

# MAVS A.S.K. Suicide Intervention Protocol

The following protocols are used by Colorado Mesa University whenever a student is at risk for suicide. It is designed to follow national best practices for the coordination of care and is used for all students who are at risk not just those in emanate danger. These guidelines are intended to assist faculty, professional staff, administrators, employees, first responders and students with addressing students who are at risk of suicide. Suicide is a serious campus concern that causes immeasurable pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families, and our campus community. The causes of suicide are complex that are often determined by number of factors, such as mental illness, substance abuse, painful losses, exposure to violence, and social isolation. Suicide, and the threat of suicide, is an issue every college campus faces. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults and is a leading cause of death among college and university students in the United States. Among those between the ages of 15 and 24 years old, for every one death by suicide, there are approximately 100-200 suicide attempts. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), suicide interventions should include the following steps:

- 1. Ask the Question:** “Are you thinking about suicide?”
- 2. Keep them Safe:** Restrict access to lethal means and develop a safety plan.
- 3. Be Present and Listen:** Use Active Empathetic Listening and provide support.
- 4. Help Them Connect:** Use the local MindSprings Crisis Line number @ 1-888-207-4004.
- 5. Follow up and Stay Connected:** Make sure you follow up so supports are in place.

As part of the MAVily (MAV family), it is important for all MAVs to have a working knowledge of these protocols so we can take a stand and make a difference to prevent suicide on campus. Although the University strives to respond in a consistent manner, the specificity and circumstances of each crisis may lead the University to adjust the actions suggested in these protocols that best meets each student’s unique needs. If you think someone maybe at risk for suicide, use the following MAV A.S.K. suicide intervention protocol and be assured that there are team of knowledgeable and well-trained University staff members ready to assist the at-risk student and you to get help. Research shows that the majority of college students who attempt or die by suicide do not access mental health services on campus before the incident. This is the primary reason that all members of the Maverick Family are active parts of CMU’s suicide intervention protocols. These intervention protocols connect students at risk of suicide to the resources and supports. This suicide intervention protocol is only one component of CMU’s compressive plan to address the problem that includes prevention and postvention strategies as well. An integral component of our multi-level system for the mental health, wellness and safety support systems available to our students. Research shows that staying connected, active outreach and being involved with follow up services can significantly reduce the risk of suicide for these individuals. Universities have a responsibility to recognize and respond to students who are at risk of suicide. We recognize the need to expand our suicide intervention, prevention, and postvention strategies that include clinical paradigms for the treatment of students with thoughts of suicide, to provide effective, comprehensive care. CMU has adopted a broad, solution-oriented paradigm to create a full continuum of prevention, intervention and postvention services on campus. CMU uses collaborative partnerships on campus and in our surrounding community to form comprehensive, suicide-prevention, intervention and postvention strategies.

***Goals of the MAVs A.S.K. Suicide Intervention Protocol***

- 1. Outline specific actions to be implemented in response to students who are at risk of suicide.*
- 2. Clarify how members of the MAV Family can respond to students who are at risk of suicide.*
- 3. Identify referral resources and procedures for accessing the local crisis services.*
- 4. Diagram the process flow for CMU's suicide intervention strategies.*
- 5. Delineate the notification process to inform and track students at risk for suicide.*
- 6. Describe stakeholder's role in responding to students at risk of suicide.*
- 7. Explain the role of the Student of Concern (SOC) team in addressing students at risk of suicide.*
- 8. Define the use of the internal "Report It" form for students at risk of suicide.*
- 9. Establish screening procedures that address a student's thoughts of suicide*
- 10. Outline follow-up steps needed to support our students how have thoughts of suicide.*

**Warning Signs:**

Warning signs are signals that someone is in trouble and needs help in the moment. That's why everyone on campus has a significant role to play in intervening with students who may be at risk of suicide. Keep in mind that the presence of warning signs does not mean that some is at risk for suicide. These indicators show that the student is currently struggling and needs help. Warning signs should never be ignored and are a part of our comprehensive efforts in intervening with students at risk of suicide on campus. These efforts seek to increase protective factors and support mental health and wellness. If a student is acting in a way that is not how they normally act, we should be checking in on them and asking them "what's going on?" If you notice any of these warning signs, take action. Approach and talk with the student. Warning signs present in different ways and can include the following but are not limited; to feelings of hopeless and helplessness, lack of motivation and having no reason to live, feeling trapped and overwhelmed with no way out, experiencing unbearable pain (emotion and/or physical), feeling like a burden and low self-esteem, increased use of substances, depression and/or anxiety, increased agitation or behaving recklessly, sleeping or eating too little or too much, social isolation, not attending classes or doing poorly in classes, extreme mood swings, irrational or psychotic thoughts. If you notice, any of these warning signs use the MAV A.S.K protocol to approach, speak up and get the student connected to the resources and supports we have on campus.

**Suicide Screening:**

The suicide-screening tool provided in this protocol should be used **immediately** whenever you think a student might be at risk for suicide, has expressed suicide ideations, has made previous suicide attempts, and or has thoughts about hurting themselves. Remember the most important part of this screening tool is to provide help, ask students about suicide and keep them safe. There are three primary goals for using this screening tool: One to ask powerful-evidenced based questions that have been shown to be effective interventions with someone who has thoughts of suicide. Two to have a straightforward way for anyone to assess students at risk who have thoughts of suicide. Three to create a follow up system that assures these students are safe and getting the help they need. When using this screening tool stay with the student, minimize distractions and take your time. Listen to the student and stay with them until the screening tool is complete and the student is connected to other supports. This screening tool can be completed by ANYONE on campus and the suicide trainings we provide on campus support the use of this screening tool. This protocol is also part of the Student of Concern "Report It" function. All students at risk need to have a follow up risk assessment and evaluation done by a licensed provider. Please follow the protocol outlined below.

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- I. Flow Chart
- II. MAV's A.S.K. Risk Suicide Protocol (to be used by anyone who is concerned that a student may have thoughts of suicide)
  - a. MAV's A.S.K. Risk Assessment tool (open to and can be used by all faculty/staff/students)
  -  b. If it's a positive suicide screen stay with the student and contact the local Mind Springs Crisis line @ (888) 207-4004 or call 911.
  - c. Then notify your supervisor and call Student Services @ 970-248-1366, developed a "Safety Plan" and submit the "Report It" form.
  - d. If the student is **not** at risk then provide the student with contact information for the Local Crisis Number @ (888) 207-4004 and the Student Wellness Center (SWC) @ (970) 644-3740, notify your supervisor and call Student Services @ 970-248-1366 to follow up.
- III. "Safety plans" and Student "Wellness Plans"
- IV. Follow up Risk Assessments then need to be completed by licensed and trained professionals.

**MAV's A.S.K. Suicide Intervention Screening Tool**  
Approach \* Speak up \* Know your resources

**Approach:**

**Verbal invitations:**

- “I just want out.”
- “You don’t have to worry about me.”
- “I’m don’t want to go on.”

**Behavioral invitations:**

- Drastic change in behavior
- Withdrawn, solation, recent pain
- Depression, MH issues or loss

This form can be used by anyone. Engage the student in a discussion by A.S.K.ing “*I’ve noticed (BLANK) can you tell me what’s going on?*” Support the student’s experience, explore strengths and resources, and focus on their resilience by building hope and empowering them to work towards solutions.

**Speak Up:**

	YES	NO
1) “People who are struggling with these things often think about suicide; Are you thinking about suicide?”	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
2) Have you ever had thoughts about suicide? If yes, “How many times? When was the last time?”	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
3) Do you have any plans on following through with suicide? If Yes, ( <b>Call 911 or crisis and stay with them and ASK “How?”</b> )	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
4) Can we work together on keeping you safe? If yes, “How?” (Develop a safety plan. Eliminate access to <b>lethal means</b> )	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>

**\*\*\* All students you have concerns about being at risk for suicide with a score of 1 - 3 are at a lower risk. Please notify your supervisor and Student Services and submit a “Report It” form. These students will need to meet with a licensed professional to complete a full clinical risk assessment and evaluation. All students with a score of 4 or > are at a higher risk and could be in danger of suicide. Please stay with these students, contact Mind Springs Crisis or 911 immediately, contact your supervisor, and notify Student Services ASAP. Then complete the “Report It” form. All students at any level of suicide risk need to have a Wellness Plan completed. \*\*\***

**1 - 2**  
**Low Risk**

**2 - 3**  
**Medium Risk**

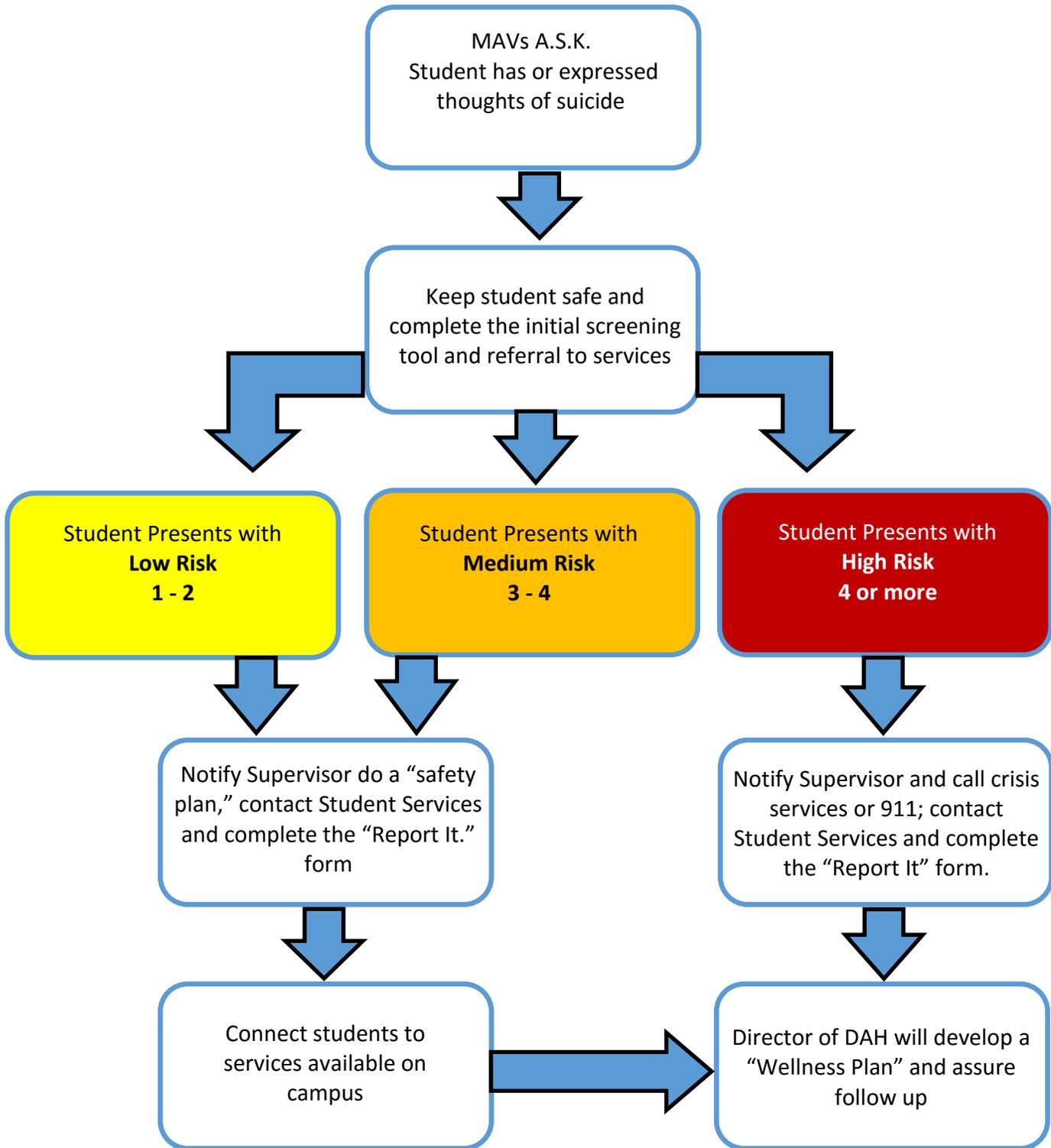
**4 >**  
**High Risk**

**Know Your Resources:**

- Local Crisis Number (Mind Springs) ..... (888) 207-4004**
- CMU Student Services (Lowell Heiny Hall) ..... (970) 248-1366**
- CMU Student Wellness Center (SWC)..... (970) 644-3740**
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline ..... (800) 273-TALK (8255)**

This screening tool was adopted from the following evidenced based instruments  
 SBQ-R Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/images/res/SBQ.pdf>  
 ASQ Suicide Screening Questions <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/ask-suicide-screening-questions-asq.shtml>

# Suicide Protocol Flow Chart



## "Safety Plans"

### **Step 1: A.S.K. about ways to keep the Student Safe**

- Can be done for any student that has a score of 1 – 3. Notify your superior and Student Services.  
*A.S.K. "What can we do to keep you safe and connected to services?"*
- Any student with a score of 4 or more are a **Higher risk**. Do not leave the person alone until you get them connected to the services below & immediately notify your superior, Student Services and call the crisis line.
  - **Call Mind Springs Crisis at (888) 207-4004**
  - **Restrict the students access to lethal means**
  - **Notify your superior and Student Services.**
- **If the student is in danger or the situation is dangerous call 911. Notify your superior and Student Services.**

### **Step 2: A.S.K. about Risks Factors and Warning Signs**

*A.S.K. about the personal situations, thoughts, images, thinking styles, mood, or behavior. Help the student identify and be mindful about these risks and warning signs.*

### **Step 3: A.S.K. about Effective Coping Strategies**

*A.S.K. the student; "What activities could you use to deal with these things?"*

*A.S.K. the student; "What activities could help the thoughts of suicide from getting worse?"*

*A.S.K. the student; "What activities have worked for you in the past."*

### **Step 4: A.S.K. about ways to get them connected to Supports**

*A.S.K. the student; "What are your supports, these can be friends family members, or professional supports?"*

### **Step 5: A.S.K. about ways to reduce their Access to Lethal Means**

*A.S.K. the student; "What steps do we need to take to restrict your access to any lethal means?" This may include safely storing medication, implementing gun safety procedures, or restricting access to knives or other lethal means. It could also just being there with them until someone else can take over.*

### **Step 6: A.S.K. about Follow up**

*A.S.K. the student; To contact the Director of Diversity, Advocacy, and Health to develop a "Wellness Plan" and to follow up with professional supports on campus.*

### **Step 7: A.S.K. about their Wellness Plans**

All students at risk of for suicide will need to meet with the Director of Diversity Advocacy and Health and develop a "Wellness Plan." These are individualized, based on each student's needs, and will be used to help support students who have an ongoing risk of suicide. These will be reviewed each semester until there is no longer a risk for these students. Safety plans cannot be substituted for "Wellness Plans." Please find an example of a "Wellness Plan" on the next page?

# Sample

(DATE)

From: Bob Lang, LPC LAC  
Director of Diversity, Advocacy and Health  
Colorado Mesa University

For: (STUDENT NAME)

Subject: WELLNESS PLAN

This wellness plan is being developed to assure your safety and success at CMU related to concerns about your risks with (CURRENT ISSUES). You are agreeing to the following conditions to assure that your ongoing safety and future success here at CMU:

1. Schedule and keep all mentoring appointments with (MENTOR).
2. Schedule and keep all therapy appointments with (THERAPIST) at the (PLACE) and follow all recommendations
3. Schedule and keep all psychiatric prescriber appointments with (PERSCRIBER) and take medications as prescribed
4. Comply with all aspects of your safety plan, call the crisis lifeline and inform the University of any risk factors that you may have.

By signing this, you willingly agree to the terms of this wellness plan and will notify all parties, providers and the University of any additional safety concerns or risks. This wellness plan can be updated at any time and must be reviewed every semester by the next registration date. Refusal to comply with the terms of this wellness plan may require additional steps to assure that your safety and wellbeing can be address while a student here at CMU. If you have any questions or concerns about this contract please notify Bob Lang, the Director of Diversity Advocacy and Health at [bllang@coloradomesa.edu](mailto:bllang@coloradomesa.edu) or (970) 201-8472.

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Students Signature

Date

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(Director of DAH NAME)

Date