

SOS - Signs of Suicide Prevention Program for Middle and High School Students

“Good friends don’t keep deadly secrets”



SUICIDE IS A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE FOR YOUTH IN THE US

Each year approximately 47,000 individuals die by suicide in the US. In Ohio, there are about 5 suicide deaths every day. According to data from the CDC (June 2019), suicide is now the 2nd leading cause of death for young people ages 10-24 years of age (19.2%). While loved ones are most affected, the ripple effects extend far beyond family members.

Studies led by Julie Cerel at the University of Kentucky in 2018 indicated that as many as 135 people are affected to some degree by every person lost to suicide. That number includes all people who have known the person who died.*

SUICIDE IS THE MOST PREVENTABLE CAUSE OF DEATH

Greater awareness of the risk factors and warning signs of suicidal thinking can help reduce the number of deaths in the same way that learning CPR has improved survival after heart attacks. Intervention at a critical moment can break the cycle of hopelessness and despair and save lives by connecting the individual to mental health professionals. Receiving the proper care is vital for recovery to begin.

SOS SIGNS OF SUICIDE- A Universal Prevention Strategy

The SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention programs for Middle and High School students are the only evidence-based universal prevention programs that address suicide risk and depression, while reducing self-reported suicide attempts. The SOS program has demonstrated increased knowledge of warning signs for suicide and adaptive attitudes regarding depression and suicide. The SOS Program reduced suicide planning for high risk individuals, with 64% fewer suicide attempts documented for participants in the program compared with the control group. Providing evidence-based education can reduce a school district’s risk for liability and meets the ODE requirements for suicide prevention education.

The program teaches students how to identify the symptoms of depression and suicidality in themselves or their friends, and encourages help-seeking through the use of the ACT® technique (Acknowledge, Care, Tell). The SOS Program can be implemented in 1-2 class periods using a DVD and discussion guide. The program also includes a self-assessment and a self-referral cards for students to let school staff know if they need immediate attention or follow up. For more information about the SOS program, visit: <https://www.mindwise.org/what-we-offer/suicide-prevention-programs/>.

To schedule a training, contact:

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*Cerel, J., Brown, M., Maple, M., Singleton, M., van deVenne, J., Moore, M., & Flaherty, C. (2018). How many people are exposed to suicide? Not six. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*. DOI: 10.1111/sltb.12450. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/sltb.12450>