

NCC's mental health/suicide prevention plan includes 4 main components: suicide prevention, de-stigmatizing mental illness, increasing help-seeking, and promoting mental wellness. Related information is posted on THRIVE's (NCC's Mental Wellness Alliance) publicly accessible web page, as well as our publicly accessible Counseling Services web page.

NCC has engaged in several initiatives to enact this plan. Perhaps most significantly, we have provided QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training to over 200 students, faculty and staff to allow them to serve as "gatekeepers" to detect students at risk for suicide and direct them to needed support. The College recently allocated funds to expand this to several hundred additional gatekeepers, potentially reaching thousands of students in need over the next several years. In addition, Counseling Services provides free anonymous mental health screenings via our website and learning management system (LMS) to all students, with over 2,000 students having participated since January 2019. The results have informed our programming efforts, and the screening platform refers students to on campus and external resources including services that provide immediate crisis response.

NCC's Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT) serves as a central repository for reports of behavior that may be indicative of a future threat of harm to self or others. All students, faculty and staff are encouraged to report any such behavior that does not place anyone in immediate danger. For circumstances involving the latter, students, faculty and staff are directed to report the situation immediately to NCC Public Safety which is available for immediate response on a 24/7/365 basis. As needed to best assess the situation, Public Safety will involve NCC counselors or community resources such as county crisis services or paramedics.

The following information geared toward preventing suicide is posted on NCC's Counseling Services website. The information will also be communicated to all students. Within the first month of the fall and spring semesters, all students will receive an email from the Dean of Student Success and Retention with information about mental health support resources. This will include national, state and local suicide prevention hotlines as well as on campus and local/remote crisis intervention services. This information will also be posted on NCC's learning management system (LMS).

*Disclaimer: Some of the information below is sensitive in nature. Additionally, this information is not a substitute for an assessment by a trained mental health professional.*

# PREVENTION: Warning Signs and Risk Factors

*Awareness of suicide warning signs and risk factors may help to prevent suicide.*

## Suicide Warning Signs

A change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors may indicate someone is at risk of suicide. This is of particular concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.

### Talk

If a person talks about:

Desire to die, killing oneself	Feeling hopeless, tired of life	Having no reason to live
Being a burden to others	Feeling trapped	Unbearable pain

### Behavior

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

Increased use of drugs/alcohol	Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods	Withdrawing from activities
Isolating from family, friends	Sleeping too much or too little	Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
Giving away money and/or prized possessions	Aggression	Fatigue
Sudden and drastic changes in behaviors (i.e. hitting, screaming, etc.)	Relapse (mental health, substance use disorder, chronic health condition etc.)	Putting personal affairs and business affairs into order
Stockpiling pills, purchasing a gun	Sudden interest or disinterest in religion	

### Mood

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

Depression	Anxiety	Loss of interest
Irritability	Humiliation/Shame	Agitation/Anger
Relief/Sudden improvement in mood/Euphoria		

## Suicide Risk Factors

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to complete suicide. Awareness of these risk factors may help to prevent suicide.

### Health Factors

Mental health conditions	Chronic health conditions	Traumatic brain injury	Terminal illness
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### Environmental Factors/Situational Clues

Access to lethal means including but not limited to firearms and drugs	Prolonged stress including but not limited to harassment, bullying, relationship problems, unemployment	Stressful life events, like rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss	Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide
Sudden unexpected loss of freedom or anticipated loss of financial security	Loss of a cherished counselor, teacher, therapist	A recent move, especially if unwanted	

### Historical Factors

Previous suicide attempts	Family history of suicide	Child abuse, neglect and/or trauma
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## INTERVENTION: ON/OFF Campus Resources

*Knowledge of on/campus resources may help when persuading an at-risk person to access help.*

### Counseling Services

NCC Counseling Services is staffed by 7 full-time and 5 part-time counselors available to provide counseling support to students in distress. The college also has trained individuals, including Public Safety officers (all campuses) and Housing staff (Bethlehem campus), available 24/7 in our residence halls who can triage and get access to help as needed (e.g., calling for counselors to respond to campus after hours or dispatching emergency medical services to transport a student to a hospital).

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about NCC's Counseling Services.

Full-time college employees have access to an Employee Assistance Plan administered by BalanceWorks. Confidential services offered at no cost to the employee include mental health counseling as well as other services supporting wellness and life management. During the COVID-19 crisis, this has been extended to part-time employees as well.

## **QPR**

Northampton Community College is equipped to offer evidence based gatekeeper suicide prevention training. Certified QPR instructors are available to train staff, students and faculty to become QPR gatekeepers at all NCC campuses. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information about QPR Training. If you would like to schedule a training on your campus please contact one of our certified QPR Instructors: Andrea Marcolla ([amarcolla@northampton.edu](mailto:amarcolla@northampton.edu)), or Jen Bradley ([jbradley@northampton.edu](mailto:jbradley@northampton.edu)).

## **Resources for Individuals in Distress**

### On Campus Public Safety at NCC

Bethlehem Campus 610-861-5588

Monroe Campus 570-369-1911

Fowler Campus 484-390-3240

### Remote Counseling at NCC (for currently enrolled students)

Bethlehem Campus 610-861-5342

Monroe Campus 570-369-1842

Fowler Campus (Contact Bethlehem Campus) 610-861-5342

### County Crisis and Warm Lines

Lehigh County Crisis Intervention (24-hour) 610-782-3127

Northampton County Crisis Intervention (24-hour) 610-252-9060

Carbon, Monroe, Pike County Crisis Intervention (24-hour) 570-992-0879

Carbon-Monroe-Pike, Lackawanna-Susquehanna, and Wayne Counties Warm-Line  
1-866-654-8114 (7 days a week 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM)

Lehigh County and Northampton County Warm Line 610-820-8451

### National Crisis Numbers

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24-hour) 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line (24-hour) Text "PA" to 741741

### Accessing Treatment/Services

SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or TTY: 1-800-487-4889- confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

## Website Resources

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention National \(AFSP\)](#)  
[AFSP Eastern PA Chapter](#)  
[Seize The Awkward](#)  
[#RealConvo Campaign](#)  
[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)  
[211 National Assistance](#)  
[National Association Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)  
[National Association Mental Illness Lehigh Valley Chapter \(NAMI LV\)](#)  
[Prevent Suicide PA](#)  
[Prevent Suicide PA Northampton County Taskforce](#)  
[Prevent Suicide PA Monroe County Taskforce](#)

## Resources for Survivors

### **HALOS – CLC (Hope After a Loved One’s Suicide – Child Loss Chapter)**

This group supports parents, grandparents, and adult siblings who have lost their child, grandchild, brother or sister to suicide.

Meet 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6:30PM – 8:30PM

Please contact Alice Keyes for more information to determine if this group is right for you.

570-236-1168 or email: [alicekeyes00@gmail.com](mailto:alicekeyes00@gmail.com)

### **LVHN Muhlenberg Hospital**

2545 Schoenersville Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18018

Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month from 7PM – 8PM

Contacts:

Marie Bartos: 484-330-0912; [marie.bartos11@gmail.com](mailto:marie.bartos11@gmail.com)

Cheryl Patino 610-657-0811; [cheryl.afsp@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.afsp@gmail.com)

### **First Presbyterian Church of Allentown, in the Chapel**

3231 West Tilghman St.

Allentown, PA 18101

Meetings are held monthly on the third Thursday of the month from 7PM to 8:30PM

Contacts:

Mary Youtz and Gerry Ifkovits: [afsply2@gmail.com](mailto:afsply2@gmail.com)

### **Survivors of Suicide**

Family Answers

411 Walnut St.

Allentown, PA 18102

(610) 435-9651

Meetings per Month: Two - The First and Third Monday; 7-8 p.m.

## Mental Health Support Groups

### **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance**

A support group for individuals living with depression or bipolar disorder or who have a loved one living with depression or bipolar disorder

#### *Monroe County*

Contact: Lisa Butz

570-476-3422

Lehigh Valley Health Network – Pocono

206 East Brown St.

East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Meets the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month from 7-9 pm

#### *Lehigh Valley*

First Presbyterian Church

Cedar Crest Blvd. and Tilghman St.

Allentown, PA

(Every Wednesday, 7 PM-9 PM)

### **Peer 2 Peer Group**

Weekly Support Group for those experiencing mental illness and their families and friends

Haven House

1411 Union Boulevard

Allentown, PA 18109

610-433-6181 (Ext 142)

(Every Wednesday 3:30-5:00 pm)

# POST-INTERVENTION: Support and Communication

## **Support Services and Communication**

In the event of a confirmed suicide of a student, faculty member or staff member, NCC will make support services readily available and will communicate directly with affected students, faculty and staff. This may take the form of counselor visits to classrooms or residence halls. The Office of the Dean of Student Success and Retention will work in conjunction with NCC's Marketing and Communications to share information to the extent possible.

*Note: The information contained within this document will be updated periodically to align with best practices.*

## References

QPR Institute (2020). <https://qprinstitute.com/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2020). <https://afsp.org/>