

Cleveland State Community College Suicide Prevention Plan and Protocol

(Updated 06/06/2025)

College students are in a state of life transition and can be overwhelmed with new opportunities and responsibilities. Lifestyle changes, such as sleep deprivation and substance abuse, can contribute to suicidal behavior.

- Suicide is the **second** leading cause of death for college students
- Approximately **1,100** college students die by suicide every year
- **6%** of college students report they have seriously considered suicide over the past year; **90%** of those students created a suicide plan, **14%** actually attempted suicide, and **60%** continued to have thoughts of suicide. (tspn.org)

As such, and in compliance with the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-7-172, Cleveland State has developed a suicide prevention plan and an associated protocol that engages in a variety of initiatives to improve crisis services.

PREVENTION

- Suicide or Mental Health Wellness Syllabus Course Handbook/Statement: All faculty syllabus documents will prominently display the following statement:

“Cleveland State is committed to and cares about all students. If you or someone you know at the college feels overwhelmed, hopeless, depressed, and/or is thinking about dying by suicide, supportive services are available and effective. For immediate help 24/7 contact the National Suicide Lifeline by dialing 988 or text “TN” to 741 741. On campus, you may contact the Counseling, Testing & Career Services department located in the Student Center Building, Monday-Friday between 8:00-4:30 at (423) 478-6217. More information and local resources are located on the counseling page of the Cleveland State website.”

- Relationships: Cleveland State will establish relationships with local Mental Health facilities for the purpose of providing annual suicide prevention education and outreach, programming, and/or prevention screenings. A signed MOU agreement with Hiwassee Mental Health Center is in effect though 04/21/2028. The Director of Counseling & Support Services maintains relationships with several mental health providers and is a member of the local Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network Task Force for Bradley, McMinn, Meigs, and Polk Counties. These organizations have assisted with suicide prevention/mental health/ screening activities in the past and will continue to do so in the future. At least one training activity for employees and students will be conducted annually.

Cleveland State has a relationship in place with the following community agencies, hereby referred to as Agency, to provide the noted services (may include crisis referral services, prevention screenings, etc.):

Agency 1: Volunteer Behavioral Health's Hiwassee Mental Health Center provides mental health education and non-crisis services such as outpatient therapy.

Contact Information: Main Office number: (423) 479-5454. Tonya Ballew, Director, (423) 745-8802

Agency 2: Volunteer Behavioral Health's Crisis Services provides mental health education, suicide prevention training, and mobile and walk-in crisis services.

Contact information: 24 Hour Crisis Line: (800) 704-2651.

Agency 3: Parkridge Valley provides mental health education, crisis services, intensive outpatient, and inpatient services.

Contact Information: Cleveland facility Main Office number: (423) 472-1999. Justin Forgette, Coordinator of Outpatient services of Cleveland.

Agency 4: Mental Health Cooperative provides counseling and psychiatric services for adults, children and adolescents.

Contact Information: Cleveland location (423) 728-6400 Referrals: (423) 697-5953

Agency 5: Centerstone provides mental health education and non-crisis services such as outpatient therapy.

Contact Information: Cleveland location (423) 464-4357.

Agency 6: Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network provides suicide prevention education, training, and resources.

Contact Information: Bryan Barks, Southeast Regional Director, (615) 780-5901 ext. 135

- Training: Cleveland State will strive to provide annual suicide prevention training to faculty, staff, and students. The training can be scheduled/offered through third party providers via relationships with community-based organizations/individuals and/or the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network.
- Dissemination of Information: Cleveland State will promote the available resources related to suicide prevention services to include, but not be limited to, its Partnership Relationships, campus resources, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and/or Crisis Text Line on the Cleveland State website and/or additional campus media and training formats.

Examples may include: sharing information during Orientation, flyers/posters, TV monitor slides, phone numbers posted and available, resources listed on the website, social media posts, and brochures/pamphlets.

- Cleveland State will disseminate and/or a link to the plan, each academic term via appropriate and effective channels of communication to faculty, staff and students, e.g. email, mass text, social media, handbook, etc. The Director of Counseling, Testing & Career Services will be responsible to disseminate the plan and record each dissemination.

INTERVENTION

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

A list of potential warning signs

There is no typical suicidal person. No age group, ethnicity, or background is immune. Fortunately, many troubled individuals display behaviors deliberately or inadvertently signal their suicidal intent.

Recognizing the warning signs and learning what to do next may help save a life.

The Warning Signs: The following behavioral patterns may indicate possible risk for suicide and should be watched closely. If they appear numerous or severe, seek professional help at once. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides access to trained telephone counselors, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be reached by dialing 988 or 1-800-273-TALK or the Crisis Text Line can be reached by texting TN to 741 741.

- Talking about suicide, death, and/or no reason to live
- Preoccupation with death and dying
- Withdrawal from friends and/or social activities
- Experience of a recent severe loss (especially a relationship) or the threat of a significant loss
- Experience or fear of a situation of humiliation or failure
- Drastic changes in behavior
- Loss of interest in hobbies, work, school, etc.
- Preparation for death by making out a will (unexpectedly) and final arrangements
- Giving away prized possessions
- Previous history of suicide attempts, as well as violence and/or hostility
- Unnecessary risks; reckless and/or impulsive behavior
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs
- General hopelessness
- Recent experience humiliation or failure

- Unwillingness to connect with potential helpers Feelings, Thoughts, and Behaviors

Nearly everyone at some time in his or her life thinks about suicide. Most everyone decides to live because they come to realize that the crisis is temporary, but death is not. On the other hand, people in the midst of a crisis often perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel an utter loss of control. Frequently, they:

- Can't stop the pain
- Can't think clearly
- Can't make decisions
- Can't see any way out
- Can't sleep, eat, or work
- Can't get out of the depression
- Can't make the sadness go away
- Can't see the possibility of change
- Can't see themselves as worthwhile
- Can't get someone's attention
- Can't seem to get control

What Do You Do?

1. Be aware. Learn the warning signs listed above.
2. Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
3. Ask if s/he is thinking about suicide.
4. Be direct. Talk openly and freely about suicide.
5. Be willing to listen. Allow for expressions of feelings and accept those feelings.
6. Be non-judgmental. Avoid debating whether suicide is right or wrong, whether someone's feelings are good or bad, or on the value of life.
7. Avoid taunting the person or daring him/her to "do it".
8. Avoid giving advice by making decisions for someone else to tell them to behave differently.
9. Avoid asking "why." This only encourages defensiveness.
10. Offer empathy, not sympathy.

11. Avoid acting shocked. This creates distance.
12. Don't keep someone else's suicidal thoughts (or your own) a secret. Get help, silence can be deadly.
13. Offer hope that alternatives are available. Avoid offering easy reassurance; it only proves you don't understand.
14. Take action. Remove anything that the person could use to hurt themselves. Get help from individuals or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Who Can You Talk To?

- A community mental health agency
- A private therapist
- A school counselor or psychologist
- A family physician
- A suicide prevention/crisis intervention center
- A religious/spiritual leader

If you or someone you know is severely depressed, potentially, or actively suicidal, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by dialing 988 or 1-800-237-TALK (8255). Trained counselors in your area are standing by to provide you with the help you need.

Saving College Student Lives in Tennessee:

Saving College Student Lives in Tennessee is a brochure available through The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network. It can be found at: <https://www.tspn.org/brochures> . This brochure provides information about signs and risk factors, related to the potential for suicide, as well as resources and information on how to help.

INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

Cleveland State has intervention protocol in place with the understanding that some students/faculty/staff will be thinking about suicide but not be in imminent danger while other suicidal students, faculty, or staff may have made plans and/or have the means to complete suicide. Appropriate assistance varies from acknowledging their thoughts and providing guidance to help them learn coping skills to hospitalization to keep them safe and provide mental health treatments. The aim is to get suicidal individuals connected with a trained professional that can assess the individual and determine a plan of care.

This process should be followed if an employee encounters a suicidal student, faculty, or staff member.

- The Counseling, Testing & Career Services Department or VP of Student Services (or HR Director if employee) is to be notified should you encounter a suicidal student, faculty or staff member. If the incident occurs after hours, Campus Police is to be notified.

- The Counseling, Testing & Career Services Department will respond to the student who is contemplating suicide and when appropriate, attempt to get consent to call a parent/spouse/family member or make a referral to an outside mental health or crisis agency. The staff member helping the suicidal individual may get assistance from the **Tennessee Statewide Crisis Line 24/7/365: 1-855-274-7471** or may use the options below.

It is helpful to determine the age of the suicidal individual. If the individual is under the age of 18 (i.e. Dual Enrollment student or Tennessee Valley Early College student), the student's parents, a family member, or guardian **must** be contacted. Parents can be given the resource information below for adolescent mental health providers.

Even if the student is 18 years old or older, the staff member should consider getting the student's permission to involve a family member. Contact the family member together and provide the resource information below for adult mental health resources.

Adolescent Mental Health Resources for Parents:

- Tennessee Statewide Crisis Line 24/7/365: 1-855-274-7471
- Youth Villages Southeast Tennessee: 1-866-791-9225
Specially trained crisis counselors for youth up to age 18 available 24/7 for assessment and evaluation of psychiatric emergencies.
- Cleveland
Mental Health Cooperative (**must have Tenn Care**):
2544 Dalton Pike SE
Cleveland, Tennessee 37323
423-728-6400 office | 866-816-0433 toll-free
Crisis phone: (615) 726-0125 or toll free 855-274-7471
- Chattanooga
Parkridge Valley Child & Adolescent Campus
2200 Morris Hill Rd
Chattanooga, TN 37421
Phone: (423) 894-4220

Adults only Mental Health Resources:

- **Option 1:** Mobile Crisis:

Volunteer Behavioral Health's Mobile Crisis Services

Trained counselors will respond to your phone call and provide assistance with referrals or arrange for a face-to-face assessment by their crisis staff. Insurance not required.

24/7/365, Phone: 1-800-704-2651 or Walk-in center at

Johnson Mental Health Center

413 Spring Street

Chattanooga, TN 37405

- **Option 2:** Other community mental health agencies:
 - Parkridge Valley Hospital 24/7/365 Adult and Senior Campus, Commercial Insurance, TennCare, Medicare accepted. Phone (423) 894-4220
7351 Courage Way. Chattanooga, TN 37421
 - Erlanger Behavioral Health 24/7/365, Commercial Insurance, TennCare, Medicare accepted. Phone (423) 498-4602
804 North Holtzclaw Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37404

- If Mobile Crisis will come to campus, a staff member from the Counseling, Testing & Career Services department or their designee will remain with the student, faculty, or staff member until the person notified or referral agency has arrived to render assistance. A suicidal person should not be left alone (consider that a professor and supporting student must go to class).

If the agency is not able to come to campus or cannot come in a reasonable time period and the student, faculty or staff member is unable to be transported off campus, the student, faculty or staff member can be referred to the community mental health agencies listed above. If a campus Certified Officer (not security guard) is on campus, they can transport the student.

- If the suicidal person has plans and access to a lethal means, is planning to make an attempt very soon, or is currently in the process of making an attempt, this individual is in imminent danger and should not be left alone. Get the person help immediately. Determine who can get there quickly and keep the individual safe. Should you have this concern, you should immediately call 9-1-1.
- Document the incident: Provide documentation of the event to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). Many personnel who would be contacted or intervene with suicidal students are members of the BIT team. Students and employees who are identified at risk for suicide, have voiced serious suicidal ideation, or have attempted suicide should be reported to the BIT team using the institutional reporting form found at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ClevelandStateCC&layout_id=100

POSTVENTION

Because all student/faculty/staff deaths affect our community, whether that death is accidental, due to illness, or the result of self-inflicted injury, it is important to respond to and recognize all deaths in a consistent manner. Campus leadership and the communications department will develop a protocol that includes a campus response to a student/faculty/staff suicide to decrease the trauma experienced by the students and other campus community members left behind and to help prevent further suicides through contagion.

GOALS OF POSTVENTION

The goals of a postvention response after a suicide includes:

- Providing resources to those impacted.
- Stabilizing the community and restoring balance and routine to campus at a pre-crisis level of functioning.
- Preventing further suicides through contagion and decreasing the trauma experienced by students.
- Facilitating understating and processing the emotional impact of grief and loss.

If a student/staff/faculty member is affected by suicide that is not connected to the campus community, the individual should be connected to mental health resources in the area.

PROCEDURE

The following should take place if a student, staff, faculty member death occurs by suicide.

- The President or their designee(s) will be notified immediately, regardless of the awareness of the incident occurring during or after office hours.
- The President or their designee(s) will lead the response on behalf of the institution. This individual will need to confirm that the death was indeed a suicide, contact outside resources that are now needed on campus, etc.
- Local and State agencies will serve as resources to assist the campus community and its members in working to decrease community trauma.

The Higher Education Mental Health Alliance has created the document Postvention: A Guide for Response to Suicide on College Campuses. This document provides information institutional leadership can use while making plans before an incident and how to proceed after an incident. The document is located at <https://hemha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/jed-hemha-postvention-guide.pdf>

RESOURCES

CAMPUS and COMMUNITY RESOURCES

On Campus Resources		
Department	Name/Title	Phone
Counseling, Testing & Career Services	Mark Wilson, Director	423-478-6217
VP of Student Services	Dr. Willie Thomas, Vice President	423-478-6211
Campus Police Department	Robert Dayo, Chief of Police	423-618-1720
Office of Human Resources	Christy Dale, Director	423-478-6205
Employee Assistance Program	Optum	855-437-3486

*Please note, email may not be an appropriate method of contact in moments of immediate crisis.

Local Emergency Resources	
Name	Phone
Campus Police; Emergency Services	911
Bradley County Sheriff's Office	Non-Emergency: 423-728-7311
Cleveland Police Department	Non-Emergency: 423-476-1121
McMinn County Dispatch	Non-Emergency: 423-745-3222
Meigs County Sheriff's Office	Non-Emergency: 423-334-5268
Monroe County Sheriff's Office	Non-Emergency: 423-442-3911
Polk County Sheriff's Office	Non-Emergency: 423-338-4540

Local Hospitals		
Name	Phone	Website
Bradley Medical Center	423-559-6000	https://vitruvianhealth.com/locations/vitruvian-health-bradley-medical-center-main-campus/
Starr Regional Hospital	423-745-1411	https://www.starregional.com/
Sweetwater Hospital	865-213-8200	https://sweetwaterhospital.org/

Crisis Support		
Hopeline Network	1-800-784-2433	
Trevor Lifeline for LGBT Youth	1-866-488-7386	

Suicide Prevention Lifeline	988 or 1-800-273-8255	
Crisis Text Line	Text "TN" to 741-741	
7 Cups of Team -online chat	7cupsoftea.com	
I'm Alive - online chat	Imalive.org	
Lifeline Crisis Chat - online chat	CrisisChat.org	
Adult Statewide Crisis Phone Line	1-855-CRISIS-1 or 1-855-274-7471	

REGION RESOURCE GUIDE

Region specific resource guides found here: [Southeast Region](#)

REPORTING FORM

- Cleveland State Community College BIT webpage with referral form:
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ClevelandStateCC&layout_id=100

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

[Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network](#) The statewide public-private organization responsible for implementing the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention as defined by the 2001 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. TSPN is a grass-roots association which includes counselors, mental health professionals, physicians, clergy, journalists, social workers, and law enforcement personnel, as well as survivors of suicide and suicide attempts. TSPN works across the state under the direction of our Executive Director to eliminate the stigma of suicide and educate communities about the warning signs of suicide, with the ultimate intention of reducing suicide rates in the state of Tennessee.

[The Jed Foundation](#) The nation's leading organization working to prevent suicide and promote mental health among college students.

[Suicide.org](#) Suicide Prevention, Awareness and Support

[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) Customized information for College Students

[National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) 1-800-273-TALK (8255)