



## **Responding to Mental Health Emergencies**

Emergency situations are rare: however, swift and decisive action is necessary when they do occur. Generally, a *psychological emergency* involves one or more of the following conditions:

- A suicide attempt, gesture, threat, or stated intention
- A homicidal attempt, gesture, threat, or stated intention
- Behavior posing a threat to self
- Behavior posing a threat to others
- Inability to care for self and this *may* include loss of contact with reality

**In the event of an emergency, it is helpful to follow these basic guidelines:**

- Stay calm, as this will help you respond more effectively, and help to reduce the student's anxiety or agitation
- Provide a quiet, private place for the student to rest while further steps are taken
- Be compassionate, yet direct-talk to the student in a clear, straight-forward manner
- If the student appears to be dangerous to self or others, do not leave the student unattended; be aware of your environment and always maintain personal safety. Set clear physical boundaries ("Please step back you are too close.")
- Plan for appropriate intervention or aid and get help.

**The primary campus resources for responding to mental health emergencies are the Health Center and the Campus Police. The following options are available to you:**

- For emergencies, Call for HELP - Campus Police (SLO) x3911 OR (805) 546-3205, (NCC) x4911 OR (805) 591-6205(NCC), or 911 if you are off campus.
- Phone consultation with a Health Center staff member is available at (805) 546-3171 (SLO) during weekday operations.
- You can walk the student over to the Health Center (room 3150 in SLO or N1013 in NCC) for crisis consultation during Health Center operating hours. Please see Health Center Website for current hours.
- Crisis is defined as an *immediate safety concern* (see next page).
- If the student is unusually aggressive or otherwise unmanageable, the Campus Police are available to help by dialing ext. 3911 (SLO) and ext. 4911 (NCC).
- Be prepared to provide as much information as possible about the student and the situation to the campus resource you contact.



## What Constitutes a Crisis/Walk-in Appointment at the Health Center?

- Having current/recent thoughts of suicide
- Thoughts or verbal threats of harming someone else
- Concern for the safety of another person (friend, roommate, family member, classmate)
- A recent experience or concern of unwanted sexual contact
- A recent experience of domestic violence (i.e. someone verbally, physically, emotionally hurting or attempting to hurt them)
- A recent experience of stalking (i.e. someone engaging in a pattern of behavior that is creating fear for them, such as repeatedly following, calling, emailing or texting them)
- Seeing or hearing things that others do not seem to see or hear that is causing them distress
- Substance use that feels out of control (i.e. alcohol, legal or illegal substances, etc.)

### Student with Suicidal Thoughts Quick Guide

- **Assess for Suicide**

1. Ask directly if the student has thoughts of suicide
2. Ask if they have a plan to do it
3. Ask if they have a method/means to do it

- **Respond & Give Resources**

If the student answers YES TO MORE THAN ONE of the suicide assessment questions, call:

- **Walk the student to the Health Center during operating hours (do not leave the student alone).**
  - SLO (Rm 3150)
  - NCC (Rm 1013)
- SLO Campus Police-ext. 3911
- NC Campus Police-ext. 4911
- **If off campus, call local police – 911 and request a safety check. Provide as much information as possible.**

If the student answers *yes to none or only the first* suicide assessment question(s) complete a Well Being Concern online **AND** refer them to:

- SLO Cuesta Health Center\*-ext. 3171, Building 3100, Room 3150
- NC Health Center\*-ext. 4207, Building N1000, Room N1013
- SLO Hotline (800) 783-0607 or Text Courage to: 741741

\*Do not email or call, walk student there