

# Adult Gatekeeper

gate.keep.er

/ˈgāt, kēpər/

someone in a position to recognize a crisis and the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide.

- can be anyone, including teachers, counselors, administrators, coaches, office staff, other school personnel, parents/guardians, other family members, friends/peers, neighbors, and others who may be strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide.

The most important role of *gatekeepers* is to maintain student safety.



Name of Identified Gatekeeper: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

You have been identified as a trusted adult gatekeeper in a safety plan.

**Note: Student information is confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone not on the student's safety plan. If you have any questions, contact the Suicide/Threat Prevention Liaison identified on the back of this handout.**

## Here's how you can make a difference:

Knowing the issues concerning mental health and suicide can aid in the prevention of suicide, help those in crisis, and change the way we think and talk about suicide. Being informed about the warning signs and risk factors for suicide are essential when helping someone who might be thinking about suicide. On this handout, you will find tips on how to be supportive, stay engaged, and help keep someone else safe. Everyone plays a role in suicide prevention...including you!

### RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE

- Access to means (e.g., firearms, knives, medication)
- Stressors (e.g., loss, peer relations, school, gender identity issues)
- History of depression, mental illness, or substance/alcohol abuse
- History of suicide in the family or of a close friend
- History of mental illness in the family

### WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness
- Significant changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Suicide threats (direct and indirect)
- Suicide notes and plans
- History of suicidal ideation/behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- Preoccupation with death
- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions, posting plans on social media, sending text messages to friends)

## Here's What You Can Do:

### LISTEN

- Listen without judgment.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as:
  - Tell me what happened.
  - Have you thought about suicide?

### PROTECT

- Respond immediately.
- Remove unsafe items such as guns, ligatures, medication, etc. from being accessible.
- Discuss and develop a plan for safety if they experience a mental health crisis in your presence.

### CONNECT

- Be a source of safety. If an individual discloses suicidal ideation, thank him/her for telling you and reassure him/her of your support.
- If you are worried about the individual's safety, communicate with the school administration, mental health personnel, counselor, or Suicide/Threat Prevention Liaison listed on the back of this handout.
- Contact Department of Mental Health, law enforcement, or child protective services, as needed.

### MODEL

- Remain calm. Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.
- Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and reactions as you listen without judgment.

### TEACH

- Teach healthy ways to cope with stress, including deep breathing, writing/drawing, exercise, or talking.
- Seek school and community resources, including referrals to professional mental health services.
- Reinforce help-seeking behaviors and the identification of adults they can trust.

## Resources

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION/ AFTER HOURS SERVICES

#### IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE HELP, CALL 911.

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771

#### COMMUNITY HOTLINES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
(800) 273-TALK (8255) (24 hours)

Trevor Lifeline (866) 488-7386 (24 hours)

Teen Line (800) 852-8336/(800) TLC-TEEN  
(6pm-10pm daily)

#### TEXT AND CHAT RESOURCES

Crisis Text Line – Free, 24/7, confidential  
Text LA to 741741

Crisis Chat (11am-11pm, daily)  
<http://www.crisischat.org/chat>

Teen Line (6pm-10pm)  
Text “TEEN” to 839863

#### ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://www.didihirsch.org/>

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

<http://teenline.org/>

<http://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide>

<https://www.eachmindmatters.org>

#### SMARTPHONE APPS

Teen Line Youth Yellow Pages

For more information about suicide prevention and intervention, please visit

<http://suicideprevention.lausd.net>



## Self-Care Tips for the Adult Gatekeeper

Being identified as a person of support to someone who is thinking about suicide can be frightening and overwhelming. There is a cost to caring if we isolate ourselves without fortifying our personal sources of strength. Your dedication to helping others requires that you also prioritize your self-care. Although this may seem challenging at times, please remember to:

- Find time to recharge and renew.
- Listen deeply to your needs, and act on them.
- Consider disconnecting from media or stressful situations to allow your mind, body, and spirit to rest.
- Protect yourself by getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising your body and mind, and also leaning on trusted friends, relatives, and support systems.
- Maintain regular, supportive contact within your personal circle of family or friends.
- Connect with wonder. Appreciate the miracle that is life, which allows us to find gratitude, even in the midst of suffering.

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Suicide/Threat Prevention Liaison(s) and/or School Site Crisis Team Member(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Los Angeles Unified School District  
**Student Health & Human Services | School Mental Health**

333 S. Beaudry Avenue, 29<sup>th</sup> Floor | (213) 241-3841  
[smh.lausd.net](http://smh.lausd.net) | [ccis.lausd.net](http://ccis.lausd.net)

**SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE** - You may be able to save a life.