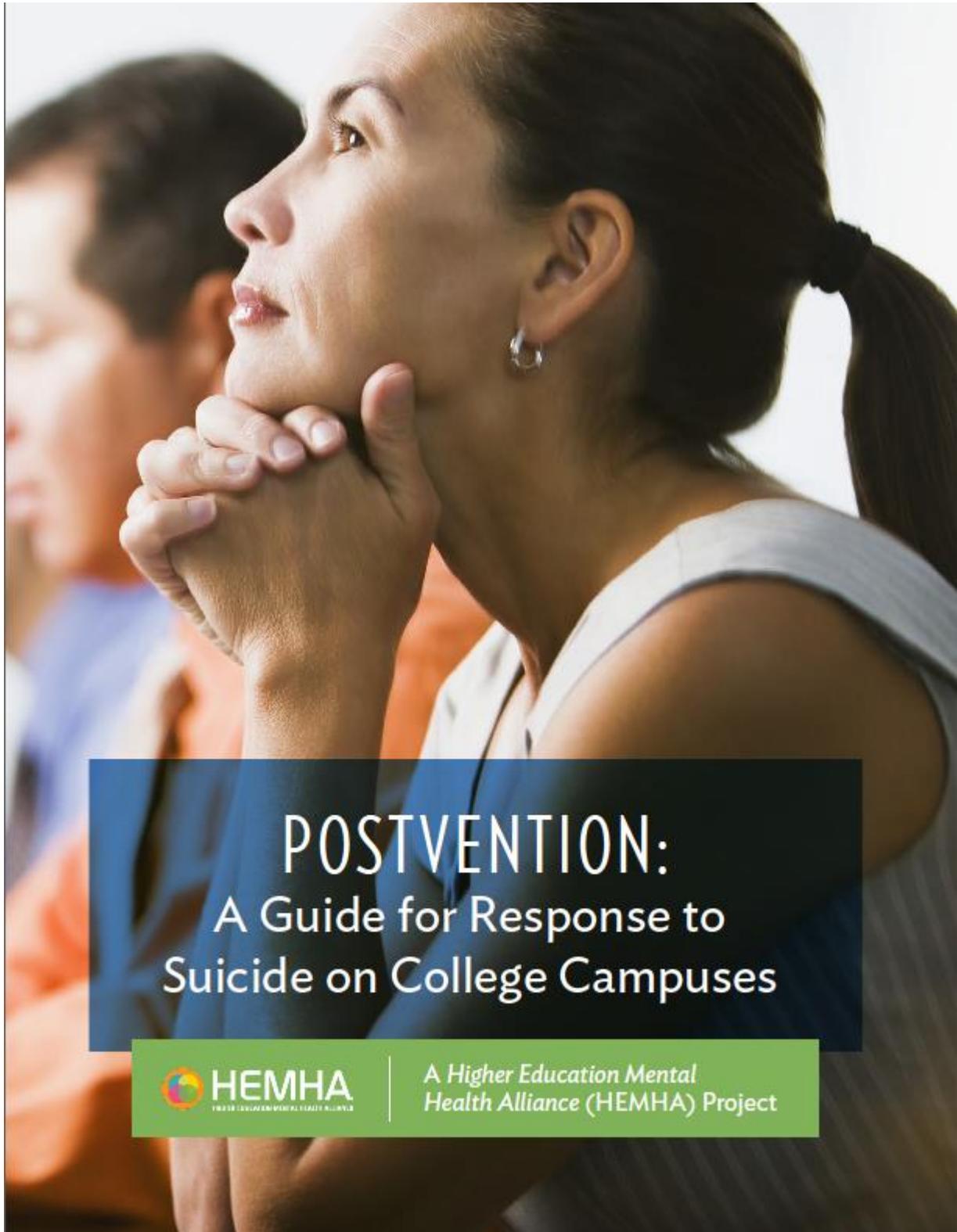
SUICIDE IDEATION DEFINITIONS AND PROMPTS	Past month	
Ask questions that are bolded and <u>underlined</u> .	YES	NO
Ask Questions 1 and 2		
1) <u>Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?</u>		
2) <u>Have you actually had any thoughts of killing yourself?</u>		
If YES 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> <i>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."</i>		
4) <u>Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?</u> <i>As opposed to "I have the thoughts but I definitely will not do anything about them."</i>		
5) <u>Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Do 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> <i>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.</i> If YES, ask: <u>Was this within the past three months?</u>	YES	NO

- Low Risk
- Moderate Risk
- High Risk

*For inquiries and training information contact: Kelly Posner, Ph.D.
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Addendum D: A Guide for Response to Suicide on Campus ([Link](#))



POSTVENTION: A Guide for Response to Suicide on College Campuses



A Higher Education Mental
Health Alliance (HEMHA) Project