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# Student Suicide Threat Response

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### I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY

Suicide is the leading cause of death of university students. Additionally, suicide, attempted suicide, and suicidal gestures have detrimental effects on both the students involved and other students in the campus community.

### II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The University of South Dakota (USD) strives to foster a campus community free from personal abuse, directed at oneself or others. USD commits its resources to the following two-fold process: 1) to educate and promote discussion about self –abuse and violence and 2) to provide crisis intervention.

1. **PREVENTION:** The goal of educational programming offered by Student Services is to promote understanding concerning the dynamics of suicide and to recognize behaviors that may signal suicidal intent. Periodic programming will be provided regarding depression, general principles about mental health, stress, and related topics to students' concerns. The educational programs will involve staff from the USD Student Counseling Center, Department of Residence Life, and various other staff working with students in areas across campus.
2. **REPORTING:** Because suicidal attempts may result in death, early identification of persons at risk for suicide is essential. Help should be sought when individuals are talking about suicide or have taken any actions that could be interpreted as leading to a possible suicide attempt.

3. **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION:** Suicide is considered an EMERGENCY EXCEPTION TO CONFIDENTIALITY. Appropriate family members will be contacted, under the direction of the Dean of Students. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFR 99.36) provides for the release of normally protected student data when it's believed the student represents a health or safety risk to self or others.

### III. DEFINITIONS

This policy considers suicide to be defined as, the purposeful act of causing one's own death. Attempted suicide is a person engaging in life threatening behavior(s) intended to jeopardize his/her life through an act, threat, or gesture.

### IV. PROCEDURES

When learning a student has threatened of attempted suicide:

1. In the event of an emergency, call 911 and the law enforcement will dispatch assistance as appropriate.
2. In a non-immediate threat situation contact the University Police Department (605-677-5342) or the Vermillion Police Department (605-677-7070).
3. The University Police Department will (depending on the situation):
  - a) Complete an emergency involuntary hold through the Chairman of the Board of Mental Illness, or
  - b) Contact the USD Student Counseling Center in the case of a student suicide attempt.
4. The Dean of Students shall be notified by the counseling center or housing staff pertaining to students.
5. The family of the student who threatened or attempted suicide will be contacted by the Dean of Students at the appropriate time. Support will be rendered to the family members and significant others as needed.
6. A student who has attempted suicide will be required to provide a release to the Dean of Students from a mental health provider prior to returning to campus.

### V. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

Not Applicable