



## Recommendations for Developing a Student Safety Plan for Elementary School Students



A Student Safety Plan should be completed after an incident involving a student who expresses suicidal ideation, is engaging in self-harm, receives a psychiatric evaluation or is hospitalized. Initial safety planning should be developed in collaboration with the student's input and should emphasize strategies that are practical. Complete a Safety Plan (**Attachment D2**) when the suicide risk assessment level is deemed low, moderate or high. Notify identified adults in the safety plan and provide **Attachment E –Adult Gatekeeper** handout, as appropriate. Update the Safety Plan as needed.

Please note: **Attachment D2- My Safety Plan** (for Elementary School Student), was developed, but not limited to, students ranging from kindergarten to fourth grade. School staff may utilize this template with students in other grade levels taking into consideration the student's cognitive functioning, learning disability, and/or learning styles.

**Refer to the definitions and examples below as a guide to help a student complete their Safety Plan (Attachment D2):**

**My Triggers:** Any situation, person, place or thing that may elicit a negative reaction or cause the student to engage in negative behaviors/self-harm. Some triggers include *fighting at home, being home alone, problems in the classroom/playground, seeing an ex best friend, gossip on social media, or getting a low score/grade.*

**When this happens, I feel:** This section allows students the ability to identify what emotion is manifested when there is a trigger. Some examples of emotions may be: *sad, mad, hurt, scared, worried.*

**My Warning Signs:** These are the actions, behaviors and observations that inform adults/staff that a student might be feeling suicidal and needs help. These can be thoughts, emotions, body sensations, and/or behaviors. Some warning signs that adults/staff may notice in students include talking, writings, postings or thinking about death; displaying dramatic mood swings; alcohol and drug use; socially withdrawing from friends, family and the community; drastic personality changes; and neglect of personal appearance.

On their safety plan, students may utilize page two to draw/write some of the warning signs they experience when they are upset that affects their thoughts, emotions, body, and behaviors. Students, especially younger students, may need some guidance and direction when developing their warning signs. Some examples include *having negative thoughts, heavy breathing, picking fights, feeling like I can't express myself, not wanting to do the things I used to enjoy, not caring what I look like, and/or sleeping too much/not enough.*

**My Coping Skills/Healthy Behaviors:** These are positive actions and behaviors that a student engages in to help them through their struggles on a daily basis. Some coping strategies include activities that a student can do in order to regulate his/her emotions (include some things he/she can do in the classroom and on the school yard, and some things he/she can do at home); ask the student for input, and teach him/her additional strategies if necessary. Strategies may include *slow breathing, yoga, playing basketball, drawing, writing in journal, taking a break from class to drink water, listening to music, playing with a pet.*

**School Support:** Any school staff member or administrator can check in with a student regularly. Notify student's teacher(s) and request monitoring and supervision of the student (keeping in mind not to share confidential information). Have the student list three names of trusted adults they can seek out for support. Emphasize that teacher(s) must notify school site crisis team members about any safety issues or concerns. Some examples of school support may include: *Counselor Mr. Jones, Teacher Mr. Doe, Teacher Assistant Ms. Jane, After-School Staff Ms. Smith.*

**Home/Community Support:** It is important that a student also feel connected with trusted adults at home or in their community. The student should trust these adults and feel comfortable asking for help during a crisis. Have the student list three names of trusted adults they can seek out for support. Some adults may include *family (e.g. grandparent, aunt, uncle, adult sister/brother); clergy (e.g. youth pastor); or next-door neighbor-Mr. Smith.*

**My Other Thoughts:** This section provides students with the option to draw or write anything else they would like to highlight or add to their safety plan. This option encourages students to process their thoughts and experiences, especially if students indicate journaling as a coping skill.

**My Crisis Plan and Resources:** Review this section with the student, as well as with their parent/guardian, to ensure they are aware of the steps to take in the event of a crisis.

**Case Carrier Support:** The case carrier is a school-site crisis team member who has been identified by the administrator/designee to follow-up with the student and monitor action/safety plans developed for the student. The support offered may include strategies to manage, monitor, and check-in with the student. The case carrier may collaborate with the outside mental health agency providing services and ensure that there is a Release/Exchange of Information form signed and on file. Additional case carrier support may include: *monitor daily logs; check-in meeting with student twice a week for the first month, then reassess safety and determine appropriateness of meeting once per week; monitor grades and attendance; maintain weekly contact with community agency/therapist that may be providing services.*

**Signatures:** The student, case carrier, and parent/guardian should review and sign to acknowledge the safety plan. Written parental consent is required to reach out to trusted adults identified on the student's safety plan from the home/community. Parents/guardians may consent by initialing the consent line in this section.