**Suggestions for Parents Following Suicide Risk Assessment**

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| **Suicide Warning Signs:*** Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
* Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
* Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
* Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
* Talking about being a burden to others
* Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
* Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
* Sleeping too little or too much
* Withdrawing or feeling isolated
* Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
* Displaying extreme mood swings
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**SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE.**

• **Talk** to your child about suicide. Don’t be afraid; you will not be “putting ideas into

their heads.” **Asking for help** is the single skill that will protect your student. **Help your child** to identify and **connect** to caring adults to talk to when they need guidance and support.

• **Know** the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.

• **Remain calm**. Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.

• **Listen** to your child’s feelings. Don’t minimize what your child says about what is upsetting him or her. Put yourself in your child’s place; don’t attempt to provide simple solutions.

* **Listen** without judging. Allow for the discussion of experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Be prepared for expression of intense feelings. Try to understand the reasons for considering suicide without taking a position about whether or not such behavior is justified. Ask open-ended questions.
* **Supervise** constantly**.** Do not leave your child alone.
* **Ask** if your child has a plan to kill themselves, and if so, **remove means**. As long as it does not put the caregiver in danger, attempt to remove the suicide means such as a firearm, knife or pills.
* **Be honest.** If you are concerned, do not pretend that the problem is minor. Tell the child that there are people who can help. State that you will be with him or her to provide comfort and love.

• **Be supportive.** Children look for help and support from parents, older brothers and sisters. Talk about ways of dealing with problems and reassure your child that you care. Let children know that their bad feelings will not last forever.

• **Take action.** It is crucial to get professional help for your child and the entire family. When you are close to a situation it is often hard to see it clearly. You may not be able to solve the problem yourself.

* Help may be found at a suicide prevention center, local mental health agency, family service agency or through your clergy.
* Become familiar with the support services at your child’s school. Contact the appropriate person(s) at the school, for example, the school social worker, school psychologist, school counselor, or school nurse.
* Reference MPS Suicide Prevention Resource Guide.

