

## **School Safety Task Force**

The safety of Nevada’s children is a matter of unparalleled importance and significance to all of us in Nevada. In the aftermath of the Parkland Florida shootings, Governor Sandoval established the Statewide School Safety Task Force, which met from May-November 2018 to develop recommendations that will make our schools and students safer. The Task Force recommendations include strategies for school building security upgrades, more school resource officers, strategies for student health and wellbeing, and more behavioral health professionals in our schools. The Task Force reports can be found at [\(link\)](#). The Task Force members also recognize that one of the most important resource is you--administrators, teachers, students, parents, and guardians committed to working together to help make our schools safer. Here is how.

## **Supporting Your Student’s Mental Health**

Schools are increasingly focused on connecting with students to stem the increase of anxiety, depression, addiction, self-harm and violence toward others. These programs also provide tools to develop life skills, which include confidence building, problem solving and maintaining positive relationships. Following are resources for parents, teachers and staff to help support the social and emotional health of our students:

***(Insert SEL links)***

If you have concerns regarding your student’s mental health, below are questions from [www.knowcrisis.com](http://www.knowcrisis.com) that you can ask your student or have them answer themselves. Teens may be hesitant to answer, so watch for these behaviors as well. Professional counselors can provide additional guidance and support.

- Do you constantly feel sad, anxious, or even “empty,” like you feel nothing?
- Do you feel hopeless or like everything is going wrong?
- Do you feel like you’re worthless or helpless? Do you feel guilty about things?
- Do you feel irritable much of the time?
- Do you find yourself withdrawing from friends and family?
- Are your grades dropping?
- Have you lost interest or pleasure in activities and hobbies that you used to enjoy?
- Have your eating or sleeping habits changed (eating or sleeping more or less than usual)?
- Do you always feel tired? Like you have less energy than normal or no energy at all?
- Do you feel restless or have trouble sitting still?
- Do you feel like you have trouble concentrating, or making decisions?
- Do you have pains, headaches, cramps, or stomach problems without a clear cause?
- Do you ever think about dying or suicide? Have you ever tried to harm yourself?

## **Warning Signs for Self-Harm or Violence**

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to student violence, but there may be warning signs. According to <https://www.nasponline.org>, some of the **warning signs** that teachers, parents, students, and others should look for are below. If these signs are present, further professional support is recommended.

- A student who withdraws from other students,
- A student who is a victim of violence, either at home or at school,
- A student, who is picked on, left out, teased, bullied, or feels victimized,
- A student who expresses violence in writings and drawings,
- A student who displays frequent and intense anger in response to minor problems,
- A student who is quick to interpret a neutral statement as directed against him or her,
- A student with a history of violent behavior such as bullying, defiance, and cruelty to animals,
- A student who displays no remorse about their own violent acts and routinely sees violence against others as justified,
- A student with intense prejudice toward other races, ethnicities, religions, languages, gender, sexual orientation, and/or physical appearance,
- A student with reduced self-control and exposes other students to violence,
- A student with easy access to firearms and who engages in risky or violent behavior,
- A student who uses specific threats of violence should always be taken very seriously, and
- A student who expresses thoughts of helplessness and hopelessness.

**If you see warning signs, speak up.**

**1) Talk to your teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, or social worker.**

**2) SafeVoice:** Students, parents, faculty, and community members now have access to SafeVoice, an anonymous tip system used to report threats to safety or wellbeing of students. People can use SafeVoice to report concerns about their friends or themselves. Download the SafeVoice App, call 833-216-SAFE, or visit [www.safevoicenv.org](http://www.safevoicenv.org).

**Talk to your students about school/community violence.**

According to the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, “children and teenagers are better able to cope with upsetting news when they understand more about the event. They need information just as adults do. Begin by asking what they already understand about what happened. They have likely heard about it on TV, on the internet or social media, at school, or from their friends.”

“However, much of their information may not be accurate. As they explain what they know about the event, you can figure out what it is they don’t already know or understand. Look for misunderstandings or frightening rumors. Tell the truth and do not try to mislead them “for their own good.” Children and youth of different ages understand and react differently

according to their developmental age and unique personal experiences. It is important to remember that we cannot assume that children’s worries are the same as our own. When we listen to children and come to understand their feelings and worries, we can better help them make sense of these experiences and how they affect us all.” For more specific tips for speaking with children about violence are offered by the National Association of School Psychologists:<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>

**Mobile Crisis Response Team:** The Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) was created to provide crisis intervention and support to Nevada families dealing with a behavioral or mental health crisis. Contact them in Southern and Rural Nevada at 702-486-7865 and in Northern Nevada at 775-688-1670.

<b>EMERGENCY HOTLINES</b>	
<b>Crisis Text Line</b> – Trained crisis counselors	<b>Text “GO” to 741741</b>
<b>Child Protective Services - CPS</b>	<b>(800) 992-5757</b>
<b>Dating abuse hotline</b> – loveisrespect	<b>(866) 331-9474</b>
<b>Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>(800) 273-8255 (TALK)</b> - Crisis Hotline
<b>Poison Control</b>	<b>(800) 222-1222</b> - Crisis Hotline
<b>RAINN:</b> Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network	<b>(800) 565-4673</b> - Crisis Hotline <b>(702) 385-2153</b> - Local help
<b>Rape Crisis Center</b>	<b>(702) 366-1640</b> Nevada Hotline <b>(888) 366-1640</b> National Toll Free
<b>Runaways</b> – National Runaway Safeline	<b>(800) 786-2929</b> <b>Text “SAFE” and your current location to 69866</b>
<b>SAFE PLACE</b> - Nevada Partners for Homeless Youth	<b>(866) U-ARE-SAFE / (866) 827-3723</b> - Crisis Hotline
<b>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b>	<b>(800) 273 - TALK (8255)</b>
<b>Nevada211.org</b>	<b>211</b>