

Screening Mental Health Providers

The following questions can be asked of mental health service providers to help you get an idea of whether or not they would be able to meet the needs of students at risk for suicide. These questions were drawn from the authors' professional experiences and adapted from the SAMHSA Toolkit (2012).

Professional qualifications

1. Are you able to provide services to children and adolescents?
2. Are there ages that you work more frequently with or have more expertise and training with?
3. What types of services do you provide?
4. Do you do individual, family, couples, or group therapy?
5. Do you have experience working with LGBT students and other groups that are disproportionately at risk for suicide?
6. Do you have experience working with varied cultural, ethnic and religious groups found within our community?
7. Do you have experience assessing suicide risk in youth? If yes, where did you get your training?
8. Do you have experience managing and treating suicide risk in youth? If yes, what treatment approach do you take? Do you have training in any empirically supported treatments for suicidal youth (e.g. cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy, attachment-based family therapy).
9. Do you have experience working with people who have lost a loved one to suicide?
10. What process do you follow in the event of a suicide crisis?
11. Under what circumstances would you come to the school, or do a home visit, in order to see a student or parent?
12. Do you work with a psychiatrist?

Business issues

1. Where are you located?
2. Are you accessible via public transportation?
3. What is your typical wait-time to see a new client?
4. What insurance do you accept?
5. Do you have a sliding fee scale for people who pay out-of-pocket? What is the range of the fee scale?
6. Do you have necessary clearances to work in schools if you were to come here: child abuse, police and FBI clearances?

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). *Preventing suicide: A toolkit for high schools*. HHS Publication No. SMA-12-4669. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-4669> (Toolkit 2.A, p. 68)