Guidelines for risk student identification and subsequent steps

Guidance for identifying a student at risk for suicide:

Important risk factors of students at risk for suicide:
- Pressure to perform
- Loneliness, weak social ties
- Low self-esteem
- The student phase of life
- Sudden severe life event
- Being a foreign student
- Being an immigrant
- Traumatic event in the past
- Parenting
- Substance (ab)use

Important warning signs of students at risk for suicide:
- Gut feeling!
- Sad
- Functioning less
- Deteriorating grades
- Absent minded
- Becoming quiet
- Introvert behavior
- Absenteeism
- Changes in behavior
- Pale and neglected appearance

What to do when you think you identified a risk student: a stepwise approach:

1. **Talk to the student**
   Ask for instance: How are you doing? How are your studies going? I have this feeling that you're not alright, am I right?

2. **Estimate the severity of the problem**
   Continue asking questions following the answers of the student, but keep in mind that you are not a mental health professional.

3. **Recommend/(call) the appropriate service using the table below**
   When it concerns mild or moderate situations, consider the student's wishes and preferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity of the student's problem</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild (e.g. study stress, mild personal problems, study-related questions or difficulties)</td>
<td>Study counselor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mild (e.g. all the above, expected study delay, in need for additional provisions or arrangements)</td>
<td>Student adviser or support coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate (e.g. feeling down, fear of failure)</td>
<td>Student psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe (e.g. depressed, suicidal thoughts)</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extreme (e.g. expressing acute suicidal intent)</td>
<td>Call the police (112) for contacting crisis center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Monitor the student and provide follow-up care**
   Ask how the student is doing now and verify whether the student followed your recommendations. You may ask this in person, but you may also use e-mail, phone or text messages too.

5. **When needed, talk with your colleagues or ask the mental health team for advice or support**
   Do not carry on worrying alone about this.

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