**Guidelines in Responding to Emergency Situations Regarding Suicide**

When a caller is talking about dying by suicide or threatening to do so, the following may serve as guidelines for phone counselors in responding:

1. Introduce yourself. “Hello, this is The Upper Room Crisis Hotline. I am (Code Name).” “May I ask for your first name?” “Thank you for calling, how may I help you?”
2. If the caller is escalated or sounds very anxious, ask the caller to take their time and reassure the caller that you are going to stay with them. Thank them for their courage in calling. If they are having a difficult time starting, give them time to get their thoughts together. If the caller is very anxious and struggling, you may be able to guide them in slow deep breathing to help calm the caller.
3. Give the caller undivided attention and try to keep the caller engaged and talking. Take bullet notes as the caller is sharing information and feelings for reflection and affirmation.
4. After the caller has had an opportunity to share content and feelings and is calm, you may ask the caller questions regarding risk factors for suicide:

Are you planning to kill yourself?

Are you alone?

Do you have a firearm where you are now?

Have you ingested any drugs or alcohol or harmed yourself? If so, what are the alcohol /drugs and the quantity? How have you harmed yourself?

Please share your location.

1. Determine based on the information shared from the caller whether or not to call emergency assistance. If you determine that it is necessary to call for emergency assistance, notify the caller that you are calling for assistance. If you have a second person with you, ask them to call for emergency assistance while you keep the caller on the phone. Call 911 and explain that you are a phone counselor at The Upper Room Crisis Hotline calling about a caller that is at high risk for suicide and you need help in sending first responders. Then share the contact information available. If you are alone, you may text the emergency contact information available: suicide concern – name, address, town/city, phone number to Terry (630-988-7395) or Jean (815-258-9019). If it is between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. CST, then place a phone call to Terry or Jean. After receiving the text message from the phone counselor, Terry or Jean will send text messages to the phone counselor that the message has been received, for additional information and to let the phone counselor know when emergency services are being contacted. The phone counselor should attempt to remain on the line with the caller until emergency responders arrive. Once the event is completed, make sure to contact Terry to discuss the incident and thoroughly complete a data sheet.