

Becker Elementary School



Learning

Dear Becker Family:

I am so sorry to tell you all that one of our families has experienced a tragic loss. Our thoughts and sympathies are with them.

Life

The cause of death was suicide. Suicide is a very complicated act. Although we may never know why this parent ended his life, we do know that suicide has multiple causes. In many cases, a mental health condition is part of it. But these conditions are treatable. It's really important if you or your child are not feeling well in any way to reach out for help. Suicide should not be an option. I am including some information that may be helpful to you in discussing suicide with your child.

Members of our Crisis Response Team are available to meet with students individually and in groups today. The social workers from the Fordson Feeder Track were all available for students, staff, and parents. Please contact the school office if you feel your child is in need of additional assistance. Note that children who are already vulnerable may be at greater risk due to exposure to the suicide.

We are fully aware that rumors and community discussions have occurred. We ask on behalf of the family that we refrain from engaging in such dialogues and to be mindful of the needs of our families.

Attached are some local community mental health resources, list of warning signs and steps to take, as well as tips to discussing suicide with your child.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the school social workers. The school office will be open until June 28th if you would like further assistance. I can be reached by calling (313) 827-6950 or through my email: hassanr1@dearbornschools.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rima Hassan".

Rima Hassan

Principal

Becker Elementary School

10821 Henson
Dearborn, MI 48126
Office (313) 827-6950
Fax (313) 827-6955

Local Community Mental Health Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. 1-800-273-8255

Unity Counseling Clinic

3938 Inkster Rd #400, Redford Charter Twp, MI 48239
(313) 537-6449

ACCESS

6450 Maple St.
Dearborn, MI 48126
Phone: (313) 216-2200

Apex Behavioral Health Dearborn

6 Parklane Blvd #695
Dearborn, MI 48124
(313) 271-8170

Counseling & Resource Center of Dearborn

2881 Monroe St, Dearborn, MI 48124
(313) 359-1977

Henry Ford Behavioral Health

5111 Auto Club Dr, Dearborn, MI 48126
(313) 317-2000

University of Michigan (Child Psychiatry)

Ann Arbor, MI
(734) 764-0231

Arab American Chaldean Council

13840 W Warren Ave
Dearborn, MI 48126
313-581-7287

Common Ground Sanctuary

751 Hendrie Blvd,
Royal Oak, MI 48067
248-547-2260

St John Providence Open Arms Program

22101 Moross Rd,
Detroit, MI 48236
313-343-4000

Tips for Talking about Suicide

Suicide is a difficult topic for most people to talk about. This tool suggests ways to talk about key issues that may come up when someone dies by suicide.

Give accurate information about suicide.	By saying...
<p>Suicide is a complicated behavior. It is not caused by a single event.</p> <p>In many cases, mental health conditions, such as depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, or psychosis, or a substance use disorder are present leading up to a suicide. Mental health conditions affect how people feel and prevent them from thinking clearly. Having a mental health problem is actually common and nothing to be ashamed of. Help is available.</p> <p>Talking about suicide in a calm, straightforward way does not put the idea into people's minds.</p>	<p>"The cause of [NAME]'s death was suicide. Suicide is not caused by a single event. In many cases, the person has a mental health or substance use disorder and then other life issues occur at the same time leading to overwhelming mental and/or physical pain, distress, and hopelessness."</p> <p>"There are effective treatments to help people with mental health or substance abuse problems or who are having suicidal thoughts."</p> <p>"Mental health problems are not something to be ashamed of. They are a type of health issue."</p>
Address blaming and scapegoating.	By saying...
<p>It is common to try to answer the question "why?" after a suicide death. Sometimes this turns into blaming others for the death.</p>	<p>"Blaming others or the person who died does not consider the fact that the person was experiencing a lot of distress and pain. Blaming is not fair and can hurt another person deeply."</p>
Do not focus on the method.	By saying...
<p>Talking in detail about the method can create images that are upsetting and can increase the risk of imitative behavior by vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>The focus should not be on how someone killed themselves but rather on how to cope with feelings of sadness, loss, anger, etc.</p>	<p>"Let's talk about how [NAME]'s death has affected you and ways you can handle it."</p> <p>"How can you deal with your loss and grief?"</p>
Address anger.	By saying...
<p>Accept expressions of anger at the deceased and explain that these feelings are normal.</p>	<p>"It is okay to feel angry. These feelings are normal, and it doesn't mean that you didn't care about [NAME]. You can be angry at someone's behavior and still care deeply about that person."</p>

Address feelings of responsibility.	By saying....
<p>Help students understand that they are not responsible for the suicide of the deceased.</p> <p>Reassure those who feel responsible or think they could have done something to save the deceased.</p>	<p>"This death is not your fault. We cannot always see the signs because a suicidal person may hide them."</p> <p>"We cannot always predict someone else's behavior."</p>
Promote help-seeking.	By saying....
<p>Encourage students to seek help from a trusted adult if they or a friend are feeling depressed.</p>	<p>"Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness."</p> <p>"We are always here to help you through any problem, no matter what. Who are the people you would go to if you or a friend were feeling worried or depressed or had thoughts of suicide?"</p> <p>"If you are concerned about yourself or a friend, talk with a trusted adult."</p>

Youth Warning Signs and What to Do in a Crisis

When you are concerned that a person may be suicidal, look for changes in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors. This is of greatest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change, such as losing a friend or classmate to suicide. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.

Take any threat or talk about suicide seriously. Start by telling the person that you are concerned. Don't be afraid to ask whether she or he is considering suicide or has a plan or method in mind. Research shows that asking someone directly about suicide will not "put the idea in their head." Rather, the person in distress will often feel relieved that someone cares enough to talk about this issue with them.

Below is a list of warning signs and steps to take specifically for youth. It was developed by a consensus panel of experts in the field. See www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org.

Youth Warning Signs	What to Do
<p>Leaders in the suicide prevention field agree that the following warning signs indicate a young person may be at risk for suicide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talking about or making plans for suicide• Expressing hopelessness about the future• Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress	<p>If you notice any of these signs in a student, take these recommended steps right away:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not leave the student alone and unsupervised. Make sure the student is in a secure environment supervised by caring adults until he or she can be seen by the school mental health contact.2. Make sure the student is escorted to the school's mental health professional.3. Provide any additional information to the school's mental health contact that will assist with the assessment of the student.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. Specifically, this includes significant:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Withdrawal from or change in social connections or situations○ Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)○ Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context○ Recent increased agitation or irritability	<p>What to Do</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask if the student is okay or if he or she is having thoughts of suicide.2. Express your concern about what you are observing in his or her behavior.3. Listen attentively and nonjudgmentally.4. Reflect what the student shares and let the student know he or she has been heard.5. Tell the student that he or she is not alone.6. Let the student know there are treatments available that can help.7. If you or the student are concerned, guide him or her to additional professional help, or to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a 24-hour toll-free phone line for people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).



Dearborn Public Schools accept a parent's assertion that he or she needs language assistance without requiring additional corroboration.

For free help with understanding the content of this document, please call the Student Services office 827-3005 for translation/interpretation assistance.

Arabic

تؤكد مدارس ديربورن على توفير خدمات لترجمة بدون أي شرط للحصول على هذه الخدمة المجانية ونفهم هذه الإستشارة يرجى الإتصال بمكتب خدمات الطلاب على الرقم 827-3005.