

Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Procedure (Community)

Essential Summary:

Audience

- Frontline employees: employees who work directly with and /or supervise young people (including YJNSW caseworkers (community), sessional supervisors, mentors, YJC convenors and managers).
- YJNSW psychologists
- Assistant managers (community)
- Area managers
- Community directors

When to use this procedure:

Use this procedure when working with a young person who is at risk of self-harming or suicide, has harmed themselves, attempted suicide or following the death of a young person by suicide.

When using CIMS refer to CIMS [CLICK] for step by step instructions

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Version:	1
Policy Reference:	Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Policy
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Ensure that this document is the latest version to use	

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Please check in the Operations Manual (TOM) to ensure you have the latest version before using this document.

1 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide steps for how to identify, manage and respond to incidents of threatened or actual self-harm, attempted or threatened suicide and suicide of a young person in the community.

2 Process Map – Self harm and Suicide Prevention Procedure

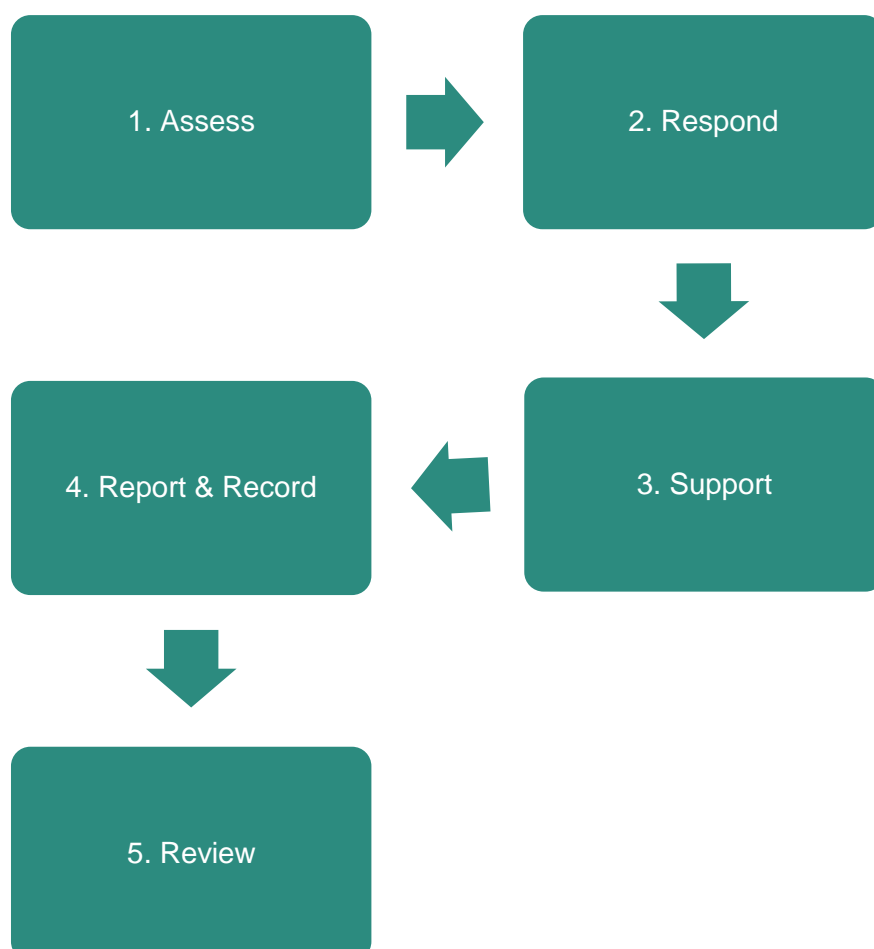
This procedure contains three individual processes

Process A: Responding to risk of self-harm or suicide

Process B: Responding to self-harm or attempted suicide

Process C: Responding to the suicide of a young person

These processes have their own steps, while following the same general process map.



3 Contents

Follow the most appropriate process steps for the situation you are responding to.

Process A: Responding to a risk of self-harm or suicide Page 4

Use this process when:

- responding to an immediate risk or threat of self-harm
- responding to a disclosure of thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Process B: Responding to self-harm or attempted suicide Page 9

Use this process when:

- responding to an incident of self-harm or attempted suicide

Process C: Responding to the suicide of a young person Page 14

Use this process when:

- responding to an incident of suicide of a young person.

4 Process A: Responding to a risk of self-harm or suicide

Use this process when:

- responding to an immediate risk or threat of self-harm
- responding to a disclosure of thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Use process B if a young person has harmed themselves, or attempted suicide.

Step 1 – Assess

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

When case workers conduct an initial assessment on a newly allocated young person, they must assess the young person's history of self-harm and suicide as directed in the *Case Management Procedure*; checking the young person's alerts and using the questions in the *Assessment Guide*:

- Have you ever attempted suicide or been stressed to the point you have thought of killing yourself?
- Have you ever deliberately hurt yourself?

If the young person answers yes to either of these questions, ask them;

- Do you feel like killing yourself now? If yes, do you have a plan?

If the young person answers 'no' to this question, and there are no other risks of self-harm identified, continue with case management ensuring the young person's risk of self-harm is monitored throughout their supervision.

When any frontline employee identifies a self-harm or suicide risk with a young person, they must:

Identify any risk to themselves and others. Do not place yourself or others in a dangerous situation.

Identify whether the young person has a previous or current suicide or self-harm safety plan in place.

Ask other people in the immediate area for assistance if appropriate (i.e. carers, other employees or your manager).

If the young person is contacting you over the phone, ask them for their location, and keep them on the phone while you respond.



Step 2 – Respond

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Ask the young person calmly, directly and empathically if they have a plan, means or intent to kill themselves, or hurt themselves.

Listen to the young person; allow them time to speak.

Remind the young person of the limits of confidentiality, and that you need to make sure that they are safe.

Persuade the young person to get help by asking if they will see a psychologist, counsellor, doctor or mental health provider. Consider engaging a culturally appropriate service when possible. Ask them if they are already engaged with a mental health service.

Facilitate a referral as soon as possible and contact your manager and the *Mental Health Access Line 1800 011 511* for advice if required.

If the young person refuses to get help, speak with your manager to discuss the risk, and identify an appropriate way to respond. This can involve informing the young person's family of the risk.

Call 000 where there is an imminent risk of suicide and you cannot persuade the young person to get immediate help.

If the young person is speaking with you over the phone and there is an imminent risk of suicide, keep them on the phone while contacting 000, or ask another person to contact 000 for you.

Remove means of the young person harming themselves, if safe to do so, or ask their carers/family to remove means.

Remind the young person of their safety plan and coping strategies, if one exists.

If no safety plan exists and they are not able to immediately access help, create an interim safety plan with the young person identifying;

- warning signs that they may be at risk
- actions they will take to stay safe if they feel like harming themselves
- people they can speak to or stay with as an interim measure
- who they can contact in a crisis, e.g. 000, Kids Helpline, Lifeline

Make sure that the young person has access to the information in their interim safety plan.

Encourage the young person to let their support people know they are listed in the safety plan.

Stay with the young person, or on the phone with them, until they can implement their safety plan and access support. This could include being with a suitable family member or friend who is aware of the risk.

Responsibility: Psychologist

Tasks

Assess the risk of self-harm/ suicide for young people who are referred to you and/or provide advice to frontline employee and manager about where the young person can receive mental health support.

Follow the steps outlined in the *YJNSW Psychologists' Manual* regarding suicide risk in the community.

Create a safety plan with the young person or review the existing one.

Provide ongoing support and advice to employees engaging with the young person.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Support employee and organise extra support if necessary.

Facilitate and support the referral to a YJNSW psychologist when required.



Step 3– Support

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Support the young person to attend follow up referrals and meet their case plan goals (caseworkers only).

Provide advice to the young person's parents/carers about where they can get further support e.g. Lifeline, Mental Health Helpline and 000.

Seek support for yourself from team mates (e.g. a peer support officer), supervisor or Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) Benestar if required.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Check appropriate referrals are made.

Provide ongoing support and advice to the employee, EAP referral or support leave where required.

Complete any tasks that the employee is not able to (e.g. convenor, sessional supervisor or mentor).



Step 4 – Report & Record

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Update alerts following the *Alerts Procedure (Community)*

Document any self-harm information or concerning behavioural changes in CIMS as an *Issues/ Concerns* case note and an incident report if required (following the *Incident Management Policy: Reporting, Debrief and Review*).

Or

Employees who do not have access to CIMS (e.g. convenors and mentors) must provide a summary of what occurred to the Assistant Manager, so that it can be recorded on CIMS. The Assistant Manager may request this to be a verbal or written paper report.

Check the family/carer is made aware of the risk, considering the limits of confidentiality and duty of care requirements.

Follow the *Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting Policy*, to identify whether you need to complete the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) and report the risk to the Helpline.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Determine whether it is appropriate to have the employee complete an incident report when risk of self-harm or suicide is made known (*see Incident Management Policy, Reporting, Debrief and Review and Incident Reporting Procedure*).

Check that employees have completed the MRG (if required).

Record the actions taken by any employees that are unable to (e.g. convenor or mentor who cannot access CIMS).

Responsibility: Psychologist

Tasks

Complete confidential psychological case notes for treatment purposes and standard case notes to inform frontline employees about any relevant information.



Step 5–Review

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Review the case plan to reflect the recent changes if necessary i.e. new medication, new mental health service referral or new day program (caseworkers only). Update the YLS/CMI-AA if required (caseworkers only).

Reflect on successes, challenges and lessons learned with your manager and the YJNSW Psychologist.

Continue to support the young person and inform your manager if you have concerns that they continue to be at risk, despite the supports that are in place.

Identify with your manager whether you would benefit from further coaching or training, such as Mental Health First Aid.

Continue to revisit and discuss the safety plan with the young person and their mental health worker, to confirm that it is meeting the needs of the young person.

Responsibility: Psychologist

Tasks

Meet with the young person as planned and review their progress and safety plan to assess if the young person's needs are being met.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Review intervention provided after any incidents and identify any systemic issues relating to increased risk or management of incidents.

Responsibility: Area Manager

Tasks

Approve incident reports completed by the Caseworker and forwarded by the Assistant Manager

Review current practices, circumstances, procedures and training needs after an incident to identify any systemic issues/lessons learned.

5 Process B: Responding to self-harm or attempted suicide

Step 1 – Assess
Responsibility: Frontline Employee
Tasks Identify any risk to yourself and others. Do not place yourself or others in a dangerous situation.
Responsibility: Assistant Manager
Tasks Assist employee when informed of the situation.

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Step 2 – Respond
Responsibility: Frontline Employee
Tasks Encourage the young person to access a medical centre for wound care or call for assistance from 000. Follow the instructions provided by emergency services or medical professionals. Provide first aid if able and willing. When providing first aid; identify what personal protective equipment (PPE) is required (e.g. gloves if blood is present). Put on PPE before responding. Discuss with the young person what action you are going to take to keep everyone safe. Ask other people in your immediate area for assistance if appropriate (i.e. carers, other employees and first aid officer). Remove means of the young person harming themselves, if safe to do so, or assist carers/family to remove means. Do not leave the young person alone. Maintain personal contact with the young person until they can implement their safety plan and access support. When physical safety issues have been addressed: Listen to the young person; allow them time to speak. Ask the young person about whether they intended to kill or hurt themselves. Remind the young person of the limits of confidentiality, and that you need to make sure that they are safe. Persuade the young person to get help by asking if they will go see a psychologist, counsellor, doctor or mental health provider. Ask them if they are already engaged with a

mental health service. Facilitate the referral or contact the ***Mental Health Access Line 1800 011 511*** for advice if required as soon as possible.

If the young person refuses to get help, speak with your manager to discuss the risk, and identify an appropriate way to respond.

Remind the young person of their safety plan and coping strategies.

If no safety plan exists, and they are not able to immediately get help, create an interim safety plan with the young person identifying;

- warning signs that they may be at risk
- actions they will take to stay safe if they feel like harming themselves
- people they can speak to or stay with as an interim measure
- who they can contact in a crisis, e.g. 000, Kids Helpline, Lifeline

Notify your assistant manager about the incident and seek advice.

Call **000** where there is an imminent risk of suicide and you cannot persuade the young person to get help.

If the young person is speaking with you over the phone, and there is an imminent risk of suicide, keep them on the phone while contacting 000, or ask another person to contact 000 for you.

Contact family/carer of the young person if they were not present and advise them of the incident.

Responsibility: Psychologist

Tasks

Assess risk of self-harm/ suicide for young people who are referred to you or provide advice to the frontline employee and manager about where the young person can receive mental health support.

Follow the steps outlined in the *YJNSW Psychologists' Manual* regarding suicide risk in the community.

Create a safety plan with the young person, if one is not already in place.

Provide ongoing support and advice to employees engaging with the young person.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Support employee throughout incident and organise extra support if necessary.



Step 3 – Support

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Help the young person access support services, including culturally specific support services if appropriate and available. Encourage the young person to speak with their family, or significant others, if appropriate.

Seek emotional support from team mates (e.g. a peer support officer), supervisor or Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) Benestar following incident and follow de-briefing processes.

Make appropriate leave and workplace arrangements with the Assistant Manager, if required.

Contact the young person, carer or hospital (with consent of young person) throughout their admission, if relevant.

Provide advice to the young person's carers about where they can get further support e.g. Lifeline, Mental Health Helpline and 000.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Identify whether an appropriate response has occurred including a referral to a mental health service or a psychologist.

Provide ongoing support to employees, EAP referral or supported leave.

Complete any steps that the employee is not able to (e.g. convenor, sessional supervisor or mentor).



Step 4 – Report & Record

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Initiate an incident report in consultation with your manager.

Document all information in CIMS as an *Issues/ Concerns* case note, an incident report if appropriate and update alerts (following the *Alerts Procedure (Community)*)

or

Employees who do not have access to CIMS (e.g. convenors and mentors) must provide a summary of what occurred to the Assistant Manager, so that it can be recorded on CIMS. The Assistant Manager may request this to be a verbal or written paper report.

Inform the young person's family/carers of the incident.

Follow the *Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting Policy*, to identify whether you need to complete the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) and report the self-harm to the Helpline.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Support the employee in completing an incident report, according to the *Incident Management Policy and Incident Reporting Procedure*.

Check that employees have completed the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG), where required.

Check that identified risks, conversations and strategies are documented in case notes.

Review and update self-harm alerts, if required

Record all actions taken for any employees that do not have access (e.g. convenor or mentor).



Step 5—Review

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Continue to revisit and discuss the safety plan with the young person and their mental health worker, to confirm that it is meeting the needs of the young person.

Adjust case plan to reflect the recent changes if necessary i.e. new medication, new mental health service referral or new day program (caseworkers only).

Consider whether the young person's YLS/CMI-AA should be reviewed (caseworkers only).

Reflect on successes, challenges and lessons learned with your manager and the YJNSW Psychologist.

Identify with your manager any need for further coaching or training, such as Mental Health First Aid.

Continue to support the young person and inform your manager if you have concerns that they continue to be at risk, despite the supports that are in place.

Participate in an operational debrief, if required.

Responsibility: Psychologist

Tasks

Meet with the young person as planned and review their progress and safety plan to assess if the young person's needs are being met.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Review intervention provided after any incidents and identify any systemic issues relating to increased risk or management of self-harm incidents.

Responsibility: Area Manager

Tasks

Approve incident reports completed by the employee and forwarded by the Assistant Manager.

Review current practices, circumstances, procedures and training needs after an incident to identify any issues and lessons learned.

Organise an operational debrief, if required.

Responsibility: Director, Community

Tasks

Provide access to training and resources for employees.

Monitor the trends in incidents and circumstances regarding self-harm and attempted suicide/suicide in the community regularly and reflect on trends.

Recommend updates to processes and practices when trying to address any failings in managing young people who are at risk of self-harm or suicide.

6 Process C – Responding to a death of a young person by suicide

Step 1 – Assess
Responsibility: Frontline Employee
Tasks If a young person is found by a YJNSW employee Identify any risk to yourself and others. Do not place yourself or others in a dangerous situation.
Responsibility: Assistant Manager
Tasks Assist caseworker when informed of the situation.
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Step 2 – Respond
Responsibility: Frontline Employee
Tasks If a young person is found by a YJNSW employee Call 000 for assistance and follow the instructions of emergency services. Provide first aid, if able and willing. When providing first aid; identify which personal protective equipment (PPE) is required (e.g. gloves if blood is present). Put on PPE before responding. Do not remove anything from the scene in case this is required for forensic evidence. Confirm that police will contact the primary carer of the young person. Notify manager/supervisor about incident. If informed of the death of a young person Offer to refer the young person’s family, friends and others to access support and organise referrals, if necessary and appropriate, as soon as possible. Contact the Mental Health Access Line 1800 011 511 for advice, if necessary. Notify manager/supervisor about the incident.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Provide support and advice to frontline employees.
Undertake any tasks that the employee is not able to, as appropriate.
Advise the area manager of the situation.



Step 3–Support

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Seek emotional support from team mates (e.g. a peer support officer), supervisor or Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) Benestar following the incident and participate in the de-briefing processes.
Apply for leave from work through the Assistant Manager, if required.

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Discuss the incident with relevant employees to complete the incident report ensuring facts are recorded as soon as practicable so details are preserved.
Encourage all affected employees to contact EAP and facilitate referrals as soon as possible.
Provide ongoing support to employees, EAP referral or supported leave.
Encourage all employees to support each other.
Maintain regular contact with employees who were impacted by the young person's death.

Responsibility: Area Manager

Tasks

Advise the Director, Community of the situation.
Check that an immediate and appropriate response has been actioned.
Provide access to EAP for all employees.
Contact family of young person to offer support and condolences, if appropriate.
Approve incident reports completed by the employee and forwarded by the Assistant Manager.
Arrange and conduct an operational debriefing for employees (*Incident Management Policy*).
Provide employees with an operational debriefing and contact other employees who could not attend the meeting. Arrange for EAP to attend if appropriate.



Step 4 –Report & Record

Responsibility: Frontline Employee

Tasks

Document information in CIMS as an incident report **or**

Where employees do not have access to CIMS (including convenors and mentors), provide a written summary of what occurred to the Assistant Manager, so that it can be recorded on CIMS) following the *Incident Reporting Procedure*.

Inform YJNSW caseworkers who supervise known peers of the young person of the incident.

Take notes if necessary for incident reporting purposes.

Complete administrative tasks on CIMS for closing a client's file (caseworkers only).

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Support frontline employee in completing the incident report (*see Incident Management Policy, Reporting, Debrief and Review and Incident Reporting Procedure*).

Approve incident report and forward to the area manager, following the *Incident Reporting Procedure*.

Record all actions taken for employees that do not have CIMS access (e.g. convenor or mentor).

Notify CIMS via IDS of the young person's death.

Responsibility: Area Manager

Tasks

Notify the sentencing court of the young person's death.



Step 5–Review

Responsibility: Assistant Manager

Tasks

Review intervention provided after any incidents and identify any systemic issues relating to increased risk or management of self-harm incidents.

Complete an *Issues/Concerns case note* indicating that the young person is deceased, and a summary of actions taken.

Responsibility: Area Manager

Tasks

Approve incident reports completed by the employee and forwarded by the Assistant Manager.

Review current practices, circumstances, procedures and training needs after an incident to identify any systemic issues/lessons learned.

Responsibility: Director, Community

Tasks

Provide access to training and resources for employees.

Monitor the trends in incidents and circumstances regarding self-harm and attempted suicide/suicide in centres regularly and reflect on trends.

Recommend updates to processes and practices when trying to address any failings in managing young people who are at risk of self-harm or suicide.

7 Legislation:

This procedure is supported by the following legislation:

- *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987*
- *Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act 1998*

8 Supporting documents:

This procedure is supported by the following documents:

Related Policies

- *Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Policy*
- *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *Incident Management Policy, Reporting, Debrief and Review*

Related procedures

- *Alerts Procedure (Community)*
- *Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *Incident Reporting Procedure*
- *Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Procedure (Custody)*

9 Document Information

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10 Document History

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1.0	03.12.2020	<i>Supersedes the Self-harm and Attempted Suicide Procedure</i>
