

Appendix D

What Can I Say? Finding the Words

Guide sheet for educators when talking to a student that may be in crisis.



Engage in conversation

- Approach with care and openly discuss the signs/behaviors that are causing you concern,

“I’m concerned because I’ve noticed _____.”

- Ask directly about suicide. It is important to be specific and ask the student if s/he is thinking about suicide.

“Sometimes when student are feeling this overwhelmed, they think about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?”



Actively Listen

- Listen to the reasons the person has for both living and dying.
- Validate that they are considering both options and underscore that living is an option for them.

“I can hear that you are feeling a lot of pain and seem to feel a little uncertain. I am concerned about you and want to help you.”



Be Respectful and Non-Judgmental

- Show the student you are taking them and this situation seriously.
- Demonstrate care, empathy, and keep a nonjudgmental stance.
- Do not minimize the student’s experience or situation.
- Validate the student’s story and feelings. It is not the time to challenge the facts.



Show Continued Support

- The student has confided in you. This student has chosen to share with you a deeply personal part of this/her life. Although it is critical to refer to the appropriately trained school based staff, do not feel that you cannot be involved in the continued support and care.
- Provide continued support to the student.
- Work collaboratively with the school counselor and family in supporting the student.