



SOS for Higher Ed: Suicide Prevention for Students

Extension Activities



Devon's Story

Instructions: Read Devon's story and use as reference for the Acknowledge, Care, and Tell activities.

Your friend Devon has been acting strange lately. Devon used to be the center of every party, always cheerful (even about going to an 8am lecture), and always seemed to have something exciting going on.

Over the past few months, though, you've noticed a change. At parties, Devon is falling-down drunk within the first thirty minutes, and you suspect there might be other substances involved. Devon insists on walking home alone, even very late at night. When you offered to walk together saying "you could get mugged or hit by a car," Devon blew you off, saying that if something bad did happen, "that'd solve all my problems."

Recently, Devon had a huge fight with a mutual friend you're both super close with. Your friend doesn't know what happened and says that Devon just "blew up out of nowhere." Devon also recently offered you some prized, rare comic books saying, "I won't need them anymore."

Activity 1: Acknowledge the Signs

Instructions: If Devon were your friend, identify which behaviors are concerning to you, and what you would say to Devon to acknowledge your concerns.

- Circle the signs of distress you see in Devon's story.
- Write sample phrases you would use to acknowledge Devon's signs of distress.

If you are participating in a group training, discuss your answers with the group.

How would you mention the changes in Devon's behavior without making any judgements or assumptions?

Changes in behavior often communicate underlying emotions. What would you say to Devon to acknowledge the underlying emotions they may be feeling?

Activity 2: Prioritize Connection

Instructions: Think of the ways you feel connected to others on a daily or weekly basis. Consider the notes you marked during the on-screen activity.

Using sticky notes or paper, write down five ways you feel connected to others. When you are done, place your notes on your own wall or bulletin board. Use these as a visual reminder to prioritize your emotional wellbeing by seeking out connection.

If you are participating in a group training, post all of the connection ideas on the wall and take time to read them throughout the training. Inspire your peers with your ideas and learn new strategies from others!

Activity 3: Show You Care

Instructions: When you care through listening, you reflect back what you hear and validate the feelings they express. Continue your conversation with Devon with a focus on showing your friend you care. Circle the best response for each statement. If you are participating in a group training, discuss your answers.

- 1. Devon says: “Yeah, I blew up! You would too! I’m so sick of everyone and everything.”**

What response “reflects back” what Devon said?

- A** You are really feeling annoyed with everything, huh?
- B** Sounds like everyone is driving you crazy.
- C** Everyone and everything is annoying you.
- D** All of the above

- 2. Devon says: “Ever since I dropped that creative writing class, I can’t even look at my comic books anymore. I hate school and I just want to get out of here.”**

What response lets your friend know their feelings are valid?

- A** Don’t let that one class get you down. You are so talented!
- B** Do you really hate school or are you just frustrated because of that class?
- C** Dropping that class was a big deal. I get why you still feel so frustrated about the whole thing.

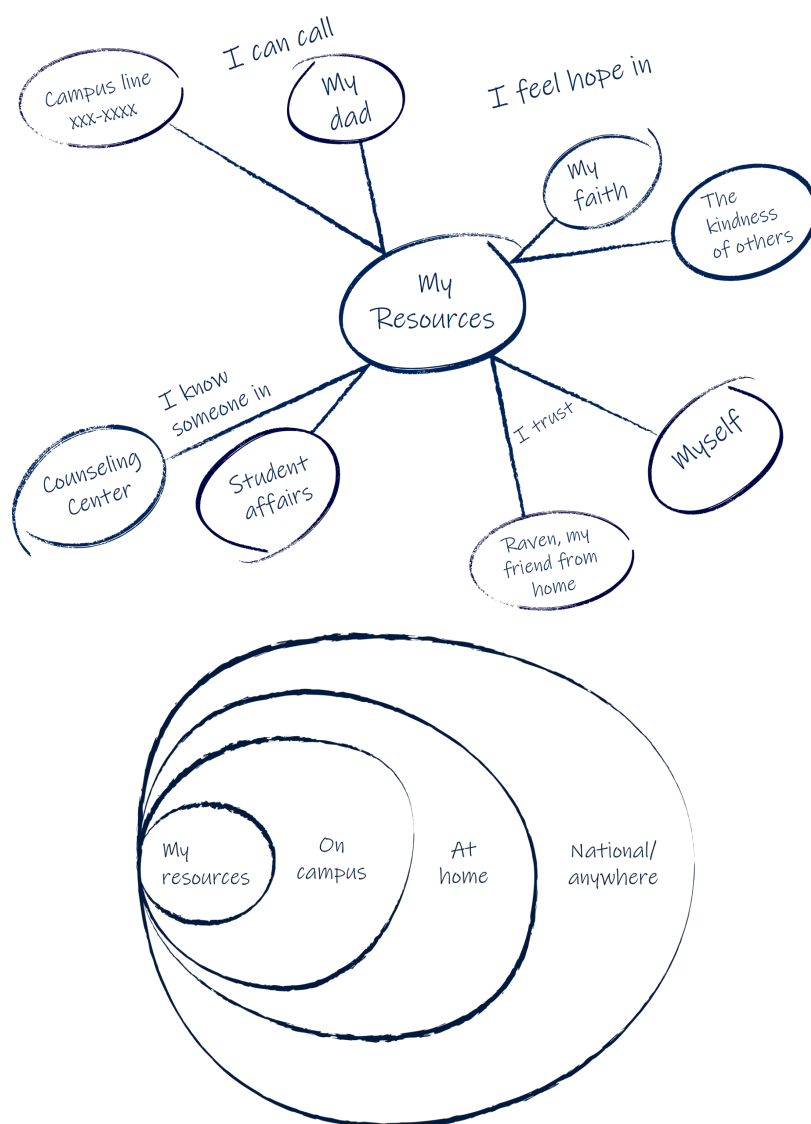
- 3. Do you ever feel like you can’t find the right words? How did Keala’s roommate, Wilbryna, show she cared?**
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Activity 4: Map My Resources

Instructions: On screen, you considered the resource categories you might use for yourself or a friend. Now, think about the categories and consider the specific resources that you, as an individual, have available in times of distress.

Create a visual representation of your resources. Using these sample resource maps as a guide, draw your own map that highlights your personal network of resources. You can be creative and draw circles smaller or larger and near or far from the center to indicate which resources are most important to you.

If you are participating in a group training, share your image with others and highlight your top resources. Feel free to add to your resources map as you gain ideas from others.



Activity 5: Encourage to Tell

Instructions: Review Devon's story. Now that you have acknowledged the signs and showed Devon that you care, it is time to encourage Devon to tell.

Respond to the prompts below with statements you would use to encourage Devon to tell someone and suggest resources for Devon to consider.

If you are participating in a group training, share the sample phrases you would use. Discuss the resources you would encourage Devon to try and why.

How would you encourage Devon to seek help?

Refer to your resource map and suggest a few resources for Devon to consider.

Activity 6: My Plan to ACT

Instructions: Complete the sample plan so you are ready if you need to ACT to take care of yourself. Keep your personal ACT plan on hand and set an example by sharing with others. Everyone needs a plan to ACT!

ACKNOWLEDGE

Signs I can recognize that I am beginning to feel overwhelmed or distressed (eg. Can't focus in class)

1.

2.

3.

CARE

Things I do to take my mind off my problems and reduce distress (eg. Take a walk outside)

1.

2.

3.

TELL

People I call when I need help (eg. Friend from home)

1.

2.

3.

TELL

Professional resources if I need help (eg. Campus hotline)

1.

2.

3.
