

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

PANIC ATTACKS

What is it?

An episode of intense fear that usually peaks within 10 minutes and occurs in the absence of real danger. They are not dangerous, but they FEEL dangerous to the person experiencing the panic attack.

How to Respond?

- ▶ Ask if they know what is happening, or if they have had a panic attack.
- ▶ If it is a panic attack, reassure the person of what they are experiencing, and that while it is terrifying it is not life threatening and the symptoms will pass.
- ▶ Be patient, speak slowly and clearly, use short sentences.
- ▶ This is not the time to figure out what triggered it, just be with them.
- ▶ Ask how you might help- get them away from others, sitting down, etc.
- ▶ Focus on breathing.
- ▶ Grounding Techniques- 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you touch, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.
- ▶ **If you are unsure if the event is a panic attack or heart attack, seek emergency medical assistance.**

SELF-HARM

What is it?

A coping mechanism to help regulate emotions. When harming themselves, students are communicating that they are outside of the window of tolerance.

How to Respond?

- ▶ Include a parent, even if it means breaking trust.
- ▶ The way you respond in the moment matters greatly. Even though it scares you, stay calm. Help talk it through. This builds trust.
- ▶ Say: You're hurting and you don't know how to deal with it.
- ▶ If you suspect someone: Don't be afraid to ask. Say "I've been terribly concerned about you. I see all of these scars on your arm and I suspect you may be hurting yourself. If that is the case, I want you to know you can talk to me about it. I just want to help."
- ▶ **Ask about suicidal intentions. Although self-injury is not usually a suicide attempt, it can increase the risk of suicide.**

STUDENTS WHO MAY BE SUICIDAL

Passive Suicidal Ideation

- I. "Sometimes I think it would be better to not be around/be in heaven.
- II. "Sometimes I think about taking my own life."

Active Suicidal Ideation

- III. "I wish I were dead" "These are the things I would do and what I would use if I were to take my own life.
- IV. Person wants to take their life/is making attempts.

A student's parent should be informed at any mention of suicide. If the student falls in the II, III, or IV category, parents should be contacted immediately and next step/a plan is formed with the parents.

Suicide Myths

Myth #1- Once a person is seriously considering suicide, there is nothing you can do.

- ▶ Fact: Most crises are time-limited and based on unclear thinking. If they get the help they need, the vast majority will not get to the place of being suicidal again.

Myth #2- If you ask a person about his/her suicidal ideations, you will encourage them to kill themselves.

- ▶ Fact: The opposite is true. Asking someone directly about their suicidal feelings will lower their anxiety level. Your openness and concern will allow the person to talk about his/her problems. It will help them to feel less lonely and isolated, and possibly relieved.

Myth #3- A person who attempts suicide or has thoughts of suicide will always be "suicidal."

- ▶ Fact: Most people who are at risk are only at risk for a brief period to their lives. If they get proper help and support, the vast majority will not be suicidal again.

Myth #4- Suicide happens without warning.

- ▶ Fact: Studies reveal that a person who is suicidal generally gives many clues and warnings regarding their suicidal intentions. Being aware of these cries for help could prevent suicidal behavior.

Myth #5- People who talk about suicide do not mean to do it.

- ▶ Fact: People who talk about suicide may be reaching out for help/support. It is a way to end their suffering, and they may feel like there is no other option.

Myth #6- Only Experts can prevent suicide

- ▶ Fact: Suicide prevention is everybody's business and anyone can help prevent the tragedy of suicide.

QPR Model

Question:

▶ **Always Ask**

- ▶ How you ask the question is so much less important than that you ask.

Persuade:

- ▶ Listen to what is going on and give them your full attention.
- ▶ Remember: Suicide isn't the problem, its the only solution that feels like it will end the suffering.
- ▶ It is important to listen without judgment and offer hope.

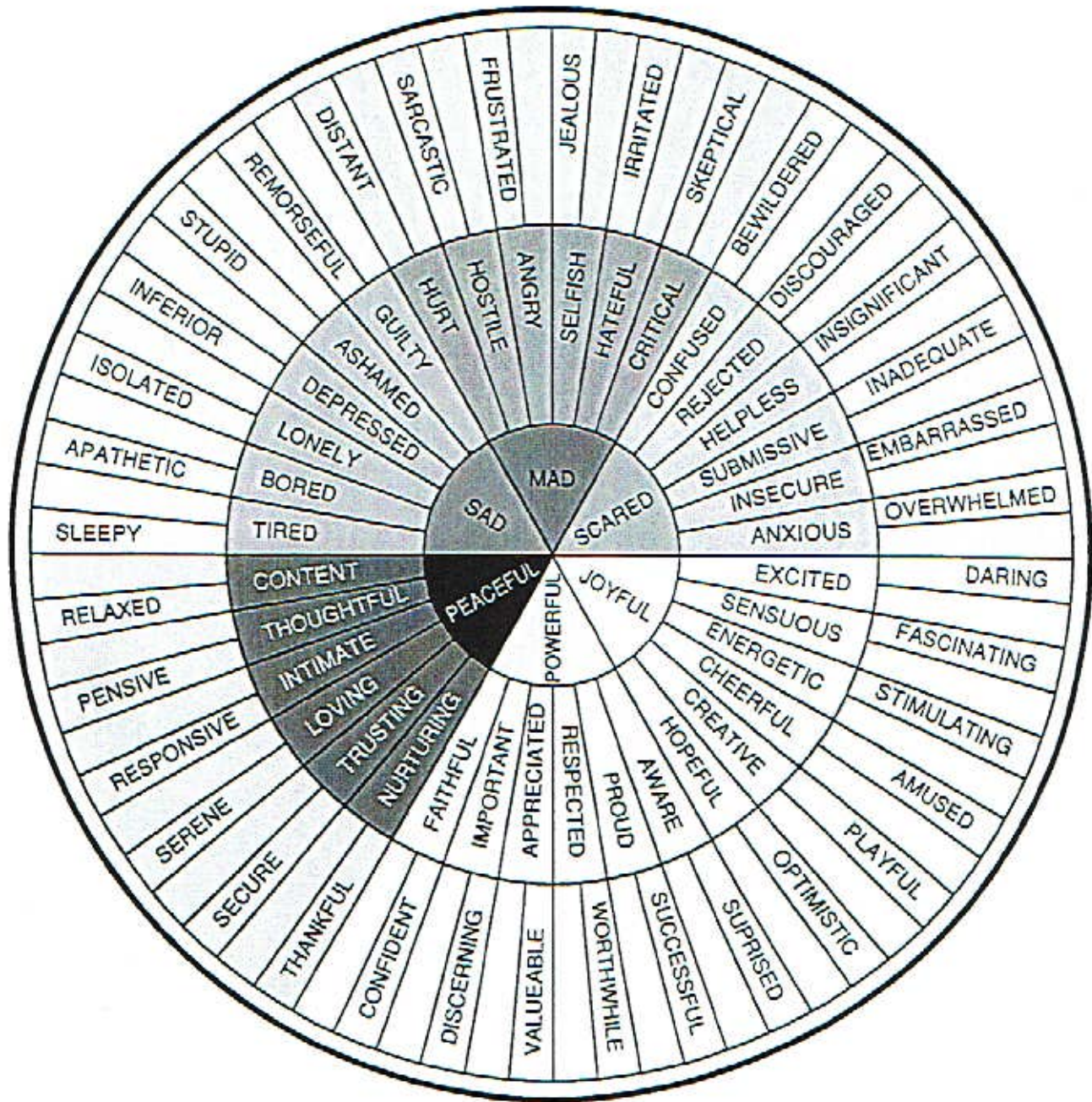
Refer:

- ▶ We are not trying to get them to stop thinking about suicide, but to consider receiving and finding help.
- ▶ Know the Resources available in your area:
 - ▶ Counselors you trust.
 - ▶ Respond Crisis Line for your area.

Call 911 when these options aren't working and you don't believe the person is going to be ok.

The Feeling Wheel

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ACTIVE LISTENING

However it is phrased, a good listener's response makes your feel understood and invites you to say more." -The Lost Art of Listening

Roadblocks to Good Listening:

- Autobiographical (Story Pirate)
- Interrupting
- Assuming
- Being Too Quick to Offer Advice

Attending: Showing you Care

- Concentrate on Person Speaking
- Put your Phone Away
- Pay Attention to Body Language
- Suspend your Agenda

Reflecting:

Let's the Person know we hear them, we care for them, & support them.

Helps check the accuracy of what we heard.

Helps us to stay focused and attentive.

Invites the other person to explore.

content:

To verbally summarize back to the person the content or facts of what they said

Examples:

- It sounds like...
- It might be that..
- It seems as though...
- If I'm hearing you correctly...
- It's almost like...

meaning:

To reflect back the explicit emotions the person.

Content + Feeling= Meaning

You feel _____ because _____.

Examples:

- You feel overwhelmed because you have so much homework to do.
- You feel exhausted because you've had such a busy week.