What to do if You or Your Friend is Thinking about Suicide, or Hurting Themselves:

Suicide is a serious concern in the US. Parents are often unaware of the risk of suicide among youth. Youth are usually the first ones to know their friends are thinking about taking their lives. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds. One in 10 college students say they have seriously considered suicide during the last year. The best thing you can do is to learn the risk factors, warning signs, not be afraid to talk about depression and suicide and take action. Remember that:

**DEPRESSION IS TREATABLE AND SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE**

**RISK FACTORS**

These are the things that make the risk of suicide higher among people.

- Previous attempt
- Depression, bipolar disorder, or other mental illness
- Significant loss (divorce, death, loss of health, separation, break-ups, loss of respect)
- Peer pressure
- Family problems
- Legal problems
- Being bullied
- Gender identity issues/questions
- Poor self esteem
- Family history of suicidal behavior
- Someone close to individual has completed suicide

**THE # 1 RISK FACTOR IS A PREVIOUS ATTEMPT**

**WARNING SIGNS**
These are the behaviors that indicate depression and possible suicidal intent.

Trouble eating or sleeping (sleeping all the time, unable to sleep at all, not able to eat or overeating)

Significant changes in behavior and/or personality

Withdrawing from family and friends

Loss of interest in activities, work, school, hobbies, or social interactions

Giving away prized possessions

Increased drug and/or alcohol use

Statements about hopelessness, or worthlessness

Taking unnecessary risks

More agitation or more easily angered

Sudden happiness or calmness following a depressed mood

Obsession with death, or preoccupation with dying, guns, knives, or hanging materials

Problems in school or work performance

Chronic pain or frequent complaints of physical symptoms

An inability to concentrate, trouble remembering things

Self-injurious behaviors including running into traffic, jumping from heights and scratching or cutting their body.

Talking about or threatening suicide

If these warning signs are present and you do not believe your friend to be suicidal (or they deny it), they are showing some signs of depression, which can lead to suicidal thinking. If you see any of these signs talk to your friend and a trusted adult. Talking to someone about suicide is difficult, but not talking about it can be devastating. Get up the courage and do it, and get yourself or your friend the help that is needed.
Suicide is preventable. Talking about it is the first step.

When Should I Talk to My Friend?

• Pay attention to your instincts.

• When things don’t seem quite right with your friend’s behavior, say something. Tell them what you are noticing

• Know the suicide warning signs. Most people show warning signs to their friends, and classmates.

• If you are afraid for them, now is the best time!

WHAT TO DO

A. Acknowledge that you are seeing signs of suicide and that it is serious.

   Take warning signs seriously

   Let the person know that you are concerned by the seriousness of the issue

   Ask “The Question” directly and openly ("Are you thinking of suicide? Do you have a plan?") If you cannot ask it, get someone who can, right away.

C. Care: Let that person know that you are there for them and that you are concerned that they need help that you cannot provide.

   Listen to the person’s issues

   Do not be judgemental, their pain is real.

T. Tell a parent/professional, either with that person or on their behalf.

   Find out if the person has a plan

   Do not keep this a secret
Brainstorm alternatives for help

Do not leave the person alone

Tell a professional or someone who can help

Keep asking over time

**WHAT NOT TO DO**

Do not keep it a secret. It is better to have a live friend than one who is not.

Do not sidestep the issue or treat it lightly.

Don’t “call their bluff”

Do not leave the person alone.

Do not offer simple solutions

Do not judge, their pain is real and serious to them

Do not try and be a therapist. Get professional help

If you do not know where to get help go to your Peer Counselor, the Bard Counseling Service, or a trusted adult in your life. **But please tell someone.**

**Suicide Resources:** If you are concerned about you or another student with regard to suicidal thinking or self harming behavior, please contact one of the following: Bard College Counseling Service, Bard Security, your Peer Counselor or Area Coordinator, the Center for Student Life and Advising or Brave. You can also call Dutchess Helpline, the National Suicide Hotline or go to the nearest emergency room. The phone numbers for these and other resources are listed below

- Bard Counseling Service: **845-758-7433**
- Bard Center for Student Life and Advising: **845-758-7454**
- Bard Office of Residential Life: **845-758-7455**
• The following are available 24 hours a day/7 days per week

• Bard Security: **845-758-7460 or 7777**

• Bard’s Brave Program: **845-758-7777** *(ask for a Brave Counselor)*

• Dutchess Helpline: **877-485-9700**

• National Suicide Hotline: **1-800-273-TALK** *(8255)*

• Suicide Hotline in Spanish: **1-800-273-TALK** *(Press 2)*

• **1-800-SUICIDE**: **1-800-784-2433**

• LGBT Youth Suicide Hotline: **1-866-4-U-TREVOR**

• Kingston Hospital Psychiatric Emergency Services: **845-331-3131**

• Northern Dutchess Hospital Emergency Department: **845-876-3001**