

what to do in a crisis

our minds
matter

OMM clubs are designed to be safe, supportive, and fun spaces. So while it's unlikely that a mental health crisis will occur during a club meeting or event, it is possible, & all club sponsors and student leaders should know what to do.

purpose of this protocol

This protocol is intended to guide the immediate response when a mental health or suicide-related concern first arises within an OMM club space, meeting, activity, or event.

- This protocol covers the steps from initial concern to the point when the student is safely connected with a school mental health professional, administrator, crisis responder, or other appropriate adult support.
- This protocol does not replace or override any school, district, or state crisis response policy. Each school has its own crisis protocol & reporting requirements, and club sponsors are responsible for knowing and following their school's crisis protocol at all times.
- Because OMM clubs are teen-led, student leaders are not expected to assess risk, manage a crisis alone, or make decisions about emergency response. Their role is to alert an adult immediately and help maintain a calm, supportive environment.

before a crisis happens: be prepared

Before the club begins meeting, each Club Sponsor should confirm:

- The school's mental health crisis protocol and reporting procedures
- The designated school mental health professional(s) or crisis team contact
- A backup adult contact if the Club Sponsor is unavailable or not a mental health professional
- Procedures for after-school or school-wide OMM campaigns/events
- Any school-specific required documentation or incident reporting procedures

Student leaders should be reminded regularly: If you are worried about someone's safety, talk to a trusted adult immediately. Do not handle it alone.

know the signs

the following warning signs of suicide demand immediate attention

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself.
- Talking, writing, posting or drawing about suicide or death.
- Talking about feeling hopeless, trapped, in unbearable pain, or having no reason to live.
- Talking about being a burden to others and how the world would be better off without them.
- Complete withdrawal.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings and acting recklessly.
- Looking for ways to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining access to firearms, pills, or other means to kill oneself.
- Giving away prized possessions and other personal things or saying goodbye in a way that feels final.
- Sharing that they have recently harmed themselves, attempted suicide, or may not be able to stay safe

When in doubt, treat the concern seriously and involve an adult immediately.

take action

If someone shows any of the above warning signs (or other worrying behavior) during a club meeting or event, don't panic. Here's what to do:

- **Stay calm and do NOT leave the person alone**
 - While other leaders and/or sponsors complete the following steps, someone (preferably a trusted adult) should always be with the person in crisis until they are connected to appropriate help.
- **Alert your Club Sponsor immediately**
 - Getting a trusted adult involved is always the first step—don't try to handle this alone.
 - Do not promise secrecy, even if the student asks you to.
- **One Club Sponsor should gently escort the person in crisis to a quiet, private space while the other Leaders stay with the main group**
 - Be sure to check that there are no weapons, sharp objects, or other materials the person could use to hurt themselves available.
 - If there is only one Club Sponsor, they should alert another adult in the building to the situation and ensure that an adult moves to supervise the main group.
- **The person in crisis should then be connected with the school's crisis response system.**
 - If the Club Sponsor is a school mental health professional, they should follow the school's suicide risk/crisis protocol directly.
 - If the Club Sponsor is not a school mental health professional, their role is to ensure a warm handoff to the appropriate school professional or crisis responder per the school's protocol. A warm handoff means the student is physically and directly connected to the responsible adult or crisis professional, not simply given a phone number or told to seek help later.
 - Once the appropriate school professional or crisis team is involved, the school's crisis protocol takes over.
- **If there is no mental health professional onsite, the situation is very severe, or each step of the school crisis protocol cannot be followed, immediately contact a crisis hotline or 911**
 - Call 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - Text "MIND" to 741741 for support from Crisis Text Line
 - Call 911 and ask for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer
- **No matter what, the person in crisis should not be left alone.** The Club Sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the person in crisis is physically connected to help, and then following any documentation required by your school.

follow up

- Once the person in crisis is safely connected to help, the Club Sponsor should check in on the rest of the group, validate any feelings that come up, and remind them of their resources.
 - Check out our full list of [mental health resources here](#).
- Next time the club meets, be sure to go over the [Guiding Principles, Zones, and Ground Rules](#) again to ensure everyone remembers how best to create a safe space and take care of themselves.
- If possible and within school policy, the Club Sponsor should follow up with the person who was in crisis to see how they're doing and express care & compassion. This should definitely happen before the person returns to the club space.

A mental health crisis can be scary, and we hope your club never experiences one. As mental health leaders, it's not just important that we all know how to respond in a crisis—it's lifesaving.