

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH THE FAMILY

It is important to work with the family of a student who died by suicide. They will often appreciate the support of the school community, and their cooperation can be valuable for effective postvention. The principal or a representative of the school should request to visit the family in their home. It may be useful for a pair of representatives to visit together so that they can support one another during the visit. It is important to respect the cultural and religious traditions of the family related to suicide, death, grieving, and funeral ceremonies.

The school representative(s) should:

- Offer the condolences of the school
- Inquire about funeral arrangements. Ask if the funeral will be private or if the family will allow students to attend
- Ask if the parents know of any of their child's friends who may be especially upset
- Provide the parents with information about grief counseling
- Ask the family if they would like their child's personal belongings returned. These could include belongings found in the student's locker and desk as well as papers and projects they may want to keep
- Briefly explain to the parents what the school is doing to respond to the death