

## College Students with Disabilities

### **Risk Factors**

- Previous suicide attempt(s)<sup>3</sup>
- Mental health issues<sup>4</sup>
- Perceives ability to reach goals as function of societal barriers<sup>1</sup>
- Sense of powerlessness when making efforts to navigate through surroundings (Vash, 1981; as cited in Martínez & Sewell, 2000)<sup>1</sup>
- Difficulty in establishing interpersonal intimacy with peers (Benshoff, Fried, & Roberto, 1990; as cited in Huebner, Thomas, & Berven, 1999)<sup>2</sup>
- Denial of the disability<sup>3</sup>
- History of physical and/or sexual abuse<sup>4</sup>
- Experiences with stigmatization
- Academic difficulties<sup>3</sup>
- A recent loss<sup>3</sup>

### **Warning Signs**

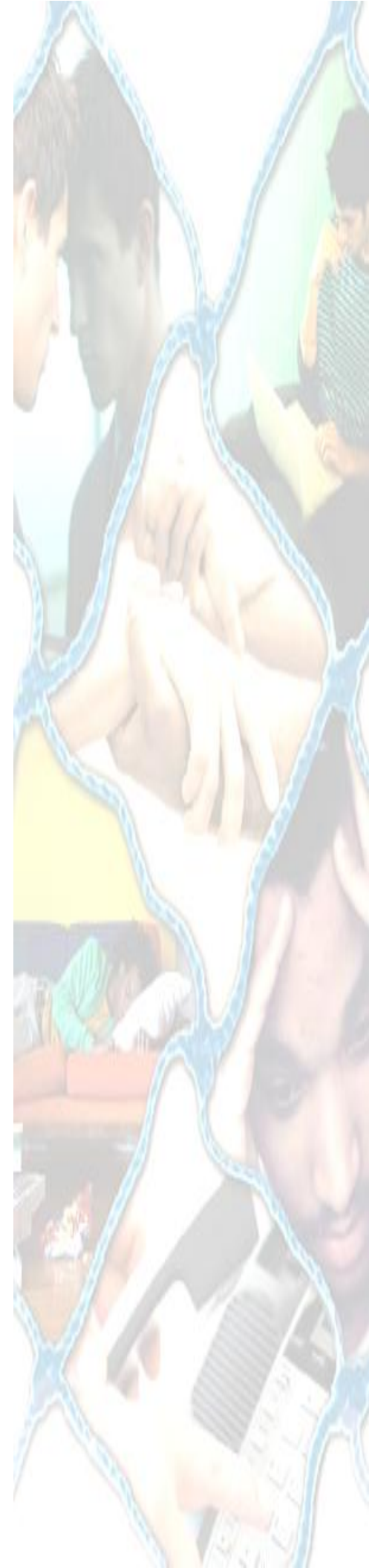
- Focused on death, dying, and suicide<sup>3</sup>
- Talking, writing, or hinting about suicide<sup>3</sup>
- Giving away possessions<sup>3</sup>
- Withdrawal from usual activities<sup>4</sup>
- Dramatic mood changes<sup>4</sup>
- Anxiety<sup>4</sup>
- Perceived burdensomeness<sup>4</sup>
- Hopelessness and/or feeling trapped<sup>4</sup>
- Exhibiting changes in behavior, such as:
  - school performance
  - eating
  - appearance
  - sleeping patterns
- Excessive/increased use of substances (e.g., alcohol and/or drugs)<sup>4</sup>
- Recklessness/excessive risk-taking behavior<sup>4</sup>
- Perfectionism (e.g., excessive concern about mistakes and/or actions, harshly self-critical)<sup>5</sup>

### **Resources**

#### **Henderson Student Counseling**

Student Counseling helps students:

- make sense of what is going on
- make meaningful changes



- find ways to better handle stress
- identify sources of support
- discover solutions
- if necessary, see the psychiatrist and (if needed) obtain a prescription for medication

**Phone: (954) 424-6911** Available 24 hours per day for consultation

**Location:** University Park Plaza (east of the bookstore)

**Website:** <http://www.hendersonmhc.org/studentcounseling>

### **The NSU Office of Disability Services**

**Phone: (954) 262-7185**

**Location:** NSU Main Campus, Rosenthal Student Ctr, Suite 121

**Website:** <http://www.nova.edu/disabilityservices/>

### **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

24-hour toll-free hotline available to anyone experiencing emotional distress/suicidal thoughts or is concerned about another person's welfare.

**Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) English**

**1-888-628-9454 Spanish**

### **References**

1. Martinez, R., & Sewell, K. W. (2000). Explanatory style as a predictor of college performance in students with physical disabilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 66*, 30-36.
2. Huebner, R. A., Thomas, K. R., & Berven, N. L. (1999). Attachment and interpersonal characteristics of college students with and without disabilities. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 44*, 85-103.
3. Pace University Counseling Center (2009). Get in the Know: Suicide Prevention for College Students with Physical Disabilities. Retrieved from [http://www.pace.edu/counseling-center/sites/pace.edu.counseling-center/files/Disability\\_Suicide.pdf](http://www.pace.edu/counseling-center/sites/pace.edu.counseling-center/files/Disability_Suicide.pdf)
4. American Association of Suicidology (2010). The Risk Factors for Suicide. Retrieved from <http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools/fact-sheets>
5. O'Connor, R. C. (2007). The relations between perfectionism and suicidality: A systematic review. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 37*, 698-714.

