

**Cottonwood, Inc.
Policies and Procedures**

SECTION: Consumer Related

POLICY NO: 05-040

SUBJECT: Management of Threat of Suicide or Homicide

PAGE(S): 1 of 2

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1991

Policy:

It is the policy of Cottonwood, Inc. to provide help and support to consumers in times of crisis. In the event that a consumer threatens suicide or homicide, a determination will first be made as to the seriousness of the threat. The appropriate support staff and community resources will then be contacted to assist in avoiding immediate harm and in providing the necessary follow-up services.

Procedures:

1. When a consumer threatens another with homicide the staff involved will make an immediate determination as to the seriousness of the threat, i.e. real and immediate. Past history and situational factors should be considered when determining the viability and likelihood of the threat. The staff person should use all attempts to de-escalate the situation. However, when danger to another is imminent, the staff person will attempt to preserve the safety of those around and then call the police (911). The police have a listing of Cottonwood, Inc. management staff and phone numbers with the dispatcher to assist with the crisis. If the crisis occurs at night, the Residential staff will implement the on-call procedure after calling the police and attempting to preserve the safety of others. During office hours, the staff will notify the supervisor and Case Manager after calling the police.

2. All threats of homicide will be documented in an incident report. Follow up, as determined by the support team, may consist of referrals for counseling, behavior management/anger management program, review of program entrance criteria for appropriateness of placement, etc.

3. Staff must be familiar with the consumers they support and any individualized plans in place to address suicidal ideation or threats, if applicable. When a consumer without an individualized plan drops hints or directly refers to suicide the following guidelines should be used to determine a course of action:

A. Ask if the consumer is considering suicide.

B. Find out if the consumer has already attempted to harm themselves;

- If so, do not leave the person alone. Call 911 or poison control as appropriate.

- In the event of medical intervention, contact the on-call manager or Case Manager immediately.
- C. If the person has not attempted to commit self harm, find out if the individual has a plan;
- If the plan is specific and accessible (e.g., has a gun) it means the attempt is more likely to happen
 - After information is gathered, contact the on-call manager, or Case Manager, or Supervisor to help determine a plan of action (e.g., hospitalization, temporary supervision at 24 hour group home, 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline).
- D. All threats of suicide will be documented in an incident report. Follow-up will be determined by the support team.