

# Christopher Newport University

## **Policy: Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention, Postvention, and Education Programs for Students Policy**

**Policy Number: 9000**

Executive Oversight: Vice President of Student Affairs  
Contact Office: Counseling Services  
Frequency of Review: Biennially  
Date of Last Review: August 2018

### **A. PURPOSE**

Christopher Newport University is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our students. This policy describes ways to identify and address the needs of students who are exhibiting suicidal tendencies or behavior; outlines training requirements for identified staff; highlights support for community members in response to a student suicide; and identifies educational programs that shall be publicized and made available to the campus community.

### **B. POLICY STATEMENT**

The University's Office of Counseling Services shall provide clinical, crisis, and consultative assessment and treatment of students at risk of suicide. In addition, Christopher Newport University has established a number of programs that educate university personnel on how to respond to students exhibiting self-harm behaviors, including suicidal tendencies, who may be in need of services. These programs are made available to the community at large and also upon request of any subset of the community such as university departments or student clubs and organizations.

Residence Life staff members, including Resident Assistants, and university police officers are required to participate in specific training related to suicide prevention and response. Clinicians in the Office of Counseling Services must achieve and maintain their licensure status through appropriate continuing education units. Other personnel may be required by their supervisor to participate in training. University departments or individual personnel may also request training by contacting the Vice President of Student Affairs

The Office of Counseling Services shall serve as the primary campus resource for direct service delivery to students who are exhibiting suicidal tendencies and behaviors; it shall also provide a support framework for the campus community in in the event of a student suicide.

## C. PROCEDURES

### 1. Imminent Threats

Any member of the university community who observes or learns of behavior believed to be an imminent threat of self-harm should report it immediately to the Christopher Newport Police Department by calling 757-594- 7777. When in doubt, report.

### 2. Other Concerning Behaviors

All members of the university community are encouraged to report any concerning behavior that may be a safety issue but may not represent an imminent threat. Examples of such concerning behavior include but are not limited to:

- Displays of disruptive conduct or troubling non-verbal communications
- Written or verbal references to self-harming behavior
- Unexplained and alarming changes in behavior or personal habits

### 3. Reporting Other Concerning Behaviors

Any concerns other than imminent threats may be addressed by contacting the Office of Counseling Services, located on the second floor of the Freeman Center (757-594-7047). Additionally, the following offices are available resources. Please note that these offices, with the exception of University Police, may not provide an immediate response.

- Vice President of Student Affairs: 757-594-7160
  - Student Intervention & Support Specialist
- Office of Residence Life: 757-594-7527
  - Residence Hall Director or Resident Assistant (RA)
- Office of the Provost: 757-594-7050
- University Police: 757-594-7777
  - Silent Witness Program ([www.cnu.edu/police/silentwitness](http://www.cnu.edu/police/silentwitness))

Individuals from these offices may bring the concern to the Student Update Meeting, the Behavior Intervention Team for Students, or the Threat Assessment Team (see University Policy 1055: Campus Violence Prevention Policy).

### 4. Suicide Incident Response

In cases where a student has engaged in a self-harm incident, to include a suicide attempt, immediate care for any physical injuries will be assessed by medical personnel. Per the guidelines outlined in University Policy 9005, parents/guardians will be notified of the self-harm attempt.

Emotional care for others affected by the behavior shall be made available through the Office of Counseling Services. Immediate emotional care shall also be coordinated by the

Office of Counseling Services in the event of a suicide. Administrative support in any instance will be coordinated through Student Affairs.

In the event a student has been hospitalized for a self-harm incident, he/she will be required to engage in a re-entry process set out in Policy 9065: Student Medical and Emotional Emergency Policy.

5. Programming

In conjunction with the Office of Orientation & Student Engagement, the Office of Student Activities and the Office of Residence Life, the Office of Counseling Services shall assist in educational programming on topics related to mental health and well-being.

6. Training

The Office of Counseling Services shall provide annual trainings regarding the manifestations of mental illness to Residence Life staff prior to the initiation of their duties. It shall also be available to supplement annual training received by university police officers as requested by the Chief of Police.

7. Community Resources

The University, through the Office of Counseling Services, shall identify partner resources in the local community and establish Memoranda of Understandings with appropriate entities to provide mental health services to students.

8. Information Dissemination

The Office of Counseling Services shall create and maintain a page on its website dedicated to the mental health resources available to students at Christopher Newport University.

**D. AUTHORITY:**

*Code of Virginia* §23.1-802

University Policy 1055: Campus Violence Prevention

University Policy 9005: Parent/Legal Guardian-Student Health and Safety Notification

**E. APPROVAL AND REVISIONS**

**Approved By:** Board of Visitors, June 20, 2008

**Revision #1:** Policy Committee, August 29, 2018

**F. NEXT REVIEW DATE:** Fall 2020