



# Suicide Prevention and Response Protocol



LEE COLLEGE

## Contents

|                                                                                    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Lee College Suicide Prevention and Response Protocol.....                          | 4  |
| INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE .....                                                     | 4  |
| Understanding Suicidality .....                                                    | 4  |
| Suicide Ideation .....                                                             | 4  |
| Suicide Attempt with Intent to Die .....                                           | 4  |
| Violent Behavior and Mental Health .....                                           | 5  |
| PREVENTION AND AWARENESS .....                                                     | 5  |
| Training and Education .....                                                       | 5  |
| ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES .....                                                       | 6  |
| CRISIS RESPONSE PROTOCOLS .....                                                    | 6  |
| Protocol for IMMEDIATE Threat .....                                                | 7  |
| Protocol for Suicide Ideation with Plan or Intent (No Immediate Danger) .....      | 7  |
| Protocol for Suicide Ideation (No Plan or Threat) .....                            | 8  |
| General Concerns .....                                                             | 8  |
| POSTVENTION .....                                                                  | 8  |
| Postvention Protocol - Suicide Attempt Survivor Response .....                     | 9  |
| Postvention Protocol - Student Returning to Campus After Mental Health Crisis..... | 9  |
| Postvention Protocol - Suicide Death Response .....                                | 9  |
| ADDITIONAL INFORMATION .....                                                       | 10 |
| Working with Minors .....                                                          | 10 |
| Online Students (Off Campus Situations) .....                                      | 10 |

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Guidelines for Use of Emergency Contacts .....             | 10 |
| Welfare (Wellness) Check - General Guidelines .....        | 10 |
| CONCLUSION .....                                           | 10 |
| APPENDICES.....                                            | 11 |
| APPENDIX A – RESOURCES .....                               | 12 |
| Lee College Campus Resources / Mental Health Support ..... | 12 |
| CARES Folder .....                                         | 12 |
| Mental Health Therapist .....                              | 12 |
| TimelyCare.....                                            | 12 |
| 988 Crisis Line / Suicide Prevention Resource .....        | 12 |
| Community Resources .....                                  | 13 |
| Employee Resources .....                                   | 13 |
| APPENDIX B - CRISIS RESPONSE FLOW CHART .....              | 14 |
| APPENDIX C – ASSESSING THE THREAT FOR SUICIDE.....         | 15 |
| When to Seek Help (Immediate Danger) .....                 | 15 |
| Common Warning Signs.....                                  | 15 |
| Changes in Behavior or Mood.....                           | 15 |

# Lee College Suicide Prevention and Response Protocol

It is the goal of Lee College to provide the support necessary for students to be successful in pursuing their goals. By providing mental health support and suicide prevention resources, the College reinforces its vision as a caring community while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students and employees.

## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to employees to 1) support the prevention of suicide through education and referrals; 2) provide support to those who are suicidal or have suicidal ideation (i.e., crisis response); and 3) provide a coordinated response should there be an attempted suicide or a death by suicide within the campus community. While this document focuses on supporting students, information is also provided to assist employees who may have suicidal ideation.

The role of all employees is to identify and support an individual in crisis; however, specific areas of the College are responsible for assuring the individual receives the appropriate support and resources. Departments or areas that take on additional responsibilities include the Security Department, the CARES Team, the Human Resources Office, and the College's Mental Health Therapist.

### Understanding Suicidality

Suicidality is a significant concern on college campuses. Academic pressure, social transitions, identity development, financial stress, and the shift to independence all converge during the college years, creating conditions in which students are particularly vulnerable. Lee College serves both traditional and non-traditional students who may have additional responsibilities such as caretaking, supporting families and other life circumstances. Understanding the key concepts — suicide ideation, suicide attempt with intent to die, and non-suicidal self-injury

(NSSI) — is essential for anyone working with or supporting college students.

### Suicide Ideation

Suicide ideation refers to thoughts about, or preoccupation with, ending one's own life. These thoughts exist on a spectrum, ranging from fleeting, passive thoughts to active, detailed planning with clear intent.

Ideation is more common among college students than is widely recognized, at 11 percent (declining from 15 percent after the pandemic). Stressors unique to the college environment — including academic performance pressure, social comparison, financial burden, and the loss of prior support systems — can intensify existing vulnerabilities. First-generation students and those from marginalized communities may carry additional stressors with fewer institutional supports ([National Institute of Health](#)).

### Suicide Attempt with Intent to Die

A suicide attempt involves a self-injurious act carried out with the purpose of ending one's life. This distinguishes it critically from non-suicidal self-injury. The most common means of suicide include the use of a firearm, overdosing on medications or other drugs, and asphyxiation.

**Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)** - NSSI is the intentional, direct injury of one's own body without the intent to die. Common forms include cutting, burning, hitting, or scratching. NSSI is distinct from suicidal behavior and must be clearly differentiated in assessment and

response. While self-injury does not inherently mean a person is suicidal, it is a significant risk factor for future suicide attempts and is linked to a much higher risk of suicide compared to the general population ([Cornell University](#)).

## **Violent Behavior and Mental Health**

It is rare for someone to engage in violent behavior during a mental health crisis and mental illness does not in and of itself cause violent behavior. Situations in which risk may be somewhat elevated include feeling threatened, acute intoxication, and untreated psychosis.

## **PREVENTION AND AWARENESS**

Suicide prevention aims to decrease the number of people who die by suicide or attempt suicide each year, focusing on reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors. Examples of risk factors include a history of suicide attempts, untreated mental illness, substance misuse, life stressors (e.g., physical illness, chronic pain, significant life changes) and access to lethal means among many others. Protective factors include but are not limited to interpersonal connectedness to friends and family, personal coping skills, access to mental health care, and a strong sense of purpose and self-esteem. Preventing suicide requires both education and an understanding of the specific roles and responsibilities for various members of the campus community.

## **Training and Education**

Best practices for suicide prevention include education on recognizing signs of distress and providing guidance on how to have difficult conversations. This includes providing the skills and tools necessary to refer those in need to appropriate resources.

**Employee Professional Development** - Lee College provides training on suicide prevention in the form of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Question Persuade Refer (QPR). MHFA is available

for full-time or part-time employees while QPR training is available to both employees and students. Both provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to recognize individuals in distress and how to connect them to support resources.

## **New Student Orientation and Tabling Events**

- In addition to training, Lee College also provides information and education on campus resources for mental health support and suicide prevention through tabling events throughout the year. Information to the campus is provided as part of New Student Orientation and other ongoing student engagement events such as Fall Fiesta, Spring Fling, and Wellness Wednesday. Specialized mental health education may include Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and Stress Relief Week.

**CARES Folder** – The CARES Folder is a tool for faculty and staff, providing information on recognizing signs of distress, available resources, and how to refer students for support. In addition to the physical folder, a poster version is available to be placed in classroom (behind the podium) or other employee areas. More information on the folder and how to request a copy can be found on the CARES Team [website](#).

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** - 988 is a suicide prevention and mental health crisis line available for both crisis support and general questions about mental health resources. Whether you are seeking help for yourself or someone else, calling 988 can connect you with information and local support services. If calling from a Lee College office phone, dial 1-800-273-8255 to ensure the call goes through.

## ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all members of the campus to recognize when support may be necessary, to be aware of the support resources available, and be familiar and willing to refer individuals to the appropriate resources for support. The following individuals, departments, and areas have additional responsibilities in working with individuals and mental health crises such as suicide.

- **Supervisors** - Supervisors should be knowledgeable of how to report and refer students of concern and educate their employees in the process. In addition, they are encouraged to provide employees with time and opportunities to complete training such as the Question Persuade Refer (QPR) or Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).
- **CARES Team** – Through an online referral process, the Lee College CARES Team connects students with wrap-around services to meet individual student needs. The Team is responsible for ongoing education to the campus community on how to support and refer students who are in distress. Case managers provide suicide screenings for all referred students.
- **Mental Health Services** - It is the responsibility of the College's Mental Health Therapist to provide direct therapeutic support to students in need and, when necessary, provide support to employees at a time of crisis. The therapist is familiar with community resources and assists individuals with referrals for more long-term support. As a member of the CARES Team, guidance is provided to support the case managers the therapist provides guidance and support to the case managers working directly with students. Finally, the therapist supports the campus by providing ongoing education on

mental health and suicide prevention.

- **Security** – Lee College Security Officers are often the first point of contact for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis on campus. Trained in de-escalation and suicide prevention, officers assist in assuring the safety of the campus to include direct support during times of crisis. As a member of the CARES Team, Security Officers may offer training on de-escalation, coordinate the request of welfare checks with other law enforcement agencies, and engage the Baytown Police Department's mental health services when necessary.
- **Human Resources Office** – The Employee Relations Manager provides support to employees who may be experiencing a mental health crisis such as suicidal ideation, providing employees with information on accessing mental health resources through the employee's private insurance or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). TimelyCare is available for part-time employees.

## CRISIS RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

The primary goal of crisis response is to ensure the safety of an individual who is either actively engaged in a suicide attempt or expressing suicidal ideation. It is not the role of anyone to place themselves in danger in responding to a mental health crisis or suicide attempt. In the event the individual has a weapon or is in a dangerous environment, contact campus security or dial 911.

- Main Campus Security – 281-425-6888
- South Liberty County Security – 832-556-5781
- McNair Campus Security – 832-556-4007

Appendix B provides a succinct flowchart outlining threat assessment and response protocols for individuals who: 1) are in immediate danger; 2) have a plan or intent without immediate danger; or 3) have suicidal ideation without threat. The employee should assess the risk level of the situation (i.e., if there is an immediate threat of harm) and follow the procedures below based on their assessment.

### **Protocol for IMMEDIATE Threat**

Appendix C provides information on assessing immediate threats which may include the following warning signs.

- The individual has a weapon or dangerous substance and is threatening to use it;
- The individual is talking about immediate harm to oneself or others; or
- The individual is acting in such an erratic manner that you are concerned about their safety.

If it is believed that the individual is an immediate danger to themselves or others, the employee should call 911 and notify security (281-425-6888).

While on campus, notification also can be done through the [Crisis Alert Badge](#)—a wearable panic alarm device. These badges enable faculty and staff to discreetly request assistance. By pressing the badge three times quickly, Campus Security and site administrators will be notified and respond. As a follow up, the employee is asked to submit a CARES Team referral for a student and notify the Human Resources Office for employees.

For situations in which a weapon is involved (i.e., the individual is threatening to use a firearm), pressing the badge eight or more times quickly will alert Campus Security, site administrators, and local law enforcement to respond.

### **Protocol for Suicide Ideation with Plan or Intent (No Immediate Danger)**

Individuals may express suicide ideation with no immediate threat or danger. This may include individuals who talk about suicide, but do not have a plan and deny any immediate action toward suicide. Resource information can be found in Appendix A. For this situation the following protocols should be followed:

- Inform the individual of your concern for their safety and that you need to connect them to Lee College's licensed professional therapist or other support.
  - Offer to walk the individual to the therapist's office for an immediate assessment or appointment, located in the Student Center, Room 112.1. The therapist can also be reached at 832.556.4550.
  - If the therapist is not available or if the situation has occurred after hours, the Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988 or 1-800-273-8255) may be called. In this situation, you should offer to sit with the individual while the call is made.
- The individual may refuse support. For this situation, the student or employee cannot be detained should they choose to leave the area.
  - Contact Security (281-425-6888) who will assess the situation. If possible, include a description of the individual (including a clothing description). If the individual is on campus and if appropriate, the Baytown Police Department will be contacted. If the individual is not on campus, Security may determine the need for a welfare check with the appropriate law enforcement agency based on the individual's home location.

- As a follow-up, students should be referred to the CARES Team through the [online referral form](#). Employees should be referred to the Employee Relations Manager, Sarah Cummings ([scummings@lee.edu](mailto:scummings@lee.edu)) in the Human Resource Office, Rundell Hall 201.

## Protocol for Suicide Ideation (No Plan or Threat)

If it is believed that there is no immediate threat, inform the individual of your concern for their safety and that you would like to refer them to support resources. A full list of resources can be found in Appendix A.

For students:

- Offer support for therapy by assisting the student with a referral to the College therapist through the [therapy online referral form](#). A call or email to the therapist will help ensure the appointment is made in a timely manner. Please note that referrals to the mental health therapist cannot be submitted without the student's knowledge and permission. The Lee College therapist works only with individuals 18 years or older.
- Assist the student with setting up their TimelyCare account ([www.timelycare.com/lee](http://www.timelycare.com/lee)) for virtual mental health support (TalkNow or Scheduled Counseling). Information on how to assist with this process can be found [online](#) and includes information on the use of TimelyCare for students under the age of 18.
- If the student declines a referral, provide them with referral information for the therapist, TimelyCare, and other support resources.
- Submit a CARES Team referral using the [online referral form](#). Unlike the therapy referral, which requires student consent,

you can refer someone to the CARES Team without their knowledge or permission.

For employees

- Assist the employee by connecting the individual with the Employee Relations Manager in the Human Resource Office (Sarah Cummings – [scummings@lee.edu](mailto:scummings@lee.edu)).
- Provide information on support resources. Full time employees have access to EAP services, and all part-time employees are eligible for TimelyCare support.

## General Concerns

In the event of having general concerns for students, individuals should complete a CARES referral to ensure the student is connected to support resources. Some examples of general concerns are listed below:

- There is evidence of Non-Suicidal Self Injury or other signs of physical injury.
- There is a sudden drop in attendance or engagement in regular activities.
- The student has an outburst or seems upset or distraught.

## POSTVENTION

Postvention refers to the coordinated response after a suicide loss to support survivors and reduce contagion risk (suicide clustering). Postvention is the response after a suicide death, suicide attempt, and the process for returning to campus after a mental health crisis. Best practices include:

- Timely, careful communication — notifications to the campus community that follow safe messaging guidelines (avoid sensationalizing method or circumstances)

- Grief support services — outreach to close peers and classmates with counseling access
- Faculty and staff support -- offering support as they are often overlooked in the grief process
- Monitoring for contagion — increased outreach and screening in the weeks following a loss

The primary goal with postvention is to connect those impacted by the event to support resources. Postvention also includes the College's responsibility to communicate with the campus community, if appropriate, regarding the suicide attempt or death.

### **Postvention Protocol - Suicide Attempt Survivor Response**

If an employee becomes aware of a suicide attempt, a [CARES Team referral](#) should be completed. The Team will then connect the student with the necessary resources while maintaining confidentiality. If the attempt involves an employee, the individual should be referred to the Employee Relations Manager (Sarah Cummings – [scummings@lee.edu](mailto:scummings@lee.edu)) for support.

### **Postvention Protocol - Student Returning to Campus After Mental Health Crisis**

Supporting students returning to college after hospitalization requires a proactive, collaborative approach focusing on academic flexibility, mental health support, and social reintegration.

It is the responsibility of all members of the campus community to recognize when support may be necessary. A [referral to the CARES Team](#) provides a case management approach for reintegration which may include the following strategies:

- a referral to the [Access Center](#) (disability services) for classroom accommodations;
- advocacy with faculty for support and/or;
- connecting with resources such as therapy, TimelyCare, or academic support (tutoring).

### **Postvention Protocol - Suicide Death Response**

Should an employee become aware of a student's death by suicide, the information should be shared with the Registrar ([admissions@lee.edu](mailto:admissions@lee.edu)) and the CARES Team ([bit@lee.edu](mailto:bit@lee.edu)). The College has established a protocol regarding the death of a student including the consideration of a posthumous credential as outlined in [Administrative Regulation EGC-R](#).

Should a student die by suicide, the following protocol will be followed

- Various departments (CARES Team, Registrar's Office, Business Office, Financial Aid, etc.) will be notified to implement procedures related to the death of a student.
- The CARES Team will identify individuals who may have been impacted and ensure support and resources are provided.
- All public statements, if necessary, will come solely from the President's Office or Marketing and Public Affairs to ensure clarity and consistency with campus messaging.
- Information on Mental Health Services will be provided to support faculty, staff, or other students as needed.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Working with Minors**

While student safety is always the top priority, the response for students under the age of 18 differs slightly. In these cases, Lee College works with school district officials and dual-credit advisors to coordinate the appropriate support.

### **Online Students (Off Campus Situations)**

The CARES Team and/or Security may request a welfare check for individuals of concern who are not currently located on campus. This may occur when students are enrolled in online-only classes, do not live close to campus, or are temporarily away from campus.

### **Guidelines for Use of Emergency Contacts**

At the time of admission, students identify an emergency contact. All communication with the student's emergency contact is done through the Registrar, the Security Department, or as part of the CARES Team process. This contact may be made (as permitted by FERPA) for situations in which there is a concern for the student's well-being such as a mental health crisis. This may include students at an elevated range of the NABITA Risk Rubric which includes behaviors such as suicidal ideation or non-suicidal self-injury.

The following guidelines were established by the CARES Team to guide outreach to a student's emergency contact.

- When communicating with the student's emergency contact, it's important to focus on immediate concerns and not overshare information. It is recommended that the contact be referred to as "secondary contact" instead of emergency contact.

- When referred to the CARES Team and as part of the intake, students confirm their emergency contact. If a different emergency contact is identified, the updated information will be shared with the Registrar, and an update is made in the student's record.

### **Welfare (Wellness) Check - General Guidelines**

A welfare check (or wellness check) is a proactive, in-person visit by law enforcement utilized to ensure a person's safety and wellbeing, typically initiated when the student cannot be reached, and a crisis is suspected. Law enforcement personnel may knock, check premises, or enter without a warrant if they have reasonable belief of immediate danger. While a welfare check can sometimes feel extreme, there are situations where it is appropriate and varies depending on the case.

With the submission of a CARES Team referral, The Lee College Security Chief can help employees determine if there is a need for a welfare check. For students, it can be an intervention for those who are at high risk (critical or elevated).

## **CONCLUSION**

Lee College is committed to the success and wellbeing of the community it serves. The Suicide Prevention and Response Protocol ensures the College remains diligent in the training and education of the campus community in order to recognize individuals in distress and to know how to connect individuals to support resources. If there are any questions about the protocol, please contact The CARES Team ([bit@lee.edu](mailto:bit@lee.edu)).

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A – RESOURCES

### Lee College Campus Resources / Mental Health Support

#### CARES Folder

The [CARES Folder](#) is a quick reference guide for faculty and staff to help them recognize the signs of students in distress. The folder provides information on support resources available and serves as a guide for faculty and staff on how to connect students to these resources. A [digital copy of the CARES Folder](#) can be downloaded for your reference. A direct report to the CARES Team can be made through their [online referral form](#).

#### Mental Health Therapist

A full-time Licensed Professional Counselor provides short-term counseling services to students aged 18 and older. The therapist is located in the Student Center, Room 112.1. With the student's permission and knowledge, employees may refer students through an [online referral form](#). In times of crisis, the therapist is available for employees and others.

#### TimelyCare

Students and part time employees have access to TimelyCare—free virtual and wellbeing services. Services include scheduled counseling, TalkNow, and psychiatric services. More information on creating an account and accessing services can be found on [online](#).

NOTE: Faculty are encouraged to add a TimelyCare link to their Blackboard Ultra courses to give students quick access to medical and mental health support resources.

Steps to add TimelyCare link:

1. In course, locate the “Details & Actions” panel and click “Books & Tools”
2. Scroll down until you locate “TimelyCare – Medical and Mental Health Support”
3. Click the small plus sign (+) next to the option and this will automatically add a link to TimelyCare at the bottom of your course content page.
4. You may move the link to your desired location. You may also update the description to better suit your students' needs
5. Ensure the link is set to “available” so students will be able to see the link

#### 988 Crisis Line / Suicide Prevention Resource

988 is a suicide prevention and mental health crisis line available for both crisis support and general questions about mental health resources. Whether you are seeking help for yourself or someone else, calling 988 can connect you with information and local support services. If you are calling from a Lee College office phone, use 1-800-273-8255 to ensure the call goes through.

## Community Resources

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Local Mental Health Authorities</a> | Additional resources to include Local Mental Health Authorities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Suicide Prevention & the Crisis Lifeline        | <a href="#">Lee College Website</a> with Information and support for suicide prevention and education.<br><a href="#">988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline</a> (1-800-273-8255 if calling from Lee College office line) - Call, text or chat<br><a href="#">Veterans 24/7 confidential crisis support</a> Text 838255 |

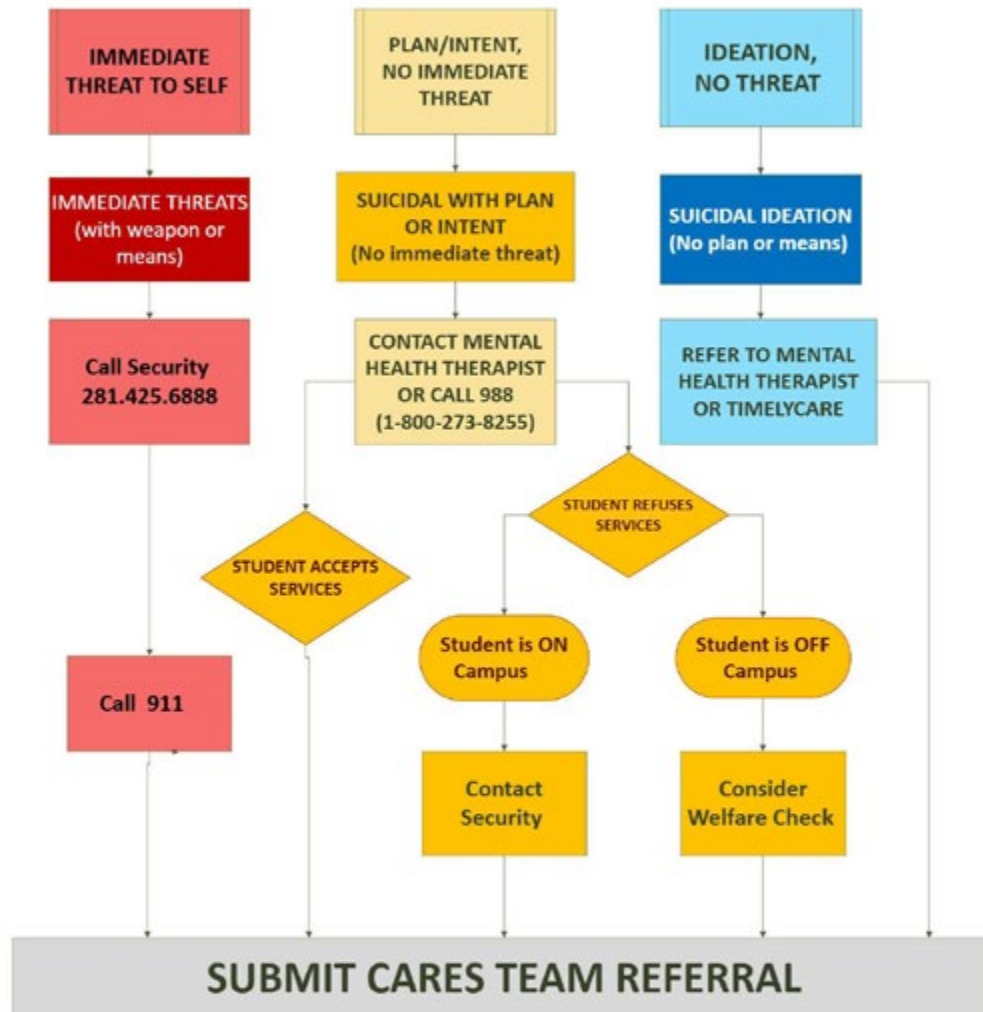
## Employee Resources

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Employee Assistance Program</b><br>Full-Time Employees can access all of the UTEAP services, completely free and confidential, anytime by visiting <a href="#">uteap.org</a> and logging in with Username: uteap Password: uteap.<br><br>To talk to someone directly, employees can call a caring professional (24/7) at 713-500-3327. All resources are available year-round, anytime time feels overwhelming or if extra support is needed. | UTEAP services are available 24/7, completely free and confidential, and are designed to help with both everyday questions and life's more complex situations.<br>UTEAP benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24/7 confidential counseling for you and your family</li> <li>• Work-life solutions for everyday challenges like childcare, relocation, or travel</li> <li>• Financial consultations for budgeting, credit repair, tax questions, or retirement planning</li> <li>• Legal guidance for estate planning, debt management, or major life changes</li> <li>• On-demand webinars covering stress, communication, emotional wellness, and more</li> </ul>                                                                          |
| <b>Lee College Security &amp; Crisis Alert Badges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 281.425.6888 (24/7)</li> <li>• 832.556.4007 – McNair Campus</li> <li>• 832.556.5781- LCEC (Liberty Campus)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <a href="#">Lee College Security Department</a> provides support to the campus community to include situations involving a mental health crisis.<br><br>Lee College provides employees with CrisisAlert badges – wearable panic alarm devices that can be activated in campus buildings, parking lots, or grounds. These badges enable faculty and staff to discreetly request assistance or initiate a campus-wide lockdown, notifying Campus Security and, when necessary, local law enforcement of an active threat.<br><br>When activated, the badge instantly transmits the employee's identity and precise location to Campus Security, designated site administrators, and — in critical situations such as an active shooter — to local law enforcement. |

## APPENDIX B - CRISIS RESPONSE FLOW CHART

### SUICIDE THREAT ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE PROTOCOL

#### Assess Student for Suicide Ideation



**IMMEDIATE DANGER (RED)** - Student has a weapon or has taken a substance  
Call 911 and submit a CARES Team Referral

**PLAN OR INTENT (AMBER)** - Suicidal with plan or intent but no immediate danger. Contact the mental health therapist. If the student declines services, contact security (on campus) or consider a welfare check (if off campus). Submit a CARES Team Referral.

**IDEATION ONLY (BLUE)** - Suicide ideation with no threat or plan.  
Refer to the mental health therapist and submit a CARES Team referral.

## APPENDIX C – ASSESSING THE THREAT FOR SUICIDE

(Source: [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#))

### When to Seek Help (Immediate Danger)

Some behaviors may indicate an emergency is happening or that a person is in crisis.

If you observe the following behaviors, you should immediately connect the person with professional help, such as the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#), emergency medical services, or a mental health professional.

- Talking about immediate harm to oneself or others
- Planning to attempt suicide (for example, searching online for information about how to attempt suicide)
- Acting in such an erratic manner that you are concerned about their safety

### Common Warning Signs

- Feeling unbearable pain
- Death or a recent fascination with death
- Feeling hopeless, worthless, or trapped
- Feeling guilt, shame, or anger
- Feeling like they are a burden to others

### Changes in Behavior or Mood

- Recent suicide attempt
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Losing interest in personal appearance or hygiene
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or community
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Giving away prized possessions
- A recent episode of depression, emotional distress, and/or anxiety
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Becoming violent or being a victim of violence
- Expressing rage



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