

Procedure for Supporting a Student in Mental Health Crisis

Definition of Mental Health Crisis:

According to the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), a mental health crisis refers to a situation in which an individual's behavior poses an imminent risk of harm to themselves or others due to a mental health condition. This may include severe depression, thoughts of suicide, psychotic episodes, severe anxiety attacks, or other acute manifestations of mental illness.

Staff Response in a Crisis:

1. **Immediate Reporting:** Any staff member who notices signs of a mental health crisis in a student should immediately report to the Head of School/Principal/Director(s). Under no circumstances is a student in crisis to be left alone.
2. **Assessment by School Personnel:** Upon receiving the report, the school nurse, social worker, or designated medication certified staff will conduct a quick but thorough assessment of the situation to determine the level of risk and the appropriate response.
3. **Contact:**
 - a **Columbus Area: Contact Netcare Access (For Students 18 and above):** If the student is 18 years or older and in crisis, the school nurse, medication certified staff, or social worker will contact Netcare Access Crisis Line at 614-276-CARE (2273) for assistance. Relevant information about the student's condition and location will be provided. Netcare's mobile crisis team will be dispatched to assess the student on-site.
 - b **Columbus Area: Contact Nationwide Children's Crisis Line (For Minors):** If the student is a minor (below 18 years old) and in crisis, the school nurse, medication certified staff, or social worker will contact the Nationwide Children's Crisis Line at (614) 722-1800 to navigate the situation. Their trained professionals will provide guidance and assistance in managing the crisis effectively.
 - c **Lancaster Area: Contact 211:** If the student is 18 years or older and in crisis, the school nurse, medication certified staff, or social worker will contact 2-1-1. We are then connected with New Horizons Mental Health Services. 740-687-8255 is the 24-hour crisis line. Shannon Lawson, MSW, LSW Crisis Supervisor - slawson@newhorizonsmentalhealth.org.
 - d **Athens Area: Contact Ohio Health O'Blennes Hospital – CALL (740) 593-5551.** If the student is a minor (below 18 years old) and in crisis, the school nurse, medication certified staff, or social worker will contact Ohio Health O/Blennes Hospital at (740) 593-5551 for assistance to navigate the situation. Their trained professionals will provide guidance and assistance in managing the crisis effectively.
 - e **Independence Area: Contact Frontline mobile unit -CALL 216-623-6888.** If the student is a minor (below 18 years old) and in crisis, the school nurse, medication certified staff, or social worker will contact Frontline mobile unit -CALL 216-623-6888 for assistance to

navigate the situation. Their trained professionals will provide guidance and assistance in managing the crisis effectively.

- f **Sandusky Area: Contact - Empower Behavioral Health & Intervention – Contact Jennifer Gutman at 567-283-4460, jennifer.gutman@empowercenters.com.** If the student is a minor (below 18 years old) and in crisis, the school nurse, medication certified staff, or social worker will contact Empower Behavioral Health & Intervention. Their contact person is Jennifer Gutman at 567-283-4460, jennifer.gutman@empowercenters.com. Main number for Empower Behavioral Health and Intervention at 567-323-4155.
 - g **Cincinnati Area: Contact The Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) at 513-584-5098.** If the student is a minor (below 18 years old) and in crisis, the medication certified staff or director will contact the mobile crisis team for assistance and they will dispatch members of their team to the location.
 - h **Dayton Area: Contact Montgomery 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 833-580-2255.** If the student is a minor (below 18 years old) and in crisis, the medication certified staff or director will contact the Montgomery Crisis Hotline. Counselors will dispatch a mobile crisis unit to assess the student and provide guidance in order to manage the crisis effectively.
- 4. **Addressing Active Suicide Attempt or Ideation:** If a student is actively attempting suicide or expressing clear suicidal ideation, regardless of age, the nurse or designated staff member will immediately call 911 for emergency assistance. Essential details about the student's condition, location, and any immediate threats to their safety will be provided.
 - 5. **Notify Parent/Guardian:** Inform the student's parent or guardian about the situation promptly. Provide them with essential details about the student's condition and the steps being taken to address the crisis.

NOTE: If Parent/Guardian refuses available onsite counseling for their student during a crisis, staff will at their discretion place a call to their assigned Crisis Hotline Center.

Staff Response Following a Crisis

1. Parental Notification and School Coordination:

- Upon a student's hospitalization for a mental health crisis, OR if the student is taken to the hospital for a mental health evaluation, parents or guardians must notify the school as soon as possible.
- If a student requires transportation from school via emergency medical services (EMS) and/or is admitted to the hospital, the parent/guardian needs to notify the school once the student is discharged to initiate the return-to-school process. In the event the student is transported from

the school, The Head of School will also contact the parent/guardian to ensure understanding of this policy.

- A return-to-school meeting will be scheduled within 48 hours of parental notification. Until this meeting occurs, the student may not return to school.
- If a student is taken to the hospital but is ultimately not admitted, the family is strongly encouraged to share any safety plans that may have been developed by the mental health/medical professionals with New Story Schools staff to ensure a safe transition back to the school setting.

2. Initial Assessment and Planning:

- The designated school staff member will conduct an initial assessment to gather information about the student's needs, including any recommendations from healthcare providers.
- A personalized return-to-school plan will be developed during the scheduled meeting, with input from the student, parents, healthcare providers, and school staff.

3. Individualized Return-to-School Plan:

- The return-to-school plan will be tailored to the student's unique needs and circumstances, incorporating academic accommodations, mental health support services, and necessary adjustments to the student's schedule or environment.

4. Safety Plan Implementation:

- The Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) will draft a safety plan for the student while at school, outlining strategies for managing crisis situations and ensuring the student's safety in the school environment.
- The safety plan will be presented at the return-to-school meeting and incorporated into the student's overall return-to-school plan and all staff will be trained on how to implement the return-to-school safety plan.

5. Transition Support:

- The school will provide transition support to help the student adjust back to the school environment, which may include gradual reintroduction, peer support, and access to counseling services.
- Teachers and staff will be informed of the student's situation and provided with guidance on how to support their successful transition.

6. Ongoing Monitoring and Support:

- The designated school staff member will monitor the student's progress and well-being closely, conducting regular check-ins and adjustments to both the return-to-school and safety plans as needed.

- Collaboration with outside mental health professionals and ongoing communication with the student and their family will be maintained to ensure comprehensive support.

7. Crisis Response Protocol:

- A crisis response protocol will be established and communicated to all staff members, outlining procedures for identifying and responding to signs of distress or crisis in the student. This information will be a part of the safety plan.

8. Review and Evaluation:

- The effectiveness of the return-to-school plan and safety plan will be regularly reviewed and evaluated, with adjustments made based on the student's progress and evolving needs.
- Feedback from the student, parents, and involved stakeholders will be sought to inform continuous improvement of the protocol.

9. Confidentiality and Sensitivity:

- All information related to the student's mental health crisis and return-to-school plan will be treated with utmost confidentiality and sensitivity, in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations.

10. Resources and Support:

- The school will provide access to resources and support services for the student and their family, including mental health counseling, peer support groups, and community referrals as needed.

11. Empowering Student Success:

- The ultimate goal of the return-to-school protocol is to empower the student to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment conducive to their overall well-being.

Training Provided to Staff:

1. **Mental Health First Aid:** All staff members will receive training in mental health first aid, including recognizing the signs of mental illness, responding to crises, and providing initial support and assistance.
2. **Crisis Intervention Training:** Designated staff members will receive specialized training in crisis intervention techniques, such as de-escalation strategies and emergency response protocols.
3. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Staff will be trained in trauma-informed care principles to approach students in crisis with empathy, understanding, and sensitivity.
4. **Regular Updates and Refreshers:** Staff training will be regularly updated to ensure all personnel are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively to mental health crises.

Disclosure of Mental Health Crisis Outside of School:

1. Families will clearly communicate the circumstances under which information may need to be shared with relevant school personnel or external stakeholders to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student.
2. Assure families that any information shared about their child's mental health crisis will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
3. Failure to communicate vital information pertaining to the student's crisis outside the school may result in a possible emergency removal until an evaluation/assessment can be made to determine the safety of the student. School will not be held liable for non-disclosed crises that families have not shared with school staff prior.