# Guide to helping suicidal or confused persons

# 5 steps to providing appropriate care



Ask the question: Thoughts about death, confused?



• Check whether student/PhD student/staff member needs help

Ask the question:

Thoughts about suicide? Feeling agitated, panicky or anxious?



Ask the question:

Specific plan, preparations? Confused or suspicious of others?



Ask the question:

Today or tomorrow? A threat to themselves or those around them?



Evaluate whether:

Situation unsafe for themselves or others, are they uncommunicative, desperate?



Call emergency services! On-campus emergency telephone number: 020-59822222 General emergency telephone number: 112.



- Give referral if necessary. Check whether the person can be sent to the appropriate staff member (study advisor, student psychologist, student counsellor, manager, staff welfare office) or offer online information

### Cooperative student/PhD student/ staff member

- Advise the person to seek support from family and friends
- Help the person make an urgent appointment with a GP as soon as possible
- Where necessary, make an appointment with the student psychologist (via study advisor) or with the staff welfare officer (via the manager or P&O advisor)

#### Uncooperative student /PhD student/staff member

Get the social safety coordinator involved. At the latest, they will get in touch on the next working day. If it cannot wait and the situation is urgent, call the emergency number: 020-5982222.

#### Cooperative student/PhD student/ staff member

- Contact a colleague or designated VU staff member (study advisor, student psychologist, student counsellor, manager, staff welfare
- Ask the person to contact a family member or friend for support
- Request the person's name, address and telephone number
- Help the person to make an appointment with a GP as soon as
- Motivate the person to take a family member or friend with them
- Ask the person to contact you as soon as they have arranged sup-

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#### Cooperative student/PhD student/ staff member

- Contact a colleague or designated VU staff member (study advisor, student psychologist, student counsellor, manager, staff welfare
- Motivate the person to visit their GP and take along a family mem-
- Help the person make an appointment with their GP that same day
- Request the person's name, address and telephone number
- Ask the person to contact you as soon as they have arranged sup-
- · Arrange a follow-up meeting with the person
- When in doubt, contact the social safety coordinator for advice

#### Uncooperative student/ PhD student/staff member

Get the social safety coordinator involved. At the latest, they will get in touch on the next working day. If it cannot wait and the situation is urgent, call the emergency number: 020-5982222.

#### Cooperative student/PhD student/ staff member

- Contact a colleague or designated VU staff member (study advisor, student psychologist, student counsellor, manager, staff welfare
- Do not leave the person alone if at all possible
- Arrange for a family member or friend to visit the person
- Request the person's name, address and telephone number, and GP's contact details where possible
- Call VU Amsterdam's emergency number. Make it clear that you are calling about a suicidal or confused person. Tell them where you are on campus. Someone will come to you and offer support on the spot.
- after experiencing this situation, make sure you take enough time for aftercare for yourself and the person involved.

## Contact details

#### **Emergencies:** VU Amsterdam's emergency number 020-5982222

Helpline for people with suicidal thoughts: 113 Suicide Prevention 0800 0113. available 24/7! See also www.113.nl

Student psychologists are always available for consultation during office hours. Send an email to: studentenpsychologen@vu.nl\_and they will contact you a.s.a.p.

#### Psychologist for PhD students can

be contacted through https://vu.nl/ en/employee/illness-and-recovery/ phd-psychologist

Staff welfare officers can be contacted through VU Amsterdam's Staff Welfare Office (vu.nl)

Social safety coordinator: socialeveiligheid@vu.nl You can find out more at: vu.nl/social-safety

# Warning signs of suicide:

Extreme sadness, unbearable pain, rage or hopelessness. No longer getting round to doing things, no longer feeling joy, loss of interest, withdrawing from social contact, looking pale and poorly groomed, poor academic performance, sudden mood swings or improved mood, saying goodbye by giving away personal items – when in doubt go with your gut feeling!

### Signs of confusion:

Disturbed speech, behaviour and feelings. Erratic speech or not finishing sentences, displaying different emotions simultaneously, starting something but not finishing it. Being suspicious of people, believing they are being sent special signals from a higher being by radio or television, believing they have special powers. Hearing voices, seeing things, experiencing things others don't notice.

