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 imminent 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 Colorado Crisis Line number @ 1-844-493-8255.
5. **Follow up and Stay Connected:** Make sure to “report it” and follow up until 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 MAV's 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 Screenings:

This MAV’s ASK suicide-screening intervention 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 protocol is to provide help, ask students about suicide and keep them safe. There are three primary goals for using this screening protocol: One to ask questions that have been shown to be an effective intervention with someone who has thoughts of suicide. Two to have a straightforward way for anyone to immediately support students at risk 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 protocol stay with the student, minimize distractions and take your time. Listen to the student and stay with them until the screening a safe for now plan is place and the student is connected to other supports. This screening protocol can be completed by ANYONE on campus and the suicide trainings we provide on campus support the use of the MAV’s ASK suicide intervention strategies. This protocol is also part of the Student of Concern “Report a Concern” 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 at risk of suicide)

   a. MAV’s A.S.K. (Ask, Speak up and Know your resources) helps individuals do suicide interventions with students at risk so we can provide help, ask students about suicide and keep them safe

   b. If it’s a positive suicide screen stay with the student and contact the Colorado Crisis Line number @ 1-844-493-8255 or call 911.

   c. Then notify your supervisor and call Student Services @ 970-248-1366, developed a “Safety for now Plan” and submit the “Report concern” form.

   d. If the student is not at risk then provide the student with resource information and notify your supervisor

III. “Safe for now plans” and “Wellness Plans”

IV. Follow up Risk Assessments then need to be completed by licensed and trained professionals.
MAV's ASK Suicide Prevention Protocol

Flow Chart

MAVs A.S.K.
Student has or expressed thoughts of suicide

Keep student safe and complete the initial screening tool and referral to services

Student Presents with No Risks of Suicide
Complete the “Report a Concern” form
Connect students to services, supports and resources

Student Presents with Low to medium Risk of Suicide
Notify Supervisor do a “safety plan,” contact Student Services and complete the “Report It.” form

Student Presents with High Risk of Suicide
Notify Supervisor and call crisis services or 911; contact Student Services and complete the “Report It” form.

Director of DAH and/or the Behavioral Health Coordinator will develop a “Wellness Plan” and assure follow up

Student Presents with High Level of Risk
Notify Supervisor and call crisis services or 911; contact Student Services and complete the “Report It” form.

Student Presents with No Risks of Suicide
Complete the “Report a Concern” form
“Safe for now Plans”

Step 1: A.S.K. about ways to keep the Student Safe
- Can be done for any student that has a score low to medium risk of suicide. Notify your superior and Student Services. A.S.K. “What can we do to keep you safe and get you connected to services?”
- Any student with 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.
  - Colorado Crisis Line number @ 1-844-493-8255 or call 911
  - 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 Advocacy, and Health or Behavioral Health Coordinator 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 or safe for now plans cannot be substituted for “Wellness Plans.” Please find an example of a “Wellness Plan” on the next page?
(DATE)

From: Bob Lang, LPC LAC
Director of 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.
2. Schedule and keep all (THERAPY) appointments at the (PLACE) and follow all recommendations
3. Schedule and keep all (PSYCHIATRIC PERSRIBER) appointments with (PLACE) 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 Advocacy and Health at bllang@coloradomesa.edu or (970) 201-8472.

__________________________________________  _________________________
Students Signature                      Date

__________________________________________  _________________________
(NAME) Director of AH or
Behavioral Health Coordinator                      Date

Sample