



## **Suicide Prevention for Educators, Students and Communities**

Our youth are dying unnecessarily by tragic and violent deaths. In Kentucky suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth and in Ohio the third leading cause; preceded by auto accidents and homicide. Yet, many of these lives can be saved. Experts agree that death by suicide is preventable in most cases.

Here is practical information needed to prevent suicides through personal interactions, awareness and education activities. The order of our discussion will be why suicide prevention is important, who is at risk, what typical behavior is and what is not and finally the types of prevention activities available to our educators and community members.

### **Why is suicide prevention important?**

- The loss of a loved one or someone you know can be devastating to families and friends. Often there is guilt associated with not recognizing signs and not enough to prevent such a tragic death.
- Number of deaths -34,000 are recorded annually in the United States. This excludes the number of deaths not identified as suicide (accidents and over-doses). It is believed that a more accurate number is 100,000 deaths by suicide a year.
- Number of attempts is also great. In a classroom of 25 two will attempt suicide and another 4 will have serious thoughts
- Suicide is preventable with recognition, knowing the questions to ask, education and awareness

### **Highlights**

1. Follow your instincts if you suspect someone is having trouble
2. Don't be afraid to ask difficult questions, e.g. "Are you thinking about hurting/killing yourself?"
3. Make a prevention and crisis plan
4. Take time to review programs and activities
5. Involve the right people, ones that are sincere and trusted
6. Stick with what works but plan on reviewing and updating to stay current with technology and your schedules and staff
7. Involve enough people that will keep the prevention program working

### **Clinical Factors**

- Warning signs and risk factors vary by individual. It is the change in behaviors that is more important.
- Typical or troubled behaviors? Listen to your intuition. Go with your gut feeling. Only by asking questions of the individual and other people that know and spend time with the individual will you find out if something is wrong.
- Know what do if you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts or showing signs

### **Know Resources**

- Crisis number National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and web link [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- Educators and community programs – develop a crisis plan

- Trust your instincts
- Have community referral pads at hand

### **Awareness and Education Options**

- Weigh the Pro's and Con's of different types of venues (assembly, class room, knowing who to go to, awareness activities)
- Weigh the Pro's and Con's of who does the prevention program (gatekeepers or peers)
- Know which prevention program you want to use. Evidence based verses other activities (what does this mean for you?)

### **Deciding what is best for you**

- What is your budget? Look at cost. Some curriculums do cost money
- What resources do you have? Staff, access to trained professionals, class room, home room, venues that will reach all students or high risk students?
- Review each program before you use it. Test one or two programs on a small group of people that you plan on targeting with prevention information. Do they believe it will make a difference?
- Using technology and current day activities to prevent suicides. Safe, confidential resources. Be creative with things like:
  - ID cards with hotlines
  - Cell phone campaign
  - Web links
  - Student orientations
  - Bathroom signs
  - Bulletin board signs maybe with tear-off phone numbers
  - Aavidum – I've got your back
  - Active Minds Back Pack initiative

### **How to get more information**

- Where to find resources –[guidetofeelingbetter.org](http://guidetofeelingbetter.org)
  - Resource page and lists
  - Community Referral Pads
  - Videos/cable shows:
    - Suicide Prevention for Educators, Students and Communities
    - Suicide – Let's Talk
    - The Science of the Mind

- In Kentucky:

Jan Ulrich, Youth Suicide Prevention Technical Assistance and Marketing Coordinator (also will assist with finding a QPR trainer in your area)  
 KY Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities  
 100 Fair Oaks Lane 4E-D, Frankfort, KY 40621  
 502.564.4456 X4436  
[jan.ulrich@ky.gov](mailto:jan.ulrich@ky.gov)

Jill King (will help link you to what you need)  
 Assoc. Executive Director, Mental Health America of NKY  
 NIMH Outreach Partner  
 513 Madison Ave., Covington, KY 41011

859-431-1077 ext. 486  
jking@mhanky.org

### **School-based Counselors**

#### Life Point Solutions, formerly Family Service

Lisa Dodd, LCSW  
Clinical Supervisor  
ldodd@lifepointsolutions.org  
859- 547-5761  
Cell 859-802-4341

Anna Haverkamp Stark  
astark@lifepointsolutions.org  
859-547-5784  
fax: 859-6554882  
www.lifepointsolutions.org

Dave Reis, Newport Schools  
areis@lifepointsolutions.org  
859.431-6566

### **What trainings are available for school staff and community? Facilitated Educator, Staff and Community Training**

**QPR - Ask a Question and Save a Life** Gatekeepers are trained to know the signs of suicide and how to talk to a person about them and then guide them to the help they need. Gatekeepers become trained through QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training. Certified school staff trainings are two hours and meet the mandated training requirements. Classified staff and community QPR trainings generally run 90 minutes.

QPR stands for question, persuade, and refer. It is an educational program that teaches ordinary citizens how to recognize a mental health emergency and how to get a person at risk the help they need.

Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

### **School Facilitated Educator and Staff Training**

#### **Online Educator and Staff Training**

- The **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide** offers free, interactive self-paced training for school personnel in response to legislation passed in New Jersey mandating suicide prevention training for staff. "Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention" is a free online course that can be taken and earn CEUs and is open to anyone. Website also included helpful information for parents. [www.sptsnj.org](http://www.sptsnj.org)
- The **Jason Foundation** staff development program provides free two-hour self-paced online training for educators called "Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention".

Participants receive a certificate following the completion of the training. Website also includes tips for parents. <http://www.jasonfoundation.com/resources>

### **What safe and effective programs are available for secondary school students?**

#### **Student Programs and Materials**

##### **Evidence-Based Programs and Practices**

**SOS Signs of Suicide® High School & Middle School** programs are depression awareness and suicide prevention programs that can be implemented in one or more classroom periods by existing school staff. The SOS programs can also be used in alternative settings serving youth such as: social clubs, after school programs, and juvenile justice systems. The **SOS High School Program** is the first school-based suicide prevention program selected by SAMSHA for its **National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices** that addresses knowledge and attitudes about suicide and depression, while reducing suicide attempts. Like the high school program, the SOS Middle School Program is designed to educate students to respond to the signs of suicide as a mental health emergency, using the **ACT®** approach (**A**cknowledge, **C**are, and **T**ell). <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/schools/index.aspx> *A limited number of SOS kits are available at no cost to Kentucky schools. For information regarding support and training for the SOS program for Kentucky middle and high schools, contact **Jan Ulrich at 502.564.4456** or [jan.ulrich@ky.gov](mailto:jan.ulrich@ky.gov)*

**Lifelines: A Suicide Prevention Program** is a comprehensive, whole-school suicide prevention curriculum for implementation in middle school and high school. This curriculum includes a program guide, a CD-ROM (which contains reproducible handouts and other resources) and two DVDs. **Lifelines** is now listed on SAMSHA's **National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices**. <http://www.hazelden.org>

Free items you can receive can be found at

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Materials/Default.aspx>

Additional information regarding programs selected by SAMSHA in the **National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices** can be found at [www.nrepp.samhsa.gov](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov).

**The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** has partnered with the New York State Office of Mental Health to develop a film to educate high school students about depression, the leading risk factor for suicide in both adults and teens. Presenting vignettes of four teens who were treated for depression, this 26-minute film aims to teach adolescents to recognize depression in themselves or their friends, and to encourage them to seek help. The film is endorsed by the National Association of School Psychologists. For more information and cost, go <http://morethansad.org>

**Safe and Effective Messaging for Students: Video Reviews** The American Association of Suicidology Video Review Committee provides standardized reviews of videos to determine whether they have safe and effective messaging for their intended audiences. For a video to receive "recommended" status, the video must meet certain requirements, including that it clearly advocates suicide prevention and that the information provided is accurate. For additional requirements and a full list of recommended videos, visit the AAS website at: <http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/stats-and-tools/videos>

**The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** has partnered with the New York State Office of Mental Health to develop an educational program to help teachers and other school

personnel learn more about teen suicide and how they can play a role in its prevention. *More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel* features two films, each approximately 25 minutes in length, and a manual that integrates both films into a comprehensive suicide prevention program. The program is designed to comply with state requirements or recommendations for teacher education in suicide prevention, and can be used for group trainings or individual study.

The films were co-produced by AFSP and the award-winning Break Thru Films, and have been endorsed by the National Association of School Psychologists. More info and program cost, go to <http://morethansad.org>

#### **What fact sheets are available to schools and communities?**

**Suicide Prevention and Awareness Fact Sheets** *Note: Disseminating these fact sheets is one component of a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. In order to take action when aware that someone is suicidal, some individuals will need to be trained to make appropriate referrals within a school and/or community, and mental health resources must be available and accessible.*

- **The Role of Teachers in Suicide Prevention: Recognizing and Responding to Warning Signs**  
[www.sprc.org/featured\\_resources/customized/teachers.asp](http://www.sprc.org/featured_resources/customized/teachers.asp)
- **The Role of School Health and Mental Healthcare Providers in Suicide Prevention: Recognizing and Responding to Warning Signs**  
[www.sprc.org/featured\\_resources/customized/school\\_mentalhealth.asp](http://www.sprc.org/featured_resources/customized/school_mentalhealth.asp)
- **The Role of Clinical Social Workers and Mental Health Counselors in Preventing Suicide: Recognizing and Responding to Warning Signs**  
[www.sprc.org/featured\\_resources/customized/social\\_worker.asp](http://www.sprc.org/featured_resources/customized/social_worker.asp)
- **The Role of Teens in Suicide Prevention: Recognizing Warning Signs, Help-Seeking for Self or Friend** [www.sprc.org/featured\\_resources/customized/teens.asp](http://www.sprc.org/featured_resources/customized/teens.asp)
- **“What to Do When a Friend is Depressed” Fact Sheet**  
[http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic\\_text/health/friend-depressed/friend-depress.htm](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/health/friend-depressed/friend-depress.htm)
- **Bullying**

#### **Additional Resources**

- **The Science of Mental Illness**  
NIH Curriculum Supplement Series by the National Institute of Health, National Institute of Mental Health. For teachers and Partners in Science Education for grades 6 – 8. (However, the video in particular is great for all ages – *MHANKY testimony*.) Learn about the relationship between laboratory research and its application to health issues. Comes with a wonderful 20 minute video featuring stories from “real” youth and their experiences with ADHD, depression, schizophrenia and suicide to increase understanding and help other youth middle, high school and adults know what they need to save lives and recover. Free materials can be obtained by visiting <http://science.education.nih.gov> [grade level: middle school].
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 1-800-273-TALK (8255) is a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress OR anyone concerned that someone they care about might be in crisis. The call will be routed to the nearest certified crisis center.
- **SAMHSA, Ad Council and Inspire USA Foundation Launch National Suicide Prevention Campaign for Teens** *Rockville, MD. (March 31, 2010) /PRNewswire/* — The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), working in collaboration with the Ad Council and the Inspire USA Foundation, announced today the launch of a national public service announcement campaign designed to reduce the incidence of suicide and

suicide attempts among teens in the United States. The PSAs tell teens that they are not alone in their struggles with emotional and mental health problems, and that other teens have successfully worked through the same issues. Young people seeking help are urged to visit [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com), where they can hear success stories and strategies from teens. For information on using this campaign in your school or community, visit <http://multivu.prnewswire.com/mnr/adccouncil/43256>

- **“School-based Suicide Prevention: A Matter of Life and Death” Video** This 14 minute video features Kentucky school principals, staff and parents who have experienced suicide loss, including suicide contagion in the school, and steps schools can take to reduce suicide and suicide attempts among their students. This video can be used with staff training, but is not appropriate for youth or children. Video is available in two parts on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13ntYuhvg0w> Part 1 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_RhFQXSbt3I&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RhFQXSbt3I&feature=related) Part 2 For a copy of the video, contact **Jan Ulrich** at **502.564.4456** or [jan.ulrich@ky.gov](mailto:jan.ulrich@ky.gov)
- **PREPaRE: School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum** PREPaRE curriculum was developed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to provide evidence-based resources and consultation related for school personnel in crisis preparation, prevention, intervention, response, and recovery procedures, with a special emphasis on the role of school-based mental health professionals. [www.nasponline.org/prepare](http://www.nasponline.org/prepare)
- **Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment by Dr. Kenneth R. Conner, PsyD, MPH, on Wednesday, October 6 from 8:15 am – 11:30 am** in Cincinnati and repeated from 1:00 – 4:15 pm in NKY. Register at [www.mhanky.org](http://www.mhanky.org) [education schedule].
- Book list: <http://www.iyi.org/resources/doc/IYI-Biblio-Teen-Depression-and-Suicide%20-Sept09.pdf>

#### Websites:

**Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)** [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov)

**U. S. Department of Education** [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities**  
<http://mhmr.ky.gov/KDMHMRS>

**Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group** [www.kentuckysuicideprevention.org](http://www.kentuckysuicideprevention.org)

**National Association of School Psychologists** [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

**National Association of Secondary School Principals** [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org)

**American School Counselor Association** <http://schoolcounselor.org>

**Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide** [www.sptsnj.org](http://www.sptsnj.org)

**Youth Suicide Prevention School-Based Guide** <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu>

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

**American Association of Suicidology** [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

**Suicide Prevention Resource Center** [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

**Suicide Prevention Action Network** [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org)

**Jason Foundation** [www.jasonfoundation.com](http://www.jasonfoundation.com)

**Yellow Ribbon** [www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org)

**Mental Health America** [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

**National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI)** [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

**Jed Foundation** [www.jedfoundation.org](http://www.jedfoundation.org)

**QPR Institute** [www.qprinstitute.com](http://www.qprinstitute.com)

American Psychological Association [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)  
National Institute of Mental Health [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

### **Kentucky Partnering for Life**

*In response to new Kentucky legislation regarding suicide prevention training and awareness for middle school and high school staff and students, the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities Services has prepared the following list of programs, training and materials.*

**Why suicide prevention in Kentucky schools? Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults in Kentucky. According to the Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Survey\*, 15% or 1 in 7 Kentucky high school students reported seriously considering suicide within a 12 month period. 17.4% or nearly 1 in 5 Kentucky middle school students reported that they had seriously considered killing themselves at some point in their lives. However, experts say that suicide is preventable. When educators, students, and communities learn warning signs and how to take action when a young person might be at-risk of a suicidal crisis, lives can be saved.**

**What do the new suicide prevention laws require? How do they affect your school community?**

**SB 65 - Suicide Prevention Education for Middle and High School Staff** *Signed by Governor April 13, 2010* <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/10RS/SB65.htm> Amends KRS 158.070 to require all high school and middle school principals, guidance counselors, and teachers to complete a minimum of two hours of self-study review of suicide prevention materials each school year. Also amends KRS 161.011 to permit suicide prevention training for classified employees.

*\* Note: although SB 65 does not designate a date of completion for the mandatory training, the Ky. Department of Education and the Ky. Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities recommend that staff training be completed prior to dissemination of suicide prevention materials to students.*

**HB 51 - Suicide Prevention Information for Middle and High School Students** *Signed by Governor March 4, 2010* <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/10RS/HB51.htm> Amends KRS 156.095 to require the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to post suicide prevention awareness and training information on its Web page by August 1, 2010; require every public middle and high school administrator to disseminate suicide prevention awareness information to all middle and high school students by September 1, 2010, and September 1 of each year thereafter.

### **Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Kentucky\***

The Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is conducted as part of a national effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC) to monitor students' health-risk behaviors in six priority areas. These six areas include injury and violence, alcohol and drug use, tobacco use, nutrition, physical activity, and sexual risk behaviors. These risk behaviors contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the U.S.

**Kentucky's 2009 YRBS results include:**

- 26.7% of high school students reported feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row during the past 12 months, that they stopped doing some usual activities.
- 15.1% of high school students reported seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months.
- 8.8 % of high school students reported actually making a plan to kill themselves within

- the past 12 months.
- 17.4% of middle school students reported ever seriously thought about killing themselves.
  - 6.5% of middle school students reported ever trying to kill themselves.

For more information on the YRBS visit:

[www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Coordinated+School+Health/Youth+Risk+Behavior+Survey.htm](http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Coordinated+School+Health/Youth+Risk+Behavior+Survey.htm)

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm)