

Table 2: Managing suicide risk in young people

Select column relevant to level of risk identified in assessment. Suicide risk fluctuates and management needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Action	Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
Reduce risk (pg 32)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove means to harm themselves Establish an appropriate regime to monitor young person Check on family's/friends' support as appropriate, provide information on resources centred around the needs of the young person In collaboration with young person and support people, write a clear action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove means to harm themselves Ensure young person has appropriate support eg: family/whanau, friends Arrange back-up support which is available 24 hours a day In collaboration with young person and support people, write a clear action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove means to harm themselves (in extreme circumstances this may mean calling the police) Involve all management outlined in moderate risk, but urgent action is required Support and supervise at all times until responsibility is passed to another agency or individual Make urgent referral to mental health team
Consultation and Referral (pg 34 and appendix 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider discussing case with a colleague or specialist mental health provider Children, Young Persons and their Families Agency (CYPFA) must be informed where care and protection are required (under 17 years)² Check if any other services are involved and who has responsibility for co-ordination eg: school counsellor, Specialist Education Services, CYPFA or mental health services Network with school or educational institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with or refer to specialist cultural health service prior to other agency consultation for Māori Consult with or refer to mental health services on the same day Involve family/whanau, friends if permission given or arrange alternative support³ CYPFA must be informed where care and protection are required (for 17 years and under) Recommend to young person and support people appropriate agencies or other resources, and assist them in accessing these services Ensure there is a management plan in collaboration with all services involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If immediate referral is not possible, mobilise professional networks to assist in the management, support and supervision of the young person in consultation with mental health professional Contact family/whanau, friends if not already present and involve as appropriate CYPFA must be informed where care and protection are required (for 17 years and under) Consider arranging assessment under the Mental Health Act if appropriate Ensure there is a management plan in collaboration with all services involved with explicit handover of responsibility between agencies or professionals
Manage underlying factors (pg 36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate/optimize treatment of any underlying mental disorders or problems Assist the young person and family to address any immediate precipitating factors and ongoing life difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must initiate/optimize treatment for any underlying mental disorders or problems Assist the young person and family to address any immediate precipitating factors and ongoing life difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must initiate/optimize treatment for any underlying mental disorders or problems Assist the young person and family to address any immediate precipitating factors and ongoing life difficulties (undertaken in most cases by the specialist mental health services)
Monitor and follow up (pg 50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make regular follow-up appointments Monitor changes in suicide risk Telephone contact may suffice If no improvement in one to two weeks treat as moderate risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make regular follow-up appointments Contact regularly Monitor changes in suicide risk Check outcome of any agency referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the following processes are in place and working effectively Make regular follow-up appointments Contact regularly Monitor changes in suicide risk Check outcome of any agency referrals

(Adapted from Ministry of Education, 1997 Young People at Risk of Suicide: A Guide for Schools)

² This may include family's inability or unwillingness to provide care, support and monitoring.

³ If there is serious or imminent threat to the young person's life, permission to contact family/support people is not required, decisions must be made in the interests of safety.