



# Making sense of student suicide: *Prevention and response*



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# Making sense of student suicide Agenda



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# Making sense of student suicide



**U.S. 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death<sup>1</sup>**  
 · 2<sup>nd</sup> for youth<sup>a</sup>  
**College student suicide<sup>2</sup>**  
 ~ 7 per 100,000  
 ~ half the rate for age-matched,  
 non-students

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Making sense of student suicide



Scope Cont'd

National College Health Assessment – UNC Charlotte<sup>3</sup>

- 7% seriously considered suicide
- 1.5% attempted
- 85% felt overwhelmed by all they had to do
- 37% felt so depressed it was difficult to function
- 62% felt overwhelming anxiety

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Making sense of student suicide



Risk Factors<sup>4</sup>

<b>Behavioral &amp; Biopsychosocial</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Sociocultural</b>
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- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health disorders</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Trauma</li> <li>• Family history</li> <li>• Chronic illness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss</li> <li>• Lethal means</li> <li>• Exposure to violence</li> <li>• Victimization</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Marginalization</li> <li>• Limited help-seeking</li> <li>• Barriers to treatment access</li> <li>• Exposure to suicidal behavior</li> </ul> |
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Making sense of student suicide



Protective Factors<sup>5</sup>

<b>Personal</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Sociocultural</b>
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- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Coping/life skills</li> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Hope</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectedness</li> <li>• Accessible health care</li> <li>• Exposure to violence</li> <li>• Victimization</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief system discouraging suicide</li> <li>• Community responsibility &amp; caretaking role</li> </ul> |
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Making sense of student suicide



Warning Signs<sup>6</sup>

- ◆ I ideation
- ◆ S substance abuse
  - ◆ P purposelessness
  - ◆ A anxiety
  - ◆ T trapped
  - ◆ H hopelessness
- ◆ W withdrawal
- ◆ A anger
- ◆ R recklessness
- ◆ M mood changes

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Making sense of student suicide



Responding:  
Prevention

- **Primary**  
Prevent disease/injury before it occurs
  - Education
  - Environmental safety
- **Secondary**  
Reduce impact of existing disease/injury
  - Self-care
  - Early intervention
- **Tertiary**  
Decrease impact of ongoing illness
  - Ongoing treatment

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Making sense of student suicide



Responding:  
Primary  
Prevention

- **Campus Wide**
- Decrease the impact of risk factors
- Build up protective factors
- Public health approach

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Making sense of student suicide



Risk Factors<sup>4</sup>

- Behavioral & Biopsychosocial**
  - Mental health disorders
  - Substance abuse
  - Trauma
  - Family history
  - Chronic illness
- Environmental**
  - Loss
  - Lethal means
  - Exposure to violence
  - Victimization
- Sociocultural**
  - Isolation
  - Marginalization
  - Limited help-seeking
  - Barriers to treatment access
  - Exposure to suicidal behavior

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Making sense of student suicide



Protective Factors<sup>5</sup>

- Personal**
  - Resilience
  - Coping/life skills
  - Self-esteem
  - Purpose
  - Hope
- Environmental**
  - Connectedness
  - Accessible health care
- Sociocultural**
  - Belief system discouraging suicide
  - Community Responsibility & caretaking role

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Making sense of student suicide



Responding: Secondary & Tertiary Prevention

- Your Role**
  - Spot warning signs
  - Share your concern directly
  - Encourage them to talk
  - Don't keep secrets
  - Provide resources:
    - National Suicide Prevention LIFELINE
    - Referral to CAPS
      - 80% of those who complete not seen by a counselor<sup>4</sup>

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Making sense of student suicide



Responding:  
Secondary &  
Tertiary  
Prevention

Your Role

- Share concerns with a supervisor
- Consult CAPS
  - Mary Alexander Rd & Cameron Blvd.  
(704) 687-0311  
[caps.uncc.edu](http://caps.uncc.edu)  
[Tips when concerned about a student](#)
- On-call counselor business days, 8-5
- After-hours emergencies
  - Campus Police: (704) 687-2200
  - CAPS ProtoCall

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Making sense of student suicide



Responding:  
Gatekeeper  
Training

- Faculty/Staff in ideal positions to notice signs and be "gatekeepers"
- Get prepared to notice and refer
- Gatekeeper trainings save time in the long run
  - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) [QPR Trailer](#)
  - Kognito At-Risk for Faculty & Staff [Kognito Trailer](#)

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Conversations that change lives.

Accessing the Simulations



URL: <https://kognitocampus.com>

Create Your Account

Also, access "Tips & Resources" to help promote and implement programs within schools

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*Questions & Comments*



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