

Module 11: Suicide & Self-Harm Response



Emergency response procedures vary by school district. This information represents key considerations that are critical to review prior to a behavioral health emergency.

Policies & Procedures

At the Annual SchoolLink Meeting, school staff shares a copy of the school's suicide/self-harm policies and procedures with the behavioral health provider. Discuss and clarify any items that are unclear.

Roles & Responsibilities

Schools have a legal duty to supervise their students and ensure they are in a safe, secure and peaceful environment. Behavioral health providers are guests on a school campus who provide students an important service. Providers need to report any concerns and/or information about a crisis situation to school staff immediately. While both teams should work together to help a student in crisis, school staff are ultimately responsible for the student's safety and therefore must lead the response.

Provider Response

If a provider is on-campus and learns a student is verbalizing suicidal ideation, or engaging in self-harm, the provider should immediately ensure the student's safety and then inform the Principal or their designee about the situation. The provider may offer support to the student and school staff during a crisis, as requested by the principal or designee.

School Response

The school is legally responsible for the student's safety on their campus, so the principal or their designee is responsible for leading the response to a suicide or self-harm situation and completing the school's emergency procedures.



Emergency and Crisis Support Resources

SchoolLink offers limited crisis response services. In some situations, students may experience a mental health crisis while at school or in the community that requires immediate support. These students may or may not be current Behavioral Health Services clients. To address these urgent needs, schools and communities have access to external crisis response resources, including the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) and Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT). To learn more about these supports and how to access them, please visit **Module 11: Psychiatric Crisis Response Teams**.

Module 12 reviews School threats and violence responses.

911 / Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT)


Request an ambulance or other emergency assistance such as the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) who are specially trained officers paired with licensed mental health professionals. Together, they respond on scene to situations involving people experiencing a mental health crisis. [PERT — CRF Behavioral Healthcare](#)

Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Program is a countywide service that offers an alternative to law enforcement response option for people of any age experiencing a mental health or substance use related crisis. MCRTs respond, assess, and de-escalate behavioral health crises in the community and on school campuses. [BHS MCRT](#)

Children & Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CYCSU) (Formerly known as Emergency Screening Unit or ESU)

Provides emergency psychiatric services for children and youth under the age of 18 who are Medi-Cal members and experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

San Diego: 4309 Third Avenue San Diego, CA 92103 | (619) 876-4502 

[Children and Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit](#)



Key Point

School staff are responsible for leading the response to any threat or action of suicide or self-harm.

Suicide Prevention Resources

Key resource: [Suicide Prevention - San Diego County Office of Education](#)

- [Suicide Prevention Council - Community Health Improvement Partners \(CHIP\)](#)
- [988 Lifeline - If you need emotional support, reach out to the national mental health hotline](#)
- [San Diego Youth Services HERE Now Program](#)

Resources

- [Children and Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit](#)
- [PERT — CRF Behavioral Healthcare](#)
- [BHS MCRT](#)

Key Terms

Behavioral health services: A continuum of prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support services for mental health and substance use.

County-funded: Services funded through the County of San Diego's Health & Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services Division.

Provider: Unless otherwise specified, a County-funded behavioral health provider.

Administrative Information

For administrative information or to provide feedback about the [SchoolLink training program](#), please email BHSContactUs.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov with subject line: SchoolLink