



## SCHOOL NURSE DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Understanding Suicide Prevention

This guide helps school nurses think through how to respond with care when a student shows signs they might be thinking about suicide. It can be used for group discussions or personal reflection. Focus on the questions that feel most relevant to your team and the students you support.

### ■ Icebreaker Questions

- What are your initial instincts when a student shares something that feels serious or concerning?

### ■ Recognizing Risk and Responding with Care

- What physical, emotional, or academic changes have you noticed that made you concerned enough to ask about suicidal thoughts?
- How do students express distress differently based on age, culture, or identity?
- What does “approaching with curiosity, not judgment” look like in a real conversation with a student?
- How do you balance validating a student’s pain while offering hope and emphasizing safety?
- How might stigma, family beliefs, or fear of consequences prevent students from speaking up or seeking help?

### ■ Systems and Supports

- What does your school’s suicide prevention protocol look like in action? Who’s on the response team? What’s your role?
- How do you help a student feel safe while waiting for next steps (e.g., crisis team, caregiver, follow-up care)?
- How do you follow up with students after a suicide risk referral to ensure they continue receiving care?
- What tools or protocols have you used (e.g., ASQ screening, Stanley-Brown Safety Plan)? What’s worked well?
- What’s your role in supporting the development of a safety plan with students and families?
- How can we better collaborate with caregivers about reducing access to lethal means at home (e.g., firearms, medications)?
- What are barriers to safety planning and communication at school or at home, and how have you worked through them?

### ■ Personal Reflection and Wellness

- What part of suicide prevention work feels most challenging or emotionally heavy for you?
- What supports do you need to feel prepared and confident in these conversations?

### ■ Conclusion

- What’s one thing you might approach differently after viewing the module and participating in today’s discussion?