

## **Heritage University - Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention**

### **Mental Health Crisis Response Plan**

Heritage University is dedicated to encouraging positive student health, mental health, and an overall sense of wellbeing as it directly impacts academic achievement. A student who is experiencing untreated depression or another mental health illness may not be benefiting fully from the educational program of the university because he/she may also be combating their feelings of depression and possibly even suicide.

It is imperative support services and resources are provided to students who are experiencing suicidal ideation to help decrease the possibility of suicide. If the student's safety is being compromised, an emergency contact shall be notified immediately, and their cooperation shall be sought for immediate intervention. Heritage University administration shall contact appropriate agencies to request assistance on the student's behalf. Emergency contacts include

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- The Twenty Four Hour Crisis Information Hotline: 1(800) 572-8122
- The Comprehensive Mental Health Crisis Hotline: (509) 575-4200
- The Comprehensive Mental Health number for a mental health professional: (509) 575-4084.
- The Northwest Employee Assistance Program number to indicate when you have a Heritage University student that is interested in scheduling non-emergent counseling appointment: (509) 575-4313
- Yakama Nation Behavioral Health for tribal member counseling (509) 865-5121 Ext-6200
- For emergency situations first call 911, then campus security (509) 961-4674 security staff will then provide you with further instruction.
- For after business hours emergency's please call 911 then campus security (509) 865-8555 After hours assistant staff will then provide you with further instruction.
- The Yakima County Sheriff's Office: (509) 574-2500
- Yakama Nation Tribal Police for tribal member safety (509) 865-2933

### **1. Faculty and Staff Responsibilities**

Faculty and staff members shall be made aware of their responsibilities in the event of a potential suicide risk. Faculty and staff are expected to follow the procedures as specified.

Three steps are vital in a suicide intervention:

- 1.1 Ensuring the short-term physical safety of the student;
- 1.2 Communicating with appropriate school personnel, and the emergency contact
- 1.3 Referring to appropriate professionals or agencies and implementing a student re-entry plan for high risk emergency situations.

## **2. Suicidal Thoughts or Behaviors**

Any staff member or faculty who receives or discovers information about a potential suicide, such as notes, threats, conversations, or statements from friends/family of the student will immediately notify Campus Security (509)865-8555, and the Office of Student Affairs (509)865-3502. In cases where staff awareness has been raised, the following is operational for suicide ideation:

2.1 Ideation may be any suggestion, demonstration, writing about death or dying, a verbal threat or communication of an intention to die by suicide or to self-harm; these must be taken seriously.

### Feelings, Thoughts, and Behaviors to be Aware of

- Cannot stop the pain
- Cannot think clearly
- Cannot make decisions
- Cannot see a way out
- Cannot eat, sleep, or work
- Cannot make the sadness go away
- Cannot see the possibility of change
- Cannot seem to get control

2.2 Such behavior shall be reported to the Office of Student Affairs (509) 865-3502, The Student Affairs Mental and Social Health Counselor will then be notified to provide immediate mental health services

2.3 If the referral source and the staff consultation determines that the student in need of professional intervention, immediate crisis counseling will be offered to conduct a formal screening. The screening will assess the relative risk and will be offered on campus, if the emergency contact chooses not to cooperate; appropriate agencies shall be contacted by the University administration to intervene on the student's behalf.

2.4 University staff, faculty, emergency response team, and administration shall monitor the students' functioning in school until a positive adjustment is evident.

## **3. Attempt of Suicide**

The following actions shall be taken by the involved staff and faculty, Office of Student Affairs, Student Affairs Mental and Social Health Counselor, and/or by the Suicide Prevention Coordinator.

3.1 Contact medical assistance 911 and then campus security (509) 961-4674 if this situation is even possibly a high risk life threatening emergency.

Please give the physical location (3240 Fort Rd. Toppenish WA 98948) and provide the building name. For non-emergent situations, contact campus security (509)865-8555

Warning Signs include:

- Confirmed suicidal intent
- Talking about the desire to die by suicide
- Recent suicide attempts
- Having a severe loss (esp. relationship) or threat of a significant loss
- Family history of suicide
- History of trauma and abuse
- History of mental illness
- History of depression
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Taking unnecessary risks; be reckless, and/or impulsive
- Access to lethal means (i.e. access to firearms or a stockpile of prescription drugs that can cause harm or death)

3.2 Ensure a staff member or emergency response team member remains with the student at all times.

3.3 Clear the area too discreetly to avoid negative attention and to provide student privacy.

3.4 Contact the students' emergency contact and inform them of the situation and what actions are being taken.

3.5 All requests for information will be responded to by The Office of Student Affairs. This will ensure that all suicide media and online coverage is covered carefully. Thus, encouraging those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help and not contributing to additional suicides.

Follow the *Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide* document and for online media please reference the Reporting on Suicide website at <http://reportingonsuicide.org/onlinemedia/>

**4. Identify crisis team leader or counselor who will:**

4.1 Contact the student or emergency contact for follow-up; and

4.2 Contact other professionals involved in the case for educational planning

## 5. Suicide

(a) In the event of a suicide on site, Law enforcement must be notified.

(b) Contact the following telephone numbers in the order listed:

- Medical assistance 911
- Campus security: (509) 865-8555
- The Office of Student Affairs: (509)865-8515
- Student Affairs Mental and Social Health Counselor: (509) 865-8544
- President of the University shall be contacted immediately: (509)865-8600 extension: 5442
- For after business hours emergency's please call 911, then campus security (509)865-8555 (campus extension 1401) staff will then provide you with further instruction.

(d) The University must exercise care to help deal with the grieving, suicide cluster prevention, and shock of the students, faculty, and staff

(e) All requests for information will be responded to by The Office of Student Affairs. This will ensure that all suicide media and online coverage is covered carefully. Thus, encouraging those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help and not contributing to additional suicides.

Follow the *Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide* document and for online media please reference the Reporting on Suicide website at <http://reportingonsuicide.org/onlinemedia/>

(f) Examples of responsible media coverage include:

- Do not use big or sensationalistic headlines, or prominent word placement "Kurt Cobain Used Shotgun to Commit Suicide", instead inform the audience without sensationalizing the suicide and minimize prominence "Kurt Cobain Dead at 27"
- Do not investigate and report on suicide similar to reporting on crimes, instead report on suicide as a public health issue
- Do not Refer to suicide as "successful", "committed suicide", or a "failed attempt", instead describe as "died by suicide" or "completed" or "killed him/herself"

**The Office of Student Affairs office shall respond to all requests for information while keeping in mind the *Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide* (please view attachment).**

Necessary follow up actions:

5.1 Prior to the next school day, the Office of Student Affairs staff will assemble the faculty and staff and provide accurate information, resources, and plans for the day.

5.2 The Office of Student Affairs staff will consult with the area mental health professionals and others to determine steps to take around the suicide or attempt, a potential suicide cluster, and to brainstorm and plan for possible conflicts that may arise in the aftermath.