



# **LSS 211 Central Ohio Suicide Intervention & Lethality Assessment**

*Edited language for United Way of Greater Cleveland 211 (December 2025)*

## **Suicide Intervention:**

If you suspect that a caller is thinking of or is attempting suicide, conduct a risk assessment to determine their level of safety. Keep in mind that the information below is not a flowchart. Remain calm when assessing the person's situation and level of safety, while still collecting, personal information (if possible), should emergency services (911) be needed.

1. Ask the caller, **“Are you thinking about ending your life?”** or **“Are you thinking of killing yourself?”**

2. If the caller is thinking of dying by suicide, develop a verbal contract with the caller that s/he will stay on the line and not continue to pursue suicide further as you two continue the conversation.

3. Provide empathy to the person in crisis while asking questions that may help you better determine the client's lethality. (See additional UWGC Lethality Assessment Tool at the end of this document)

- **“Have you thought through any specific plans about not wanting to be alive anymore?”** If yes, **“What is your specific plan?”**
- If yes to having a plan, **“Do you have the means to carry out your plan?”**
- **“Have you taken any steps already toward carrying out your plan?”**
- **“Do you feel any control over what is happening in your life right now?”**
- **“Do you feel trapped by your situation?”**



4. Obtain as much information about the caller as they are willing to provide you, including full name, current address/location, caller's phone number.

- Express to the caller that you are concerned for their safety and want to collect some personal information so that, if needed, emergency services can be contacted to help him/her.
- Even if the client does not wish to provide certain personal information, make note of the information you do know (e.g. write down the number that shows up on the caller ID)

5. Alert a fellow specialist, manager, or supervisor to assist you if emergency services (911) need to be sent out to provide a well check on the individual.

- Provide your "helper" with the caller's contact information so that the helper can reach out to police while you stay on the line with the caller in crisis.
- Have your "helper" let the police know that you are dealing with a suicidal individual and ask police to send out an officer who has been trained in mental health assessment/intervention.
- Remember: If you believe the client to be at imminent risk for suicide, DO NOT place the customer on hold or disconnect the call. Remain on the line with the caller until emergency services arrive.

If, after talking to the client and conducting a risk assessment for suicide, you determine that the client appears to be at low risk for completing suicide, you may want to do the following:

If the caller expresses low risk for suicide but you think they may find it helpful to talk to someone on the Suicide Hotline, you may complete a "warm transfer."

- If the caller agrees that s/he can be transferred, let the caller know that you will put them on hold while you connect to the Suicide Hotline.
  - Press the "Transfer/Consult" button on your phone
  - Dial out the Suicide Hotline number: 614-221-5445 or 9-8-8. The call will ring into the Suicide Hotline.
  - Let the representative know you are from LSS 211 Central Ohio and that you have been speaking with someone who has been contemplating suicide, and that you have them on the phone line with you.



- Press the conference button on your phone to merge the parties together.
- Introduce the caller to the Suicide Hotline representative, and briefly share some of the things that you and the caller have discussed.
- Inform the caller that you will let them continue the conversation from there. You may now disconnect from the call by pressing on the Leave button; the other two parties will remain connected.

If the caller expresses low risk for suicide but the caller does not wish to be “warm transferred” to the Suicide Hotline, offer the phone number to the caller, should they wish to use it at another time.

**\*\*With any suicide call, it is required that you ask the caller if they are willing to have you follow up with him/her. If the client agrees, schedule a follow-up call for the very next day and be sure to follow back up! If the caller declines, respect his/her right to self-determination. \*\***

If the client agrees, schedule a follow-up call for the very next day. If the caller wants a follow-up call outside of your shift, or, if you’re off the next day, assign the follow-up to [Danielle Schamer](#). Leave detailed notes for Danielle to complete the follow-up.

If saving a follow-up to [Danielle Schamer](#), also send an email to [211Supervisor@unitedwaycleveland.org](mailto:211Supervisor@unitedwaycleveland.org) indicating a follow-up has been scheduled, along with the Navigate transaction ID.

**PRO TIP: COPY AND PASTE THE SUGGESTED LANGUAGE BELOW IN AN EMAIL:**

I handled a call that turned into a crisis call; the caller was warm transferred to their local suicide hotline and requested a follow-up, but I will not be in the next day; follow-up assigned to Danielle Schamer with Navigate transaction number {insert the Navigate Transaction Number}.

***See the follow up scripts on the last page of this document.***

Below is the Lethality Assessment used by United Way of Greater Cleveland’s 211:



## Lethality Assessment

### DANGER TO SELF (i.e., Suicidal, Psych Emergency)

1. Sometimes when people are stressed or feeling down they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about suicide?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

2. Are you currently thinking about suicide?

Yes  No  Other/Unsure

3. Do you have a specific plan?

Yes  No  Other/Unsure

4. Do you have the \_\_\_\_\_ (gun, pills, etc. described in plan) to carry out the plan?

Has initiated plan  About to initiate plan  Not immediately implementing plan  Suicidal ideation only

**\*\* If caller has begun to hurt self, or is planning to and has the means, initiate rescue procedure \*\***

### DANGER FROM OTHERS (i.e., Domestic Violence, Other Violence, etc.)

1. Are you in danger right now?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

2. Is your assailant still there?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

3. Do you need emergency medical treatment?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

**\*\* If caller is in danger or needs medical treatment, initiate rescue procedure \*\***

### DANGER TO OTHERS (i.e., Homicidal)

1. Are you planning to hurt someone?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

2. Do you have a specific plan?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

3. Do you have the \_\_\_\_\_ (gun, knife, etc. described in the plan)?

No  Yes  Other/Unsure

**\*\* If caller has already begun to hurt someone, or is planning to and has the means, initiate rescue procedure \*\***



## Follow-up Scripts:

### **CLIENT REQUESTS THAT A MESSAGE BE LEFT:**

Hello, this is [Name] with LSS 2-1-1 Central Ohio. I am calling about the conversation I had with [Client's first name] on [Date and time of call]. I'm sorry I was unable to reach you at this time, but I will attempt to contact you again tomorrow. If you need assistance before then, please contact LSS 2-1-1 Central Ohio by dialing 2-1-1 or (614)221-2255. If not, I look forward to speaking tomorrow. Have a great day!

### **SOMEONE BESIDES THE CLIENT ANSWERS:**

Hello, this is [Name]. I am calling to speak with [Client's first name]. When would be a better time for me to call to speak with [Client's first name]? Thank you so much. I will try to reach her/him then. Have a great day!

**Note:** If the client has not requested that a message be left, do not leave a message. Reschedule to contact the client the next day.

\*Under no circumstances are you to leave your direct extension\*

**\* Please be aware of these guidelines to help ensure safety for clients who may be in dangerous situations\***