

Care and Concern Policy

Mandated assessment following suicide threats and attempts

A. Policy

Northwest Missouri State University expects and encourages students to maintain a reasonable concern for their own self-welfare. One of the times the University formally requires that such a concern be maintained is in the area of suicide.

In the event that the University is presented with a credible report that a student has threatened or attempted suicide, engaged in efforts to prepare to commit suicide or expressed a preoccupation with suicide, the student, with approval of the Student Development Coordinator, will be required to attend four sessions of professional assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to provide the student with resources to adhere to this standard in the future and to monitor the student's willingness and ability to adhere to this standard.

B. Procedures

When the Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) is in receipt of a credible report that a student has threatened or attempted suicide, engaged in efforts to prepare to commit suicide or expressed a preoccupation with suicide, the student, as set forth above, will be required to attend four one hour sessions of professional assessment with a licensed mental health professional who agrees to participate in the program's requirement of a comprehensive and in-depth assessment of the precipitating incident(s), prior attempts and threats, and current suicidal intent. In addition, the professional must be willing and available to engage in counseling and/or therapy, if the student so consents.

The first assessment will occur within a week of the incident or release from the hospital and the remaining assessments at weekly intervals unless otherwise determined by the counselor.

Students are required to participate only in an assessment of their past and current suicidal thoughts or ideation. Students are not required to engage in counseling or therapy. A student may elect to go beyond the required assessment and participate in counseling or therapy, only after the professional secures the student's permission through consent.

The Student may seek to obtain the four assessment appointments with a staff member in the University Wellness Center ("Staff Member") or through a private practitioner. Regardless, the Student must sign a release allowing the Staff Member or private practitioner to make contact with a member of the Behavior Intervention Team on behalf of the University. The Staff Members or private practitioners will be required, during the period in which the four session assessment occurs, to provide the University (BIT) with reports of instances in which the student threatened or attempted engaged in efforts to prepare to commit suicide or expressed a preoccupation with suicide. Staff members and/or private practitioners must submit, in writing, a Mandated Risk Assessment Summary.

Failure to adhere to this standard of self-welfare or failure to fulfill the requirements of the assessment following a suicidal incident may result in disciplinary action, academic encumbrance, suspension and/or withdrawal. The appropriate actions associated with this policy will be determined by the Student Development Coordinator.

The Student Development Coordinator, where appropriate, may take other steps, including contacting the student's parents (see the Parental Notification Policy) and/or other appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.