

# Helping a Suicidal Student Remotely

## If you are concerned about a student, talk with them individually

Let them know you care and listen to their story.

Ask directly about suicide, calmly and without judgement.

You can ask, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Show understanding and take their concerns seriously. Let them know their life matters to you. A conversation can save a life.

## Find out the student's location

As you will likely be talking with the student using an electronic platform (i.e. email, video conference, phone), you will not immediately know their location.

This information is necessary if you learn they are in imminent danger and need to send emergency responders to their location. Therefore, as soon as you begin to have any concerns about a student, try to learn their current address.

## If the student says they are thinking about suicide

Take the person seriously and be empathic.

Ask if they plan to act on these thoughts.

## If the student has thoughts but no plan:

Assist them in connecting with a resource.

- The Counseling Center has support available for students experiencing a mental health emergency. When the CC is open, M-F, 8AM-4:30PM, students can call or come into the Counseling Center (540-568-6552, SSC 3rd Floor, Suite 3100). After regular business hours or on weekends: please call the Counseling Center at 540-568-6552 and press "1" to connect to the after-hours crisis line.
- If you are on a video or phone call, you could offer to call a crisis resource together (e.g., the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK).
- You can encourage them to talk to their own therapist if they have one.
- If they do not have a therapist, you can encourage them to contact the Counseling Center to assist them in getting connected with mental health support.

Follow up with them after the crisis to see how they are doing and let them know you care about their well-being.

## If the student says they plan to kill themselves or cannot commit to safety:

**Get immediate help:**

- First, see if they will seek immediate help by going to the hospital for emergency support. You can call 911, or JMU Public Safety (540-568-6911) in order to assist them in going to the hospital.
- If they are not willing to go to the hospital you can suggest that you contact the Counseling Center together at 540-568-6552 and you can facilitate their connection with the clinician who takes the call.
- If they are not willing to call the Counseling Center, you can contact local emergency services, locally this might include: the Harrisonburg-Rockingham CSB who offer emergency services (540-434-1766), the National Suicide Hotline (1-800-273-TALK), 911, or JMU Public Safety (540-568-6911) in order to assist them in going to the hospital.
- **If they do not agree to call together, you will need to independently contact emergency resources.**

**If you have their address:**

Call 911. Explain the situation. You can request a welfare check.

**If you do not have their address:**

Call 911. You can also reach out to JMU Public Safety (540-568-6911) and JMU Behavior Assessment Team, BAT, (540-568-6468) to notify them of the situation, who can assess and intervene when student behavior may pose a threat to themselves or the JMU community.

- Know you can also call the Counseling Center (540-568-6552) on your own to consult and receive guidance about how to proceed.

## Crisis Services

JMU Counseling Center: 540-568-6552

Harrisonburg-Rockingham CSB Emergency Services: 540-434-1766

Sentara RMH: 540-689-1414

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

JMU Public Safety: 540-568-6911

JMU BAT, Madison Cares, Dean of Students: 540-568-6468