
CRISIS INTERVENTION & SUICIDE PREVENTION

RESOURCE PACK

A Comprehensive Toolkit for School Counselors

Risk Assessment Protocols • Safety Planning Templates
Staff Training Guide • Warning Signs Posters
Parent Resources • Referral Templates

UM Printables

Research-Based | Evidence-Aligned | School-Ready

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What's Inside:

- **Risk Assessment Protocol** — A non-clinical, QPR-aligned framework for identifying and responding to students at risk, including structured interview guides and documentation templates.
- **Safety Plan Template** — A student-centered safety planning tool with step-by-step instructions, warning-sign identification, coping strategies, and emergency contacts.
- **Staff Training Slide Deck** — 15 ready-to-present slides covering suicide awareness, warning-sign recognition, response protocols, and postvention procedures.
- **Student Warning Signs Posters** — Three visually engaging, age-appropriate posters: recognizing signs in yourself, helping a friend, and knowing where to turn.
- **Parent Resource Packet** — A comprehensive handout for families covering warning signs, conversation starters, community resources, and home safety planning.
- **Referral List Template** — A customizable template for organizing local, state, and national crisis resources and mental health referral contacts.

SECTION 1

Introduction & How to Use This Resource

School counselors play a critical role in identifying, supporting, and referring students who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or suicidal ideation. This resource pack provides a structured, research-aligned framework to help counselors respond with confidence, compassion, and compliance.

Purpose of This Resource Pack

This toolkit equips school counselors with practical, ready-to-use materials for crisis intervention and suicide prevention. All protocols align with the **QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Institute's** evidence-based framework and adhere to best practices recommended by the **American School Counselor Association (ASCA)**, the **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)**, and the **Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)**.

How Each Component Works Together

- **Risk Assessment Protocol (Section 2):** Use when a student has been identified as potentially at risk. This protocol guides you through the QPR process — asking the question, persuading the student to accept help, and referring to appropriate resources. Includes documentation forms for your records.
- **Safety Plan Template (Section 3):** Complete collaboratively with a student after risk has been identified. The safety plan helps students recognize their own warning signs, identify coping strategies, and know who to contact in crisis. Keep a copy on file and provide one to the student and family.
- **Staff Training Slide Deck (Section 4):** Present to school staff at the beginning of each year and as a refresher mid-year. Covers warning signs, appropriate staff responses, referral procedures, and postvention protocols. All staff members should know how to recognize and refer.
- **Student Warning Signs Posters (Section 5):** Display in counseling offices, common areas, and classrooms. These posters help students recognize warning signs in themselves and peers and provide clear next steps for seeking help.
- **Parent Resource Packet (Section 6):** Distribute at parent nights, during individual meetings, and when concerns arise. Helps families understand warning signs, start difficult conversations, and access community resources.
- **Referral List Template (Section 7):** Customize with your local resources at the start of each school year. Keep copies in your office, share with administration, and provide to families.

■ IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

This resource is designed to **support** school counselors in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. It is **NOT** a substitute for professional clinical assessment, diagnosis, or treatment. School counselors should always work within their scope of practice and follow their district's policies, procedures, and protocols. If a student is in immediate danger, call **911** or contact the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** (call or text **988**).

Key Principles

- **Safety First:** The immediate physical safety of the student is always the top priority. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and seek a higher level of care.
- **Direct Language:** Research consistently shows that asking about suicide directly does *not* increase risk. Use clear, straightforward language when assessing students.
- **Collaboration:** Crisis intervention is a team effort. Work with administrators, teachers, families, and community providers to create a comprehensive support network.
- **Documentation:** Thoroughly document all assessments, conversations, safety plans, and referrals. Accurate records protect both the student and the counselor.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Be aware of how cultural factors may influence a student's expression of distress and willingness to seek help. Adapt your approach accordingly.
- **Self-Care:** Supporting students in crisis can take a significant emotional toll. Prioritize your own well-being and seek supervision or support when needed.

Crisis Response Quick Reference

IMMEDIATE CRISIS RESPONSE STEPS

1. **STAY CALM** — Your composure helps the student feel safe.
2. **STAY WITH THE STUDENT** — Never leave a student in crisis alone.
3. **ASSESS IMMEDIATE DANGER** — Does the student have a plan, means, and intent?
4. **ASK DIRECTLY** — "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
5. **LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGMENT** — Validate their feelings.
6. **REMOVE MEANS** — If safe to do so, remove access to lethal means.
7. **CONTACT HELP** — Administrator, crisis team, 911, or 988.
8. **DOCUMENT** — Record all actions, statements, and referrals.
9. **NOTIFY PARENTS/GUARDIANS** — Per district policy and state law.
10. **FOLLOW UP** — Check in with the student and family after the crisis.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 (24/7)

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

911: For immediate life-threatening emergencies

SAMHSA National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ Youth): 1-866-488-7386

Veterans Crisis Line: 988, then press 1

Note: Customize the referral list template in Section 7 with your school's specific contacts, including your building administrator, school psychologist, school social worker, local crisis center, and nearest emergency room.

QPR AT A GLANCE

Q — Question: Ask the person directly if they are thinking about suicide. Be direct, calm, and compassionate.

P — Persuade: Listen with empathy and persuade the person to accept help. Offer hope without minimization.

R — Refer: Connect the person with appropriate resources. Never leave them alone during the referral process.

Source: QPR Institute (qprinstitute.com). QPR is a registered trademark of the QPR Institute.

SECTION 2

Risk Assessment Protocol (QPR-Aligned)

School counselors are often the first line of defense in identifying students at risk for suicide. A non-clinical risk assessment protocol provides a structured method for evaluating the level of risk and determining the appropriate response. This protocol is aligned with the QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) model and emphasizes safety, direct communication, and documentation.

The QPR Framework: Step-by-Step

Step 1: Question

If you suspect a student may be considering suicide, you must ask. Research confirms that asking about suicide does **not** plant the idea in a student's mind; rather, it provides relief that someone has noticed their pain and is willing to talk about it.

Indirect Approaches (Use to open the conversation):

- Have you been unhappy lately?
- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Do you ever feel like you just want to give up?

Direct Approaches (Essential for clear assessment):

- Are you thinking about killing yourself?
- Are you thinking about suicide?

■ AVOID THESE APPROACHES

- Negative framing: "You're not thinking about suicide, are you?"
- Minimizing: "You have so much to live for!"
- Guilt-tripping: "How could you do this to your parents?"
- Promising secrecy: "I promise I won't tell anyone."

Step 2: Persuade

Once you have established that the student is thinking about suicide, your goal is to persuade them to accept help. Listen actively, validate their feelings, and offer hope without dismissing their pain.

Key Persuasion Strategies:

- Listen without judgment — give them your full attention.
- Validate: "It sounds like you are in a lot of pain right now."
- Offer hope: "I don't want you to die. I want to help you get through this."
- Avoid arguing or debating whether suicide is right or wrong.

Slide 1 | Suicide Prevention: Our Role as Educators

- **Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Staff Training**
- Equipping our team to recognize, respond, and refer
- Because every student deserves to feel safe and supported

Speaker Notes: Welcome staff. Acknowledge that discussing suicide can be uncomfortable, but it is necessary. Remind them of the school's commitment to student safety and that this training gives them the tools to help.

Slide 2 | Training Objectives

- Understand the scope and impact of youth suicide
- Recognize the difference between risk factors and warning signs
- Learn the QPR method: Question, Persuade, Refer
- Know how to respond when a student discloses suicidal thoughts
- Understand postvention and self-care strategies

Speaker Notes: Emphasize that the goal is not to make staff into therapists, but to equip them as 'gatekeepers'—people who can recognize when someone is in crisis and connect them to help.

A Parent's Guide to Youth Suicide Prevention (Continued)

Starting the Conversation

Many parents worry that asking about suicide will put the idea in their child's head. **Research shows this is a myth.** Asking directly can actually provide relief and open the door to help. Here is how to approach the conversation:

CONVERSATION STARTERS

"I've noticed you've been seeming really down lately. How are you doing?"

"I care about you, and I'm worried. Sometimes when people feel this overwhelmed, they think about suicide. Are you having thoughts like that?"

"It sounds like you're in a lot of pain right now. I want to help. Will you let me?"

Do's and Don'ts for the Conversation:

- **DO stay calm.** Your reaction sets the tone.
- **DO listen without judgment.** Let them talk without interrupting.
- **DO take it seriously.** Never dismiss their feelings as a phase.
- **DO express love and support.** "I love you and we will get through this together."
- **DO ask directly about suicide.** Be clear and straightforward.
- **DON'T minimize their feelings.** Avoid "You have so much to live for!"
- **DON'T guilt-trip.** Avoid "How could you do this to our family?"
- **DON'T promise secrecy.** Say "I care about you too much to keep this a secret."
- **DON'T debate whether suicide is right or wrong.**
- **DON'T leave them alone** if they are in immediate danger.

Creating a Safe Home Environment (Means Restriction)

One of the most effective ways to prevent suicide is to reduce access to lethal means. If a child is in crisis, making it harder for them to harm themselves can save their life. **This is not about punishment or lack of trust—it is about physical safety.**

STEPS TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER

Firearms: Store guns in a gun safe, remove them from the home, or use a cable lock. Store ammunition separately. The safest option during a crisis is to temporarily remove firearms from the home entirely.

Medications: Lock up all prescription and over-the-counter medications. Limit access to large quantities. Monitor refills.

Sharp Objects & Other Means: Secure knives, razors, ropes, and other potentially harmful items out of sight and reach.

Alcohol & Drugs: Lock up or remove all alcohol and recreational substances, as they lower inhibitions and increase impulsivity.

★ REMEMBER

Means restriction works. Many suicide attempts are impulsive and last only a few minutes. Creating barriers during those critical minutes gives your child time for the impulse to pass and for help to arrive.

SECTION 7

Referral List Template

A comprehensive, up-to-date referral list is an essential tool for crisis intervention. Customize this template with your local resources at the beginning of each school year. Keep copies in your office, share with administration and crisis team members, and provide to families when concerns arise.

★ MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Verify all contact information annually before the school year begins.
- Add new resources as you discover them throughout the year.
- Remove outdated listings immediately to avoid delays in a crisis.
- Save a digital copy so you can quickly print or email the list to families.

SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCES

School Counselor: _____

Phone / Extension: _____

School Psychologist: _____

Phone / Extension: _____

School Social Worker: _____

Phone / Extension: _____

Building Administrator: _____

Phone / Extension: _____

School Nurse: _____

Phone / Extension: _____

DISTRICT-LEVEL RESOURCES

District Crisis Team Contact: _____

Phone: _____

District Director of Student Services: _____

Phone: _____

Title IX / Compliance Officer: _____

Phone: _____

CRISIS & EMERGENCY RESOURCES

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 (24/7)

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

911: For immediate life-threatening emergencies

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+): 1-866-488-7386

SAMHSA National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357

Local Emergency Room: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Local Mobile Crisis Team: _____

Phone: _____

Thank You!

for choosing the **Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Resource Pack** from UM Printables.

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