

Safeguarding Our Youth – Parent Information Night

SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

PRESENTED BY CHALLENGER MIDDLE SCHOOL

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT:

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Tonight's Agenda

- ▶ **Welcome and introductions**
- ▶ **Brief Presentation on Suicide Prevention – Recognize and Respond, Community Resources**
- ▶ **Watch SOS Gatekeeper Video: Training Trusted Adults – Approx 15 minutes**
- ▶ **Questions & Answers**

District Leadership and Background Information

ASD20 SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

- A group of mental health providers that have met to research and guide district efforts on suicide prevention
- Researched and piloted SOS before recommendation from district to implement in all secondary schools across the district
- We are all gatekeepers.

Suicide Prevention Best Practice Education – Just the Facts

- ▶ FACT: Talking about suicide **will not** plant the idea.
 - ▶ Bringing up the topic of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do. There is no evidence that screening youth for suicide induces suicidal thinking or behavior.
- ▶ FACT: Suicide **rarely** occurs on a whim or without warning.
 - ▶ Do not ignore suicide threats or statements (no matter how casually or jokingly said). Almost everyone who has died by suicide has given some clue or warning, “I can’t see any way out,” or “I’d be better off dead.”
- ▶ FACT: Youth who talk about suicide **are not** just seeking attention.
 - ▶ All suicide threats need to be treated as if the person has the intent to die. Most suicide attempts and completions are the result of under or un-treated mental health disorders, which are treatable.

Suicide Prevention Best Practice Education – Important Terms

- ▶ **Risk Factor** –an attribute that is associated with increased risk of suicidal behavior.
 - ▶ **Mental/Behavioral Health** – depressive disorders, Non-Suicidal Self Injury (NSSI), substance use
 - ▶ **Personal Features** – hopelessness, low self-esteem, social isolation, poor problem-solving
 - ▶ **Adverse Life Circumstances** – interpersonal difficulties, bullying, history of abuse/neglect, exposure to peer suicide
 - ▶ **Family Characteristics** – History of family suicide, parental divorce, history of family mental health disorders
 - ▶ **Environment** – exposure to mental health stigma, access to lethal means, limited access to mental health care, exposure to suicide

*** Risk Factors are **NOT** causes!

Suicide Prevention Best Practice Education – Important Terms, cont'd

- ▶ **Warning Sign** – a verbal or behavioral clue that someone may be experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide
 - ▶ Threatening to kill themselves
 - ▶ Actively seeking means
 - ▶ Talking, posting, and/or writing about death – “Life isn’t worth living,” “My family would be better off without me,” “I won’t be in your way much longer.”
 - ▶ Risky behavior, recklessness
 - ▶ Increased substance use
 - ▶ Decreased interest in activities, and activities of daily living (personal hygiene, eating, difficulty sleeping or excessive sleep)
 - ▶ Extreme withdrawal

Suicide Prevention Best Practice Education – Important Terms, cont'd

- ▶ **Protective Factor** – personal trait or environmental quality that can reduce the risk of suicidal behavior – they do not imply immunity, but reduce risk
 - ▶ Individual Characteristics – adaptive temperament, coping skills, self-esteem, spiritual faith, resiliency
 - ▶ Family/Other Support – connectedness, healthy social support
 - ▶ School – positive experience, connectedness, sense of respect
 - ▶ Mental Health and Healthcare – access to care, support through medical and mental health relationships
 - ▶ Restricted Access to Means – firearms, medications/alcohol – LOCK THEM!!!

Suicide Prevention Best Practice Education – Important Terms, cont'd

- ▶ **Precipitating Event** – a recent life event that serves as a potential trigger, moving an individual from thinking about suicide to attempting to take his or her own life.
 - ▶ **Examples:** a breakup, a bullying incident or repeated bullying, sudden death of a loved one, getting into trouble at school or in trouble with the law, family turmoil, severe disappointment/failure, disclosure of abuse
- ▶ **Precipitating events are often confused with causing suicide – No single event causes suicidality. Rather there are a number of risk factors typically present as well as limited protective factors in the moment.**

Suicide Prevention Best Practice Education – Important Terms, cont'd

- ▶ **Gatekeeper** - Any trained person who is willing to be an advocate for another person contemplating suicide. Gatekeepers are trained to recognize the signs of someone in distress and get them to help. Gatekeepers are students, parents, faculty, staff and administrators.

Depression & Anxiety

Recognize the Signs
and Symptoms

**PRESENT FOR MORE
THAN TWO WEEKS AND
AFFECTS DAILY
FUNCTIONING TO
DIAGNOSE.**

**WE STILL NEED TO PAY
ATTENTION TO
SITUATIONAL
RESPONSES...**

Symptoms of Teen Depression

- ▶ Persistent sad, irritable mood
- ▶ Sense of hopelessness
- ▶ Withdrawal from friends, family, activities
- ▶ Change in activity – increased agitation or lethargy
- ▶ Changes in appetite and sleeping patterns – sudden weight loss/gain and/or insomnia or hypersomnia
- ▶ Risky behaviors: drinking/drug use, reckless driving, gun play, choking game
- ▶ Lack of personal hygiene or caring for self (activities of daily living)
- ▶ Diminished ability to concentrate – increased indecisiveness
- ▶ Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt

Symptoms of Childhood Depression

- ▶ Vague somatic complaints – headache, stomach ache, muscle fatigue
- ▶ Frequent attempts to stay home from school
- ▶ Social withdrawal
- ▶ Regression in behaviors – thumb sucking, bedwetting
- ▶ Behavior changes – engages in challenging behaviors
- ▶ Drop in grades – lack of concern for school work
- ▶ Fascination with death, or talking about death – suicidal comments

Other Mental Health Concerns

These mental health concerns also increase a person's risk for suicidal ideation and attempts:

- ▶ Anxiety Disorders (Panic Attacks/Panic Disorder, Specific Phobia)
- ▶ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
 - ▶ History of abuse or trauma
- ▶ Substance Use
 - ▶ Drugs and alcohol cause mental highs and lows that exacerbate suicidal thinking
- ▶ Intoxication
 - ▶ More than one in three people who die by suicide are under the influence at the time of death

Curriculum for Suicide Prevention

SIGNS OF SUICIDE
(SOS)
PREVENTION
PROGRAM



SOS Signs of Suicide: Middle School Prevention Program

- ▶ Developed by Screening for Mental Health, Inc.
 - ▶ Time to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) DVD and Discussion Guide
 - ▶ Optional Follow-up Lessons
 - ▶ Lights, Camera, ACT!
 - ▶ The Categories Game
 - ▶ Connections
 - ▶ Jeopardy!

Delivery Dates

6th Grade:

- October 24th-November 17th
- Lessons given in Cheetah Time

7th Grade:

- October 5th –November 14th
- Lessons given in Cheetah Time

8th Grade:

- October 11th- November 16th
- Lessons given in Cheetah Time

SOS Gatekeeper
Video

**TRAINING TRUSTED
ADULTS**

Important Role of Gatekeepers

- ▶ Willing to talk OPENLY about suicide
- ▶ Knows the risk factors and warning signs
- ▶ Responds IMMEDIATELY to a person showing warning signs
- ▶ Will reach out to RESOURCES
- ▶ Knows how to LIMIT ACCESS to lethal means – prescriptions, firearms, knives, etc.



Questions?

SOS Middle
School Program

TIME TO ACT
(AVAILABLE
TO PREVIEW)