

# A CONVERSATION ABOUT POSTVENTION

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# **Learning Objectives**

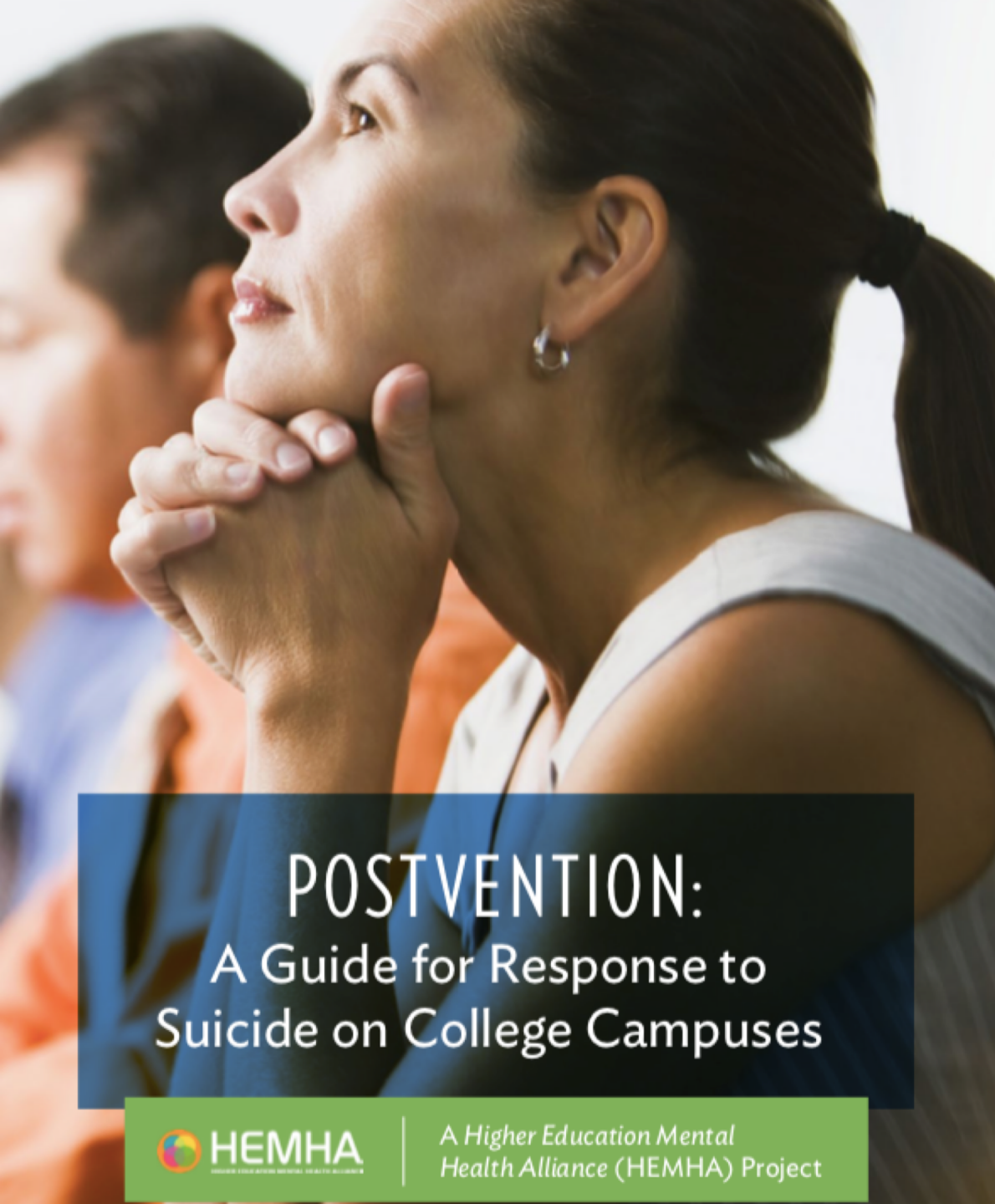
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- > Review the principles of postvention
- > Understand the elements of a postvention strategy
- > Review JED recommendation for tracking info pertaining to student deaths
- > Identify two action items to further develop the postvention strategy for your campus

# Introductions

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- > Name, institution, position, role in regard to postvention
- > How would you assess your campus postvention strategy?
- > Special considerations for your school (e.g., size, 2 year, 4 year, commuter)
- > What are you hoping to learn or discuss today?



This workshop is largely informed by this guide.

**POSTVENTION:**  
A Guide for Response to  
Suicide on College Campuses



A Higher Education Mental  
Health Alliance (HEMHA) Project

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

# Principles of Postvention

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- > An **interdisciplinary approach** to planning and implementation of:
  - **Predetermined strategies** to effectively respond to campus deaths after they occur.
  - A way to **be prepared** to manage the painful challenge of a student death by suicide.



# Elements of Postvention

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- > Media, communications, and social media
  - Who is responsible?
  - Guidelines/best practices
  - Timing
  - Communication reach
  
- > Support for impacted students/communities
  - Knowing high risk groups to support
  - Group discussions / support sessions
  - Individual clinical support
  - Academic advocacy



# Elements of Postvention

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- > Student legacy requests
  - Cap and gown, memorial, posthumous degree, scholarship endowment
- > Debriefing
  - Attending to vicarious trauma
  - Postvention as “prevention”



# UW Postvention Strategy

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- > The VP for Student Life appoints a Student Death Protocol Coordinator to initiate care, administrative, and emergency responses.
- > Emergency procedures and communication plan are reviewed with an interdisciplinary team including: housing, communications, counseling center, UWPD, and student life reps.
- > Student Death Review team meets on a biannual basis to review student deaths of all types. This has led to systems change efforts.





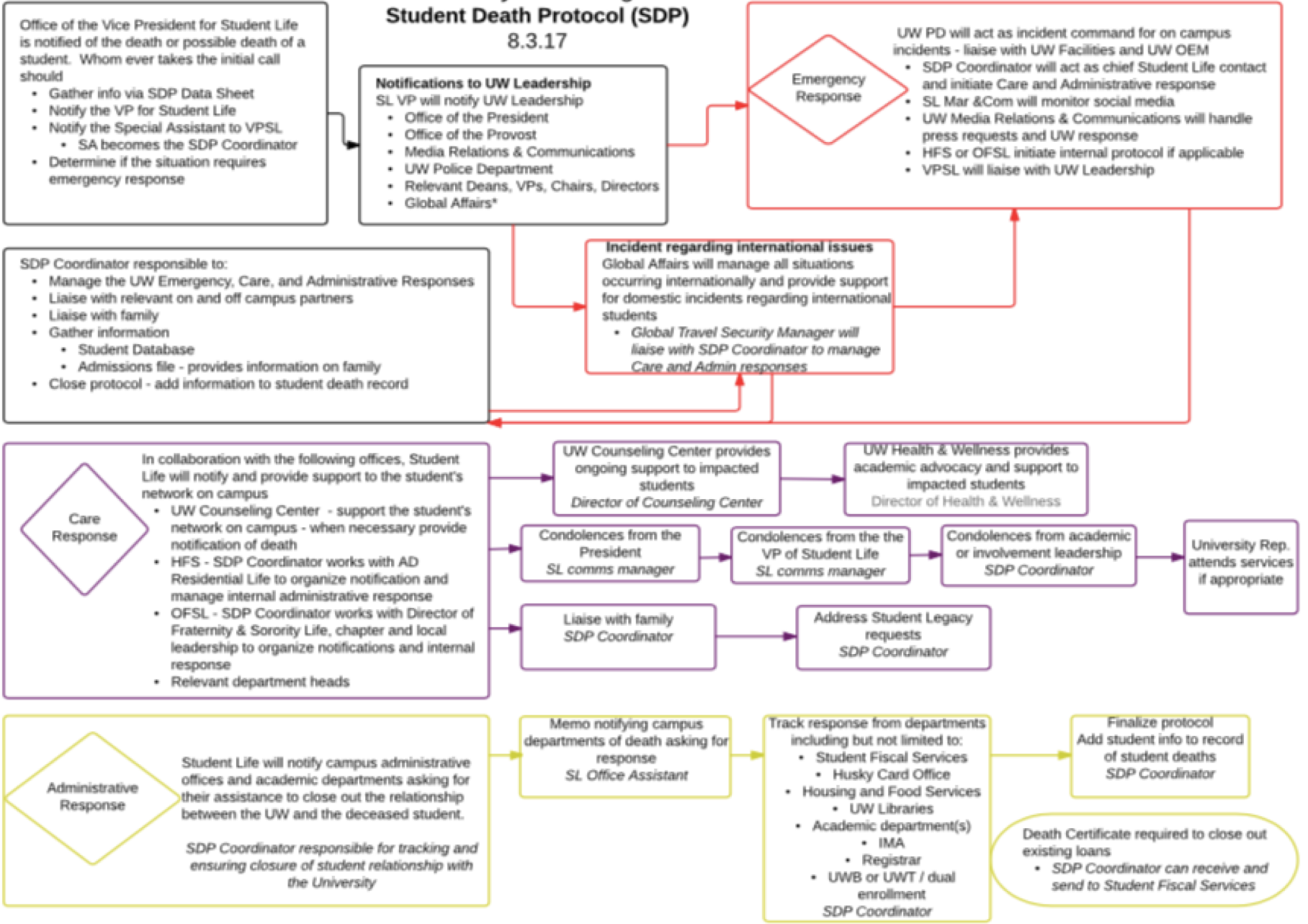
# UW Postvention Strategy

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- > **Emergency Response** – issue is emerging and required immediate attention
- > **Care Response** – care response to student’s friends, family, and community
- > **Administrative Response** – creating closure between student and the UW



# University of Washington Student Death Protocol (SDP) 8.3.17



Office of the Vice President for Student Life is notified of the death or possible death of a student. Whom ever takes the initial call should

- Gather info via SDP Data Sheet
- Notify the VP for Student Life
- Notify the Special Assistant to VPSL
  - SA becomes the SDP Coordinator
- Determine if the situation requires emergency response

**Notifications to UW Leadership**  
SL VP will notify UW Leadership

- Office of the President
- Office of the Provost
- Media Relations & Communications
- UW Police Department
- Relevant Deans, VPs, Chairs, Directors
- Global Affairs\*

**Emergency Response**

UW PD will act as incident command for on campus incidents - liaise with UW Facilities and UW OEM

- SDP Coordinator will act as chief Student Life contact and initiate Care and Administrative response
- SL Mar & Com will monitor social media
- UW Media Relations & Communications will handle press requests and UW response
- HFS or OFSL initiate internal protocol if applicable
- VPSL will liaise with UW Leadership

SDP Coordinator responsible to:

- Manage the UW Emergency, Care, and Administrative Responses
- Liaise with relevant on and off campus partners
- Liaise with family
- Gather information
  - Student Database
  - Admissions file - provides information on family
- Close protocol - add information to student death record

**Incident regarding international issues**  
Global Affairs will manage all situations occurring internationally and provide support for domestic incidents regarding international students

- Global Travel Security Manager will liaise with SDP Coordinator to manage Care and Admin responses

**Care Response**

In collaboration with the following offices, Student Life will notify and provide support to the student's network on campus

- UW Counseling Center - support the student's network on campus - when necessary provide notification of death
- HFS - SDP Coordinator works with AD Residential Life to organize notification and manage internal administrative response
- OFSL - SDP Coordinator works with Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life, chapter and local leadership to organize notifications and internal response
- Relevant department heads

UW Counseling Center provides ongoing support to impacted students  
*Director of Counseling Center*

UW Health & Wellness provides academic advocacy and support to impacted students  
*Director of Health & Wellness*

Condolences from the President  
*SL comms manager*

Condolences from the the VP of Student Life  
*SL comms manager*

Condolences from academic or involvement leadership  
*SDP Coordinator*

University Rep. attends services if appropriate

**Administrative Response**

Student Life will notify campus administrative offices and academic departments asking for their assistance to close out the relationship between the UW and the deceased student.

SDP Coordinator responsible for tracking and ensuring closure of student relationship with the University

Memo notifying campus departments of death asking for response  
*SL Office Assistant*

Track response from departments including but not limited to:

- Student Fiscal Services
- Husky Card Office
- Housing and Food Services
- UW Libraries
- Academic department(s)
  - IMA
  - Registrar
- UWB or UWT / dual enrollment  
*SDP Coordinator*

Finalize protocol  
Add student info to record of student deaths  
*SDP Coordinator*

Death Certificate required to close out existing loans

- SDP Coordinator can receive and send to Student Fiscal Services

# **A Conversation about Postvention**

- Do you have a communications strategy?
- Do you have a protocol for identifying high risk students/communities after a suicide?
- What systems issues affect the implementation of a postvention strategy on your campus?

# A Conversation about Postvention

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- > Who would ideally be included on your campus postvention team (e.g., communications, housing, police department)?
- > What community resources make sense to connect to (e.g., emergency rooms, police departments, fire departments, community-based mental health services, psychiatric departments)?

# Tracking Deaths by Suicide

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JED's recommendation:

- > Year of school
- > Cause of death
- > Enrollment status
- > Living Situation
- > Major
- > Gender Identity
- > Ethnicity



# Tracking Deaths by Suicide

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- > Was the student involved?
- > Were RAs aware of concerns?
- > Was student seen at the counseling center?
- > Did the student have an outside therapist?
- > Has this student ever been on medical leave?
- > Was student ever hospitalized for mental health issues?



# Tracking Deaths by Suicide

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- > Has student ever come up in BIT team?
- > Was a safety plan ever in place for this student?
- > Did faculty contact the dean with concerns about this student?
- > Did the school ever reach out to family about this student?
- > Did the family ever contact the school about this student?



# Tracking Deaths by Suicide

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- > Through **S.B. 6514**, all institutions of postsecondary education (including vocational programs) are required to complete an annual survey. Among other things, the survey seeks to gather number of student suicides. All data will be aggregated by higher ed sector, and reported to the legislature.



# **A Conversation about Postvention**

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- How does your institution collect information about student deaths? Whose role is it?
- What information is collected? Where are there gaps in the info collected?
- When is the information shared and to whom?

# **A Conversation About Postvention**

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- What are the strengths of your institution's postvention plan if you have one?
- Where are there gaps and opportunities for improvement?
- What are two action items that you want to take back to your institution related to postvention?

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# Questions & Discussion

# Good work!

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