



## Mentor Safety Plan – Responding to a Participant in Crisis (NSW)

### Purpose

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of women participating in Success Works programs by providing mentors with clear, consistent steps for responding to crisis or safety concerns.


### Scope

Applies to all Success Works mentors, coaches, and staff supporting women through employment preparation, workplace mentoring, or career transition programs.

### 1. Recognising a Crisis

A participant may be in crisis if she:

- Expresses feeling overwhelmed, unsafe, or unable to cope
- Discloses distress related to mental health, family violence, housing, financial stress, or work
- Indicates fear, hopelessness, or loss of control
- Shows sudden withdrawal, agitation, or significant changes in behaviour
- States or implies she is not safe right now
- States that she is feeling hopeless or mentions suicidal thoughts

 **All disclosures must be taken seriously**, even if the participant minimises the situation.

### 2. Mentor's Immediate Response

Mentors should remain calm, respectful, and professional.

#### DO

- Stay present with the participant (in person or online) if safe
- Listen without judgement or interruption
- Validate her experience:
  - “I’m really glad you shared this with me.”
  - “That sounds incredibly difficult.”
- Focus on **immediate safety and support**, not problem-solving

#### DO NOT

- Promise confidentiality — instead say:  
**“Because I care for you and want to keep you safe...”**
- Attempt counselling or therapy
- Ask for detailed or graphic information



- Give advice beyond your role
- Minimise or dismiss her experience

### 3. 🚨 Assess Immediate Safety

Ask clear, simple questions:

- “Are you safe right now?”
- “Are you having thoughts of suicide?”
- “Who is someone you trust that I can get Success Works to contact?”
- “If there is no one you choose, SWP can call the mental health crisis team — would you like that?”
- “Because I care for you and you have not given me an option from the above two choices, I will need to get SWP to call 000.”

#### 🕒 If the crisis occurs within standard work hours:

➡ **Contact Success Works Partners (SWP) immediately** so they can step in and support the participant as soon as possible.

They can assist with **risk assessment**, contacting **appropriate crisis services**, and guiding next steps.

#### 🚑 If the participant is in immediate danger:

➡ **Call 000 without delay**, and stay with the participant (if safe) until help arrives.

### 4. 🚨 Mandatory Escalation (Success Works)

Mentors **must not** manage crisis situations alone.

As soon as possible, notify:

- **Your Success Works Supervisor / Program Manager**

This applies even if:

- The participant asks you not to tell anyone
- You are unsure how serious the situation is

⚠️ **Participant safety overrides confidentiality.**

### 5. 📞 Connecting to Support (NSW)

Once immediate safety is addressed, mentors should support the participant to access appropriate professional services.



## Crisis & Support Services

- **Lifeline** – 13 11 14 (24/7)
- **NSW Mental Health Access Line** – 1800 011 511 (*you will need to know the participant's suburb*)
- **1800RESPECT** – 1800 737 732
- **Emergency** – 000

### Where appropriate, mentors may:

- Encourage contact with a trusted family member or support person
- Suggest speaking with a GP, psychologist, or counsellor
- Support connection to local women's services or community organisations
- Stay present while she makes contact, if appropriate

## 6. Documentation

As soon as practicable, mentors must record:

- Date, time, and setting of the disclosure
- A brief, factual summary of what was shared
- Actions taken
- Who was notified within Success Works

## 7. After the Crisis

- Follow direction from your SWP before further contact
- Maintain clear professional boundaries
- Continue mentoring only once safety and support pathways are confirmed

## 8. Mentor Wellbeing

Supporting women in crisis can be emotionally demanding.

Mentors are encouraged to:

- Debrief with their Success Works supervisor
- Seek guidance early rather than managing concerns alone
- Practice their own self-care

## 9. Guiding Principles for Success Works Mentors

- Wellbeing comes before employment outcomes
- Mentors are volunteers, not counsellors
- Early escalation is protective and professional
- Clear boundaries build trust and safety

