HELPING SKILLS & SUICIDE INTERVENTION TRAINING

UCalgary offers a number of free, evidence-based suicide intervention training programs open to all UCalgary students, faculty, and staff.

We encourage all campus members to receive training to learn life-saving skills and contribute to a caring, supportive campus community.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
Learn to recognize and review risk of suicide, and how to intervene.
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/learning/workshops-training/asist

Question, Persuade, Refer
Learn to recognize and support someone who may have thoughts of suicide.
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/learning/workshops-training/question-persuade-refer

Community Helpers
Learn the skills needed to help others experiencing a problem or in distress.
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/learning/workshops-training/community-helpers

Safer Substance Use: Harm Reduction
Learn about the harm reduction approach to substance use.
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/learning/workshops-training/harm-reduction-101

The Inquiring Mind (students only)
Learn about mental health, stigma reduction and resilience.
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/learning/workshops-training/inquiring-mind

LivingWorks Start
LivingWorks Start is a powerful online training program that teaches life-saving skills to recognize and prevent suicide.
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/learning/workshops-training/livingworks

The Working Mind (staff and faculty)
Staff and faculty can learn about mental health, stigma reduction and resilience.
ucalgary.ca/hr/wellness/wellbeing-worklife/workshops-programs/working-mind

STAFF WELLNESS

UCalgary Wellness & WorkLife
ucalgary.ca/hr/wellness/wellbeing-worklife

UCalgary Mental Health Consultant
ucalgary.ca/risk/staff-wellness/wellbeing-worklife/mental-health/mental-health-consultant

LifeWorks Employee & Family Assistance Program
ucalgary.ca/hr/wellness/wellbeing-worklife/employee-and-family-assistance-plan
1-866-424-0699

Staff and faculty groups can also request sessions for training programs by emailing communityhub@ucalgary.ca.

Learn more:
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/staying-healthy/training

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
cmha.ca/documents/preventing-suicide

CENTRE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION POST-SECONDARY RESOURCES
suicideinfo.ca/post-secondary

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA
mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/suicide-prevention

HELPER SUPPORT

As a helper, it is also extremely important that you get the support you need. For example, this could be debriefing with a supervisor or helping professional, practicing self-care, or accessing resources.
Visit UCalgary Staff Wellness to get the proper support you need.

STAFF WELLNESS

UCalgary Wellness & WorkLife
ucalgary.ca/hr/wellness/wellbeing-worklife

UCalgary Mental Health Consultant
ucalgary.ca/risk/staff-wellness/wellbeing-worklife/mental-health/mental-health-consultant

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Student Wellness Services

Suicide Intervention

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

If you are noticing signs of distress and are concerned that a student may be thinking of suicide, use the following guide to check in with care and concern.
BE DIRECT AND CARING
Ask about suicide in a direct, non-judgmental, and caring manner. Demonstrate that you are a safe person that they can talk about suicide openly with.
Start the conversation by generally checking in about how the student is doing before mentioning suicide or distress.

EXPLORE PROBLEMS & ACTIVELY LISTEN
 Invite a supportive conversation through asking open-ended questions to explore the problems.
 Take into consideration that suicide is not the problem but rather the perceived solution to other problems and circumstances they are experiencing.

VALIDATE & EMPATHIZE
Validation and empathy can be very helpful strategies to help the person feel heard and understood without agreeing that suicide is the right option.

USE COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
Use a collaborative approach to identify next steps to help keep the person safe. Explore support and resources the person may be connected with, any protective factors present, and inquire about what types of supports they feel could be most helpful.
Protective factors may include:
• social support
• coping strategies
• resources
If the person is reluctant, you may have to be more direct with the plan for next steps.

CONNECT AND REFER TO FURTHER SUPPORT
Consult supervisors and additional resources for further support. Provide support in making arrangements to connect the person to helping resources. You can determine the resource by assessing the risk level.
The flow chart on the following page identifies actions to take depending on the level of risk.
When in doubt about level of risk, consult resources.

IMMEDIATELY REPORT THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS
Campus Security 403.220.5333
Emergency Services 911
Student Wellness Services 403-210-9355

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF DISTRESS
• Significant changes in mood, behaviour, or appearance
• Appears agitated, sad, worried, or anxious
• Expresses hopelessness or references suicide or self-harm
• Mental health appears to be significantly deteriorating
• Current or past experience of violence or trauma

IMMEDIATELY REPORT THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS
• Violent or destructive behaviour
• Concern for safety related to suicidal thoughts or behaviors
• Concerning drug or alcohol poisoning
• Aggressive or threatening behaviour with high risk of harm

CAMPUS SECURITY 403-220-5333
STUDENT AT RISK TEAM 403-220-4925
CALGARY EMERGENCY SERVICES 911
STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES 403-210-9355

Example:
“I noticed you haven’t been attending classes lately, is everything okay?”

Avoid:
“You’re not thinking about suicide, are you?” (leading question)

Example:
“I am so glad you told me. It sounds like things have been really tough. How long have you been feeling this way?”

Example:
“I can understand why you are feeling defeated - it sounds like things are extremely hard right now.”

“Have you been dealing with so much, I can understand why you are feeling overwhelmed.”

Example:
“I understand you are unsure about talking to anyone else about this, but I am really concerned about you and we need to connect with further support. Let’s talk about some options for this, I want to come up with a plan for this together.”

“I am so glad you told me. It sounds like things have been really tough. How long have you been feeling this way?”

“What has been contributing to these feelings?”

“I can understand why you are feeling defeated - it sounds like things are extremely hard right now.”

“You have been dealing with so much, I can understand why you are feeling overwhelmed.”

Example:
“Tell me more about what has been going on.”

“Have you been considering suicide?”

“I noticed you haven’t been attending classes lately, is everything okay?”

“Are you thinking about hurting yourself?” (indirect language that leaves room for misinterpretation)

“You wouldn’t do anything stupid would you?” (judgmental tone)

Example:
“Are you aware of some of the resources on and off campus available to you?”

Example:
“When have you been feeling this way?”

EXAMPLE:
“I can understand why you are feeling defeated - it sounds like things are extremely hard right now.”

“Have you been dealing with so much, I can understand why you are feeling overwhelmed.”

Example:
“Tell me more about what has been going on.”

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“You wouldn’t do anything stupid would you?” (judgmental tone)

Example:
“Are you aware of some of the resources on and off campus available to you?”

Possible Indicators of Distress

1. Significant changes in mood, behaviour, or appearance
2. Appears agitated, sad, worried, or anxious
3. Expresses hopelessness or references suicide or self-harm
4. Mental health appears to be significantly deteriorating
5. Current or past experience of violence or trauma

Indication of imminent harm or self or others

No indication of imminent harm to self or others. Urgent support not required.

No indication of imminent harm to self or other but urgent support needed.

Immediate report to: Student Support Case Management Coordinator

Referral to wellness supports and Student Wellness Services website
ucalgary.ca/wellness-services

Make a report to one of the following:
• Student Support Case Management Coordinator
• Student-at-Risk Team
• Campus Security (After Hours)

Make a report to:
Call emergency services (911) if emergency response is required and Campus Security

Helping conversation

Identify student may be in distress

ACTIONS TO TAKE DEPENDANT ON RISK LEVEL