

In recent news, I read about the deaths of a priest and a headteacher both by suicide: I also read today about [another university student](#) who took their own life. There are so many more stories we hear (and those we do not hear) about suicides from all walks of life. As an educator, I have lost 2 students to suicide: this is 2 suicides too many.

Yet, we don't talk about this openly to see and look at what we can do to prevent these tragic losses of life. There seems to be some taboo and reluctance to talk about suicide as if we ignore them, they will disappear, or worse we distance ourselves because we simply don't know how to respond. But I cannot afford to do this any longer.

Currently, I have a student who is under suicide watch and although I have referred them to central services I do not know if they are providing the care this student needs. However, I received an email asking me whether I have seen this student myself as they have not heard from them. Is it not their remit to contact the student concerned? Is it not their role, as well as my role as the student's tutor to support them?

In the most recent case of the uni student's death, the article says that the student had communicated their struggles to the university a year before they took their own life. Why does it take 1 year, surely even 1 day is too long a gap.

One of my colleagues also told me a shocking anecdote that they knew of a pupil who was told that they would only be referred to CAMHS after 3 suicide attempts. I asked them to repeat this as I found it incredibly hard to believe such a shocking revelation. My colleague was serious, this was not a joke but a reality. How can this be right? How can it be that a person on the verge of taking their own life is asked to wait 3 times before help is offered?

Many students talk of the stigma and embarrassment they feel when they seek support for their mental health concerns let alone suicidal attempts. They often say that they do not wish to speak with a 'stranger' to share their struggles. They even fear that what they disclose will be kept on record and somehow it will be held against them in some way. Also in some cases, they do not wish families to be notified (because their source of the concern involves the families).

If trained mature professionals take their own lives, what are we doing to support vulnerable young students? Is it enough to offer services that only work within office hours (yes this happened to me at 6 pm one evening when I was looking for a referral to central services with a distressed student and I saw a notice to call 999...)? How many suicide attempts or actual deaths do we have to witness before we take responsible timely action?

I am not suggesting that we have any counselling training. But can we not provide opportunities with skills that students can access and use before the issues that trigger their mental health concerns arise, which enable them to stay mentally healthy? Surely providing them with tools that they can apply the moment the issues arise is far more effective and empowering. Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility and providing the SEJ Process is a way forward in offering students a vital life-saving skill so they can live to their full potential no matter what their circumstances.