Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. Approximately 30,000 persons in the United States kill themselves each year, and nine times that many attempted suicide. Many of those who attempted will try again. And here’s the irony – except for a very few, all of the people who commit suicide want desperately to live. Suicidal thoughts occur when a feeling of hopelessness sets in that one is alone and that pressures and problems are one than one can bear and will never go away. The reality that people who commit suicide are unable to see is that the pain does go away and that the quality of one’s life does improve, with time. Sometimes a suicidal individual may express the idea of “being a burden,” of “being better off dead,” or of “wanting to get away from it all.” Suicidal persons usually want to communicate their feelings; any opportunity to do so should be encouraged. Suicidal persons are intensely ambivalent about killing themselves and typically respond to help. Suicidal states are time-limited, and most who commit suicide are not “crazy.”

High-risk indicators include: feelings of hopelessness and futility; a significant loss or threat of loss, including disappointment or rejection; a previous attempt; history of alcohol or drug abuse; and feelings of alienation and isolation. All of us may be able to save lives if we know how to recognize the danger of suicide and what to do about it. Although the suicide of any individual might have an effect on us, clearly it is far more likely that the loss by suicide of someone very close to us, such as a parent, child, relative or friend, would be potentially even more significant. Statistics indicate that at least six other people are impacted by each suicide that takes place. Although at times it presents a challenging and/or conflicted circumstance, getting appropriate professional help for a suicidal person is more important than preserving a confidence.

At CSUN there are some key resources on the campus that are in a position to respond to students who might be depressed and/or suicidal. They are:

University Counseling Services, (818) 677-2366, TTY (818) 677-7834;
Student Health Center (http://www.csun.edu/studenthealthcenter/) (818) 677-3666, TTY (818) 677-3692;
Public Safety (University Police) http://www-admn.csun.edu/police/ (818) 677-2111 V/TTY; and the
CSUN Helpline (http://www.csun.edu/helpline), available 6 p.m. – midnight at (818) 349-HELP V/TTY.

There are a number of potentially helpful on-line resources also available for additional information:
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention www.afsp.org/
American Association of Suicidology www.suicidology.org