**Creating a Safety Net in Schools and Communities for Students at Risk for Suicide**

Responding to crisis situations regarding students at risk of harming themselves is a difficult task. Who do you call? What will the response be if you contact municipal emergency personnel or the local community mental health system? How do you insure the actions taken are in the best interest of the student having difficulties, the entire student body and staff? Will this affect other students who are at risk of harming themselves? Identifying students at risk can also be a challenge to school administrative staff and teachers.

The construction of a safety net to protect and help the student in crisis and the school as a whole is possible. When emergency systems such as law enforcement, rescue squads and hospital emergency departments work together then a safety net for the student and school is created.

Did you know?

New Hampshire has best practice suicide prevention and postvention protocols and training known as Connect: available through the National Alliance on Mental Illness

* Connect Protocols and Training were developed by task forces in NH for schools and other sectors of communities to build a safety net around persons at risk.
* Connect protocols provide schools with the template and best practices for crisis response plans
* The Connect Program has been implemented in states across the U.S. as well as internationally
* Dozens of schools, organizations and communities in NH have been trained in the Connect Program; your community may have Connect trainers available

When a student is at risk of taking their life or does take their own life the results are complex and traumatic. The Connect training approach recognizes that a systemic approach is needed to best serve the student in crisis and those affected by it. Schools do not need to be alone in dealing with this issue.

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