Suicide Warning Signs & Response

**Ideation**
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Making threats or talking about killing themselves
- Looking for ways to kill themselves

**Substance Abuse**
- Increased substance (alcohol or drug) use

**Purposeless**
- No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life

**Anxiety**
- Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep

**Trapped**
- Feeling trapped - like there’s no way out

**Hopelessness**
- Loss of hope, doesn’t look forward to the future

**Withdrawal**
- Withdrawal from friends, family and society

**Anger**
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge

**Recklessness**
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities, without thinking

**Mood Changes**
- Dramatic mood changes

**Seek Immediate Assistance (24hrs)**
- Call University Police 813-974-2628 or 9-1-1
- Call the Counseling Center 813-974-2831, SVC 2124, usf.edu/counsel
- File a SOCAT Referral www.usf.edu/socatreferral
- Follow department procedures and contact your supervisor

**Show Concern and Refer**
- Express that you care
  “I’ve noticed...I care about you and I want to help.”
- Ask about suicide
  “Are you having thoughts of wanting to die?”
- Assess the urgency of the situation
  “Do you have plans to kill yourself now?”
- Validate strengths
  “Thank you for sharing, it takes a lot of courage...”
- Recommend they speak with a mental health professional
  “I think it may be helpful if you spoke with a counselor.”
- Acknowledge concerns
  “The services are confidential. They help a lot of students.”
- Follow-up
  When encouragement, support and outreach is needed call Student Outreach and Support 813-974-6130 or make a referral at www.usf.edu/socatreferral
OARS

O = Open Ended Questions:
Allows the person to tell their story and cannot be answered with a yes or no.

A = Affirmations:
Verbal and non-verbal communication which conveys respect, warmth, empathy and understanding

R = Reflective Listening:
Put your own thoughts and feelings aside and tune into information, feelings, accuracy, understanding, patterns and themes.

S = Summaries:
Paraphrase what you are hearing to ensure accuracy and understanding.

HELPFUL OARS PHRASES

Talk about what you observe
“I see…, I noticed that …, It sounds like you feel…”

Talk about what you know
“I am aware that …, I know that…, It has been brought to my attention that…”

Talk about what you understand
“I understand you need…, I hear you …, I am aware of …”

Clarify
“Do you mean…, Tell me more about…, Could you describe…”

Reflect (mirror back)
“It sounds like…, You were…What happened was…”

Summarize
“So, for you, (state summary).”