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Mid-Summer Extender

Options to continue the conversation about responding to suicidal disclosures mid-summer:

- 1) Ask staff if any of them have been in any situation involving suicidal thoughts or plans. Ask staff and their supervisor to together describe the situation, describe how they responded, and ask for any feedback or advice they would want from the larger staff team. General debrief questions can include: what worked? What didn't? What **did** you do and what **didn't** you do (recall the handout/training from the beginning of the summer)? What did you notice about how the camper responded? What was the hardest part of the process? What was the most surprising part? What would you do differently next time? What did you learn from the experience? Remind staff to keep the identity of the camper private.
- 2) Revisit the role-play section of the training, using given scenarios (Handout #5) or any real-life scenarios that have come up again.
- 3) Review the format for a standard "Safety Plan" (next page). How does this knowledge impact the response to a disclosure about suicide? **Note: remind staff it is never their job to create a safety plan with a student: this should always be done with a mental health professional.*

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Safety Plan

*Based off the model created by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, (accessible at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/VA_Safety_planning_manual.doc).

This plan is meant to be used in order; if you recognize signs (step 1), start with step 2. If this does not resolve the crisis or help reduce the risk of suicidal ideation, use the next step.

1. Recognizing Warning Signs

How will you know when the safety plan should be used? What do you experience when you start to think about suicide or feel extremely distressed?

2. Internal Coping Strategies

What can you do, on your own, to help yourself not to act on your thoughts or urges? How likely would you be to use this step during a time of crisis? What might stand in the way?

3. Social Contacts Who May Distract From Crisis

Who or what social settings help you take your mind off your problems, at least for a little while? Where is a safe place you can go to be around people, even if they are strangers?

4. Family or Friends Who May Offer Help

Who can you contact for help during a crisis? Who is supportive? List several people. Do you have their phone numbers? How likely would you be to contact these people?

5. Contacting Professionals and Agencies

What mental health professional should be on your safety plan? Do you have their phone numbers? How likely would you be to contact them? What might get in the way of using these services?

Some ideas:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

The Trevor Lifeline (for youth who identify as LGBTQ): 1-866-488-7386

Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room

You have created a safety plan, and now you are prepared to respond in a time of crisis – great job! Last steps to creating your plan includes sharing it with the people on your plan and making sure your environment is safe.

1. Who will you share this plan with? How will you share it with them? (Tell them, send a picture, etc.)
2. Is there anything you need to reduce access to (e.g., weapons, medication, heights)? What do you need to do to make your home and environment safer in case you are in a crisis?