



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED

During your time with your Mentee, you may observe behavior that raises concern. The Mentee may appear to be in a bad spot, and you may feel an urgent need to do something for their safety. While it is unlikely that you will encounter this, you will be more prepared as a Mentor if you know when and how to report any concerns about your Mentee's safety or the safety of others.

Behaviors that raise concern include:

- **Suicidal or Homicidal ideation**
thoughts, ideas, statements about harming themselves or others
- **Paranoia**
- **Substance Misuse**
alcohol, over the counter, prescription, or illegal substances



When to contact the SUCCESS team?

As a SUCCESS Mentor, you are part of a team.

Remember to reach out to the SUCCESS team anytime you have concerns, or your if Mentee needs more help than you can provide. We are here to support you and your Mentee - you do not have to do this alone.

Some examples of when you may want to contact us include when your Mentee:

- Shows Red or Yellow Flag Warning Signs (see Yellow and Red Warning Signs below)
- Continues to make unhealthy choices
- Has academic concerns
- Stops responding to you
- Has legal issues or questions
- Is not a good match



Warning Sign Risk Levels



Warning Signs can be categorized based on how likely you think the person is to act on their behavior and/or how concerned you are for his/her safety. There are two levels:



Yellow Flag: *Low to Medium*



Red Flag: *Medium to High*



Yellow Flag Warning Signs

- An increase in anxiety or seemingly unable to relax
- Dramatic mood or habit changes
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Intense/irrational mistrust or suspicion
- Looking unkempt or poor hygiene
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped – like there's no way out
- Talking about being in unbearable pain
- Low motivation or no sense of purpose in life



Yellow Flag Action Plan

Use the **READ** plan of action if you get a feeling that your Mentee may be in distress, but you're **not** panicking:

Redirect, Encourage, Ask, and Document.

Redirect conversation back to the topic.

Encourage them to reach out to their medical team with their concerns, as well as their SUCCESS team.

Ask yourself some questions, like:

- Is this the first time he/she has said that, looked like that, or acted like that?
- How serious does this seem? Was this an idle comment or does this person look serious or very sad?
- What else is going on right now? Have they mentioned other things that may be triggering this particular crisis?
- Assess his/her behavior at the end. Do they look like it was no big deal? Or are you still concerned?

Document your concerns for the SUCCESS team, even if you feel that it was an offhand remark and not a real threat.

- Make note of what your Mentee said, and your internal responses to the questions above.
- If the more you think about it, the more worried you are, go ahead and move to the **Red Flag Action Plan**.



Red Flag Warning Signs

- Threatening to hurt or kill him/herself or others
- Looking for ways to kill him/herself or others by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Repeated mentioning of self-harm intent or plan



Red Flag Action Plan

If you are worried that your Mentee has a plan to hurt themselves or someone else (they've expressed clear intent, and have a plan that they could act on), then it's time to **ACT**:

Ask, Connect, and Tell.

Ask.... "Are you thinking about suicide?"

- Ask them a bit more about their plan – do they have a how and when plan, and do they have access to a method?
- Do NOT promise to keep anything that they tell you a secret. If they directly ask, be honest that you will be asking for help from the SUCCESS team.

Connect

- Be present with your Mentee. This can be virtually or face to face.
- Talk to them about who else could be a good contact for them – a friend, family member, or their mental health professional
- Encourage them to call the Lifeline number (800-273-8255) provided in the app, or you can share it with them again too.

Tell

- Contact the SUCCESS team immediately. You can do this in the app, or our emergency contact line.
- If the risk is very immediate, ask your Mentee to call 911.
- If they will not call 911, but you think it needs to happen, contact the local police for a Welfare or Wellness Check (you can only call 911 yourself if you are in the same county as your Mentee).

The above information is adapted from
information created by
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Foundation.
[You can read the full handout here.](#)