

ScholarMatch



How to Handle Student Crises and Emergencies

As a career coach, tending to students' mental or physical health needs is not part of your role. Although health concerns could arise during the coaching process, we ask that you do not advise them on these issues. If you are concerned for the wellbeing of a ScholarMatch student, please observe the following procedures:

Step 1. Determine whether the situation is an emergency or non-emergency.

Emergencies are immediate life-threatening situations, such as:

- a) Current suicidal behavior
- b) Immediate risk of harming others
- c) Immediate risk of being harmed by someone else
- d) Sudden and immediate health situations (i.e. seizure, heart attack, stroke, etc.)
- e) Substance overdose or alcohol poisoning

Non-emergency concerns may include the following: issues involving sleep, procrastination, anxiety, feelings of isolation or depression, substance abuse (but not overdose), and physical concerns such as head and stomach aches, and sudden weight loss or gain.

Step 2. Follow emergency or non-emergency procedures.

Emergency procedures:

1. Call the appropriate authorities:
 - a. 911
 - b. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 or 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish) to reach a trained counselor.
 - c. Students can text "**Home**" to **741-741** (24/7 Crisis Text Line).
 - d. Emergency services at the student's college campus (look this up)
2. Inform ScholarMatch of the situation by calling (415) 652-2766 AND emailing careers@scholarmatch.org.

Non-emergency procedures:

If you are concerned about a student's mental or physical health, but it is NOT an immediate life-threatening emergency, please inform ScholarMatch by emailing careers@scholarmatch.org.

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Suicide Awareness and Intervention

We do not want you to act as mental health professionals. However, in the unlikely event that you encounter a student who is suicidal, it is important to know what to do. First, differentiate between a student who is suicidal in the present and a student who has or previously had suicidal thoughts. Intervention is appropriate for students who are *currently* suicidal.

If you are concerned about a student but they aren't in immediate danger of harming themselves or others, please follow non-emergency procedures as outlined on the How to Handle Student Crises and Emergencies page.

- If a student is suicidal *in the present*, enlist outside help.
 - Refer students to the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**: 1-800-273-8255 (English) or 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish) to reach a trained counselor.
 - Students can text "**Home**" to **741-741** (24/7 Crisis Text Line).
 - You can call their campus emergency services.
 - If a student is in the process of attempting suicide, **call 911 immediately**.

- Important Facts to Keep in Mind:
 - It is a myth that talking openly about suicide increases chances of suicide.
 - Risk factors for suicide are *not* predictors of suicide. You **CANNOT** predict the future.
 - You **CANNOT** control how another person is going to respond. You **CAN** be genuinely concerned and supportive (e.g. "I am worried about you.").
 - You **CANNOT** decide for another person whether or not they want help or want to change. You **CAN** be aware of your own needs.
 - You **CANNOT** read other people's minds. You **CAN** be honest with yourself.
 - You **CAN** maintain and respect healthy boundaries for your own self-care.

- If a student is suicidal in the present, be sure to clearly articulate and follow through with your boundaries.
 - If you are comfortable, stay on the phone or computer with them until authorities arrive or they call a mental health crisis hotline, do so.
 - Do not say you are comfortable doing something you are not comfortable doing, and do not feel guilty about your limits.
 - Be aware that some students may feel uncomfortable with police intervention.