Death Note in a Threat Assessment: Questions to Ask

How to Use This Handout

Use these questions when a student's notebook, drawing, post, or comment references *Death Note*. The reference is what brings you into the case, not the conclusion. Ask open questions, listen for what the show means to this student, and gather information from multiple sources before forming an opinion. Pick the questions that fit your case; you do not need to ask them all.

About the Show

Start here. These questions build rapport and show you which part of the story the student connects with.

- How did you first find *Death Note*? Who did you watch or read it with?
- What do you like most about it?
- Which character do you relate to most? Why?
- What do you think of Light? Was he right to do what he did?
- What did you think of how the story ended?
- If you had a Death Note, what would you do with it?
- What other shows, games, or books do you like?

About the List

Use these when there is a notebook or list of names. Listen for grievances; they should lead your investigation.

- Tell me about the notebook. When did you make it?
- Whose idea was it? Did anyone help you?
- Who is in it? How did you choose those names?
- What happened between you and each person on the list?
- Did you write how or why each person would die? What did you write?
- Who else knew about it or saw it?

- How did you feel while you were writing it? How do you feel about it now?
- What did you want to happen when you wrote it?
- Have you thought about hurting anyone on the list in real life?

About Identification and Online Activity

These questions help you tell interest in the topic from wanting to be the person.

- Where do you talk about *Death Note* online? With whom?
- What usernames or profile pictures do you use? Have you ever used "Kira" or a *Death Note* image?
- Have you ever felt like Light, or wished you could judge people the way he does?
- Have you seen *Death Note* posts mixed with posts about real attackers or school shooters?
- Do you follow any true crime accounts or communities? What do you like about them?
- Is there a real attacker you have read about or admire? What stands out to you about them?
- Will you show me the accounts or posts we have been talking about?
- Have you been feeling hopeless, or thought about hurting yourself?

For Parents, Peers, and Staff

Check what the student tells you against what others see.

- How long has the student been interested in *Death Note*? Has the interest changed recently?
- Have you noticed changes in mood, sleep, friendships, or schoolwork?
- Has the student experienced a recent loss, rejection, conflict, or humiliation?
- Has the student talked about anyone on the list, or about getting back at someone?
- What do you know about the student's online activity and the communities they belong to?
- Does the student have access to weapons at home or elsewhere?
- Who does the student trust and turn to when things are hard?

Remember

Every student you assess is unique. Learn what *Death Note* means to this student, and build your management plan around increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors.

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