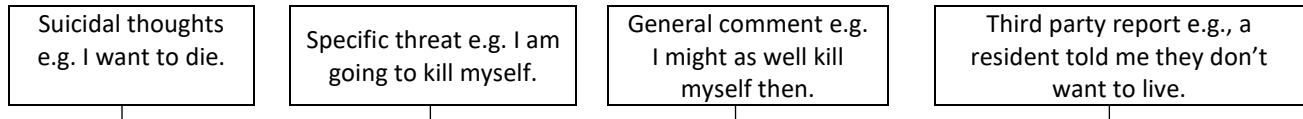


## Responding to threats of suicide or self-harm

### Examples of suicide/self-harm threat or attempt



#### Assess Risk – use the questions below as a guide to assess level of risk and decide what action to take

- Do they have a plan?
- Do they have the means, e.g., they've been collecting pills; have a rope, etc?
- Have there been past suicide/self-harm attempts?
- Is there an abuse of drugs or alcohol?
- Are they expressing despair and/or hopelessness?
- Is the person getting treatment for a mental illness/emotional problem?
- Are there any recent crises or stresses, e.g., bereavement; redundancy; relationship breakdown?
- What would stop them? Asking might help you to get them to agree to postpone harmful behaviour.

#### High Risk

If there are multiple risk factors (consider answers to above questions); they have active suicidal thoughts; they state they have a plan; they have the means to carry out threat(s).

#### Lower Risk does NOT mean NO risk

#### Try and gather as much of the following as possible (if applicable):

- ❖ Name of person making threats; address; contact number(s); current location (if different from address);
- ❖ If there is anyone else at risk or who might be affected e.g., children; disabled elderly parent?
- ❖ Name of their GP and/or any support workers e.g., mental health nurse; social worker?
- ❖ If reported by a third party - try to get reporter's name, contact details and when they became aware of the threat.
- ❖ Is there anyone who can keep them safe?
- ❖ If possible, get CONSENT to refer although you should explain that you may need to tell another agency what they've said.

#### In an EMERGENCY

**Call 999 and ask for the Police and/or an Ambulance if necessary**

Note: who will respond depends on the situation so you may have to risk assess relevant factors e.g., will they need to gain entry (break in)?

Give as much detail as possible and why you think there is a significant risk.

You might want to tell the operator:

***"I am (name/job title) ... and I have a person with me/on the phone who is at HIGH RISK OF SUICIDE."***

#### Non-emergency

- ❖ Encourage them to get help from a friend, family member or support agency (e.g., Samaritans). If no-one is available and they're worried, suggest they go to A&E;
- ❖ Try to get them to contact their GP and/or support worker (if they have one). Offer details of relevant support agencies if you have them e.g., Open Road, Peabody etc.
- ❖ If unsure what to do, **Ring NHS 111 - Option 2** for advice and/or to ask them to make direct contact with the person at risk.
- ❖ If you know they're being supported by the local Mental Health Team, ring the team to share your concerns. Local team based at Rectory Lane in Loughton Tel: **020 8272 4630**
- ❖ If you don't know if open to Mental Health, email the **EPUT Safeguarding Team** via **epunft.safeguarding@nhs.net** to ask.

#### In all situations

- ❖ Inform your line manager as soon as possible after the incident;
- ❖ Notify the EFDC Safeguarding Team of the incident as per the usual safeguarding procedures (available on the Intranet in the Safeguarding section);
- ❖ Make detailed notes and file as soon as possible – include your reasons for assessing as a lower risk;
- ❖ Look after yourself e.g., talk it through with someone; dealing with these issues can be very distressing.