

**Mount St. Joseph University**  
**Suicide Prevention/Intervention Policy**  
**Wellness Center**  
**Division of Academic Affairs**

**Introduction:** Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young adults aged 17-24 years. In addition, suicide, attempted suicide and suicidal gestures have a significant detrimental effect on the entire campus community. Mount St. Joseph University seeks to foster a safe environment for the campus community. Through the Wellness Center Counseling and Health Services, Mount St. Joseph University commits its resources to providing crisis intervention and to educating and promoting discussion about reducing the stigma for seeking mental health care and preventing suicide, non-suicidal self-injury, and violence.

**Definition:** For the purpose of this policy, suicide is the purposeful act of causing one's own death. Attempted suicide is the act, threat, or gesture in which a person engages in life threatening behavior(s) with the intent of ending one's life. Suicidal ideation refers to a broad array of thoughts related to ending one's life. These range in severity from vague, fleeting reflections about non-existence to thoroughly formulated plans of actions.

**Prevention**

**Efforts**

The goal of educational programming is to promote understanding of the dynamics of suicide and to recognize behaviors that may signal suicidal intent. Periodic programming and training workshops will address topics of depression, anxiety, general principles of mental health, stress, and other topics related to student concerns. Professional training in the use of QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training is available through the Wellness Center. The Wellness Center has two trained clinicians who provide this training. Training efforts are concentrated early in the academic year in the months of September and October, but can also be offered later in the academic year. In addition to 4-6 QPR Gatekeeper Trainings provided to the entire campus, specific groups are targeted for additional training: Resident Assistants, Health Sciences Majors, and Student Leaders. Other programming throughout the year includes topics that reduce the stigma related to mental health and to increase awareness of suicide prevention efforts.

**Parental**

**Notification**

Suicidal situations are highly individual. The primary goal of this policy is the student's safety. To achieve this, a student's designated emergency contact will be informed as necessary, under the direction of the Director of Wellness Center to promote the safety of the student and others whose health, life or safety may be endangered. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFS 99.36) provides for the release of normally protected student data when it is believed that the student represents a health or safety risk to self or others. Whenever possible, consent is requested from the student before an emergency contact is notified.

## Intervention

In a proactive effort to identify students who might be at risk, the Wellness Center Counseling Services administers a Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) to new incoming first-year and transfer students during the Welcome Week at the beginning of the fall semester. This assessment targets 7 areas of concern including Suicidal Ideation. After the assessment is administered, Wellness Center Counselors contact the following:

- All students who endorse Suicidal Ideation will be contacted.
- All students with moderate or high elevations in 2 or more scales will be contacted.
- All students with moderate or high elevations on depression, anxiety, social anxiety, alcohol use or disordered eating will be contacted.
- Students who require more intensive services will be referred to an outside provider.

Training Opportunities on Mental Health 101 and Student Supportive Strategies are offered throughout the year for all faculty and staff. Crisis Resources are also available on the Wellness Center website at: [www.msj.edu/wellness](http://www.msj.edu/wellness).

**Wellness Center Staff:** The Counseling Staff from the Wellness center consists of independently licensed mental health providers who are guided by the ethical standard of their respective professions:

- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

The Wellness Center mental health providers are responsible for understanding and complying with the ethical standards of their professions. The general requirement that counselors and social workers keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent clear and foreseeable danger to the student or others who are assessed to be at an imminent safety risk. Counselors consult with other professionals when in doubt as to the validity of an exception (ACA Code of Ethics. B.2.b.; NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards. 1.07).

Wellness Center counselors provide consulting services to University faculty and staff upon request to assist personnel in working with students on issues related to suicide. University faculty and/or staff who have questions relating to suicide are encouraged to call the Wellness Center office during normal business hours.

## Emergency

**Intervention** Because suicide attempts may result in death, the early identification of persons at risk for suicide is essential. Help should be sought when individuals are talking about suicide or have taken any actions that could be construed as leading to a possible suicide attempt. Below are general policies regarding emergencies:

**General Policy: Faculty and Staff are directed to call 911 and/or Campus Police for any life threatening emergency.**

- Mental Health emergencies will be directed to Tri/Health Good Samaritan Hospital unless the student has another preferred provider.
- Documentation of any services or consultations provided in response will be documented in a secure Electronic Health Record.
- If a student is admitted to the hospital for a medical emergency, the Chief Belonging Officer Students will contact the professors of the student to let them know that there was a medical emergency which may require a student to miss some classes.

## Transition back to campus after emergency

**General Statement:** It is important to ensure the safety of the student and of the University community following a mental health or medical emergency resulting in a student leaving campus for treatment. The University desires to facilitate a smooth transition back to campus for the student who has been in crisis. In addition, the University must also safeguard the safety and well-being of the campus community.

Any student who experiences a mental health emergency is required to check in with the Director of Wellness or a Wellness Center Counselor on the next business day following their release from the hospital or emergency room.

- Students who are hospitalized for a mental health emergency are asked to have their Discharge Summary faxed to the Wellness Center at 513.244.4738.
- Students should contact Student Accessibility Services at 513-244-4623 or email [StudentAccessibilityServices@msj.edu](mailto:StudentAccessibilityServices@msj.edu) to obtain a copy of the Temporary Illness Form or Medical Leave Form.
- The Director of Wellness or a Wellness Center Counselor will communicate with Chief Belonging Officer or the Director of Residence Life for any mental health emergency involving a Resident Hall student.

## Follow-up

The student who has been identified as at risk for suicide, is expected to cooperate with University personnel and/or medical personnel in taking any necessary measures to reduce the likelihood that a suicide attempt will be made. Once the student is released from the hospital or emergency room, they are expected to check in with the Wellness Center Director or Wellness Center Counselor on the next business day following their release.

- Counseling services at the Wellness Center are available to the students for ongoing care. If a higher level of care is warranted, the Wellness Center will make appropriate referrals. If appropriate, a medical leave is another possibility for the student. A Temporary Illness Form or Medical Leave Form can be completed by the student's doctor or license clinician and emailed to [StudentAccessibilityServices@msj.edu](mailto:StudentAccessibilityServices@msj.edu) to begin this process.
- Whenever possible, the student will be assisted to continue enrollment at the University. This decision will be made by the student in consultation with medical personnel, Wellness Center, Student Accessibility Services, Mission & Belonging administration, and any other staff/faculty necessary to make a decision that is in the best interest of the student.