

Suicide Awareness & Prevention

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the second- leading cause of death among college students, and the third-leading cause of death among all youth aged 15–24. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that suicides are preventable, particularly with early detection and intervention.

Seeking Help

Call the SDCC directly and confidentially at 508-831-5540 if you or someone you know is having thoughts of harming themselves.

After 5 P.M., or in an immediate emergency where safety is a concern, contact Campus Police at 508-831-5555, or dial 911 if you are away from campus.

CONTACT

Location: 16 Einhorn Road

Phone: 508-831-5540

sdcc@wpi.edu



WPI Services & Resources

- **Student Development and Counseling Center (SDCC)** staff members are available to confidentially speak with you in a professional and non-judgmental way.
 - Individual counseling with a counselor at the SDCC is recommended. Counselors listen intently and are able to help you sort through feelings, problems, and priorities.
 - Consultation for friends and staff is available to share concern for another and learn what can be done to support someone.

- The **Employee Assistance Program** (EAP) For employees provides free, confidential services including counseling (in-person, online, or by phone), as well as health resources, mental health toolkits, and crisis support.
- The **I'm Concerned About a Student form** provides a venue to connect with WPI services if you know of a student who is struggling and needs outreach.

Other Resources

- The **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is a free, 24/7 service that can provide individuals with support, information, and local resources regarding suicide. Call them at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.
- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of suicide.
- National Mental Health Association (NMHA) provides information on many topics related to suicide and depression.
- ULifeline is an online resource for college mental health.

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Warning Signs

**Depression & Risk
Factors**

**When to Be
Concerned**

How to Help

Some warning signs include:

- Talking about wanting to die
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others

- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

Depression

In most cases, suicidal people are depressed. The more symptoms they have, the more at risk they are. Some symptoms of depression are:

- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Significant loss or gain in appetite
- Significant loss of interest or pleasure in previously enjoyable activities
- Decreased sex drive
- Speaking or moving with unusual slowness
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Diminished ability to function

Heightened Risk

Suicide risk is greater when depression is accompanied by any of the following:

- Severe insomnia
- Feelings of hopelessness and desperation
- Speaking of death and suicide
- Previous suicide attempts
- Extreme anxiety, agitation, or enraged behavior
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Significant loss; possibly due to a death, relationship breakup, or physical impairment

- Themes of death in conversation, poetry, or artwork
- Preparing for suicide; putting affairs in order, saying goodbye, giving belongings away
- A plan for how or when to commit suicide; the more specific the plan, the more serious the intent

When to Be Concerned

College is a time when students are at a higher risk of depression and suicide. Some factors that affect the level of students' risk are:

- Change in environment or community
- Stressful or demanding schedules
- Leaving behind support system
- Loneliness
- Pressure of grades and expectations

This experience is unique to college students, and they can feel isolated and boxed in with no way out. In fact, most people who attempt suicide are ambivalent about dying—but they desperately want their emotional pain to end.

If any of these situations arise, call Campus Police at 508-831-5555 for assistance:

- You or someone you know of has stated an intention to kill him or herself
- There is a plan for doing it
- There is a means to do it—the person has access to pills, a weapon, etc.

If you or a friend are not suicidal but at a high risk, call the Student Development and Counseling Center (SDCC) at 508-831-5540 to speak to a counselor.

How to Help Someone Who May Be in Danger

Many times, survivors of attempted suicide express relief that their attempts failed and are grateful to those who helped prevent them from following through. Unfortunately, many loved ones left behind after a suicide are blindsided by the event. Learning how to identify the warning signs of suicide and how to react could save a

person's life.

- **Take Initiative.** Talking to someone about suicide will not make him or her more likely to do it. It is important to express your concerns and ask whether the person has thought about suicide.
- **Listen.** Find a place to talk where you can really listen to what the person is sharing. Don't be afraid to talk about suicide and find out whether the person has a plan or method in mind. Talking about it usually provides a great deal of relief.
- **Take it seriously.** About 75% of all suicides give some warning of their intentions to a friend or family member.
- **Do not attempt to argue someone out of suicide.** Let the person know you care and understand what you have heard. Stress that he or she is not alone, and with help, these feelings and thoughts may end.
- **Seek professional help.** Actively encourage the person to talk with a counselor or health professional. It's common that individuals contemplating suicide don't believe they can be helped, so you may need to do more. Speaking with a counselor can help you through these difficult steps. Call the SDCC at 508-831-5540. No appointment is needed in the event of an emergency.
- **Never promise to keep it a secret.** Never tell a person contemplating suicide that you will keep it a secret. Simply say that you are not able to do this because you truly care and the person's well-being is too important to do so.
- **Remove dangerous objects.** Remove any firearms, drugs, or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt. Stress that you want to help keep him or her safe. Ask the person to help you locate unsafe objects.
- **In an acute crisis, do not leave a suicidal person alone.** Take him or her immediately to the SDCC for an evaluation. If you need assistance, call Campus Police at 508-831-5555. If off-campus, dial 911. The nearest emergency room is UMass Memorial Medical Center, 281 Lincoln St. Worcester, 508-334-1000.

Some of the information for this section was provided by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

Disclaimer

We have included links to other websites and we encourage students to evaluate the materials and to use what they find to be helpful. Please keep in mind that WPI cannot assume responsibility for information on other websites.

Information on the web is not intended as a substitute for assistance from the SDCC. For personal assistance, WPI students should contact the SDCC at 508-831-5540 to schedule an appointment with one of our professional staff members.