**QPR Suicide Prevention: Ask a Question, Save a Life**

**Share Concerns/Be Specific/Find an appropriately private place to talk**

* ”I’ve noticed that you are saying this term paper won’t matter anymore after next week…”
* “I’ve noticed that you used to come to the library a lot all semester and lately I haven’t seen you around”
* “I am concerned about you because there are a lot of concerning statements in this term paper about suicide”
* “I am concerned about you because you told me you are failing most of your classes.”

*Stick to behaviors you observe.  Don’t try to diagnose i.e. “You seem depressed”*

**Question**: Ask the person about suicide and wishes to be dead.

* + "Sometimes when students go through stuff like you just told me, they have thoughts of suicide. Is this happening for you?"
* Are you thinking of killing yourself?
* Are you having thoughts of doing something to end your life?

*Asking the question will not put ideas into someone’s head. People feel relief most of the time when asked this question.*

**Persuade:** Listen, and then convince the person to get help

* + “The things you are saying make me worry about you; will you please let me help you contact a suicide hotline?”
  + It sounds like you're in a lot of pain and that you're really struggling right now. Thank you for trusting me to tell me about it. Have you thought about speaking to someone at the Counseling Center on campus?”

**Refer:**  Make the referral for help

* “I’m so glad you are willing to talk to our Counseling Center right now; I’ll walk with you.
* “There are suicide hotlines available to help you right now. I will sit with you while you talk. It can really help.”

*Remember, you’re not diagnosing or assessing. You are just connecting them to the next step-and connecting them with people who are trained to assess further for suicide*

* Source: The QPR Institute, Inc., Paul Quinnett, Ph.D, President and CEO [www.qprinstitute.com](http://www.qprinstitute.com)

**Skills to Work With Distressed Students**

**Listen!** *Silence is okay. People want to feel heard, not necessarily receive advice*

**Don’t try to fix or solve the problem**

**Focus on them, not trying to relate or connect your experience**

**Validate:**

“Of course you feel overwhelmed, look at all the assignments you were given”

“It’s such an expectable reaction to be so overwhelmed right now given the feedback you got from your professor”

“I see how confusing this assignment is. Of course that is why this is so stressful”

**Ask Open Ended Questions**

“Tell me a little bit about your stress right now” vs “Are you worried about school?”

**Affirm/Recognize Strengths**

“You really tried hard to clarify with the professor what he wanted for the paper topic”

“You took a big step by scheduling this research help session, and you showed up right on time, with your materials prepared.  I can tell how dedicated you are to your academics”

“I remember the last time you came to see me for a paper, and you were so proud of how well you did on it!”

**Normalize:**

“It can be really difficult to find the balance between going out and studying”

**“**A lot of us have struggled with the pressure of midterms. This is a particularly tough time of year, and a lot of students are sharing similar feelings right now with us”

**Offer Hope:**

“I know things seem really hard right now, but now that we’re talking openly about this, I know we will find a way forward”

“A lot of students really struggle and doubt they will graduate, I have a lot of hope that you can get through this.”

“Talking to someone about this can really help”

“I have seen a lot of students on campus struggle with mental health, it is possible to feel better”

**Clarify their needs/what they are looking for and do not assume.**

“How can I help you right now?”

“What made you decide to come to the library today?”

“What were you hoping to accomplish when you decided to walk over here today?”

“What would you like to see our next step be?”

“For you to feel like our meeting today was successful, what needs to happen?”

**Ways to support students with the task you are helping them with:**

\*Partialize the problem

\*Help them break down, scaffold steps

\*Make a written plan of the steps they are going to do.

\*Offer hope and confidence, affirm things they did well in your meeting today.