**Guidelines for helping your mentee in a crisis**

There is no perfect formula for helping your mentee in a crisis or difficult life situation. However, we have compiled these guidelines to help prepare you for situations that are unlikely (but possibly) to arise.

At the beginning of the school year, make sure you clearly and graciously communicate to your mentee that there are certain topics you cannot keep confidential. If you feel the mentee is engaged in behavior or a situation that is harmful to them or others, you will work with a parent/guardian to make sure that student gets the needed help. Do not dramatize this, but make the statement at some point.

Students who are in immediate danger due to substantial self-harm or a threat of suicide should be taken immediately to the emergency room. This is a necessary step for a student to eventually receive psychiatric help if needed.

If a student is not in immediate danger, lovingly inform the student that this behavior/situation needs to be shared with a parent. Offer to accompany your mentee for support during this time when s/he will communicate with one or both parents. If a mentee will not share the information, tell him/her that you will have to inform the parent, and then do so.

If you have reason to believe your mentee is being abused, please use the information provided at this web page in order to report your information: <http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/resources/childline/index.htm>.

We need to make very clear that you are a mandated reporter. Please review those guidelines here: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Clearances/Documents/FAQ_Mandated%20Reporter.pdf>

If a student is facing an issue (e.g., mental health, emotional distress) where you believe professional help should be sought, please encourage your mentee to talk with a parent/guardian, again offering to accompany him/her. The student may be able to use resources through his/her school system. There is also the option of Focus on the Family’s counseling services and referrals: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/counseling-services-and-referrals/>. The Barnabas mentor coordinator also keeps a list of licensed Christian counselors others have recommended through the years.

A criminal threat involves one person threatening someone else with physical harm. The threat must be communicated in some way, though it does not necessarily need to be verbal. You should contact the authorities if your mentee mentions thoughts or plans of harming another person.

A helpful tool for working through less urgent problems with students is the SODAS problem-solving worksheet, which is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/716860668338571/729269287097709/> or through the Barnabas Mentor Coordinator.

All of the above situations and life in general will benefit from your concerted prayer and spiritual guidance. Please commit yourself to faithfully praying for your mentee and consistently nurturing your mentee’s spiritual and overall health. The Barnabas mentor coordinator is available to provide guidance for you, including directing you to further resources.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” –James 1:5