

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.

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

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.

Amsterdam, 2016.

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