

# Suicide

A school's general response to a suicide does not differ markedly from a response to any death. However, some issues exclusive to suicide require specific attention.

School administrators must allow students to grieve the loss of a peer without glorifying the method of death. Over emphasis on a suicide may be interpreted by vulnerable students as a glamorization of the suicidal act. In rare cases this can trigger other individuals with similar tendencies to consider suicide as a viable option.

The following “**DO’s**” and “**DON’Ts**” will help school staff limit glamorization of suicide:

- **Do** acknowledge the suicide as a tragic loss of life
- **Do** provide support for students profoundly affected by the death
- **Don’t** organize school assemblies to honor the deceased student
- **Don’t** dedicate the yearbook, newspaper articles, proms, athletic events, or advertisements to the deceased individual
- **Don’t** pay tribute to a suicidal act by planting trees, hanging engraved plaques or holding other memorial activities

A suicide in the school community can heighten the likelihood, in the subsequent weeks, of “copycat” suicide attempts and threats among those especially vulnerable to the effects of a suicide. To prevent further tragedies, students considered to be especially susceptible to depression/suicide must be carefully monitored and appropriate action taken if they are identified as high risk. These efforts require an intensive one on one intervention rather than a school wide response.