



SOS 2

# Parent Information Night

OCTOBER 12, 2017

PRESENTED BY DCC HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELORS –  
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# Tonight's Agenda

- ▶ **Welcome and Introductions**
- ▶ **Suicide Prevention – Resources, Risk Factors, Warning Signs, Sources of Strength**
- ▶ **Watch SOS Gatekeeper Video: Training Trusted Adults – Approx 20 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 Signs of Suicide at AAHS prior to all district secondary schools implementing in 2016-17 school year.
- Researched Riding the Waves skills-based curriculum for all D20 Elementary
- Instrumental in bringing Sources of Strength to the district

# 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/marijuana – 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 include students, parents, school staff, administrators, community members, and faith leaders.

**You will now be a GATEKEEPER!**

# Depression & Anxiety

Recognize the Signs  
and Symptoms

**In order to diagnose depression and/or anxiety symptoms must be present for more than two weeks and affect daily functioning.**

**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:

- ❑ 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

# HS SOS

Curriculum is delivered to all Freshman students during their Health Class, either in the Fall semester or Spring semester. All Juniors review the curriculum during their Individuals and Societies course (American History), and it is generally delivered in the Spring.

- Watch Friends for Life video and discuss do's and don'ts
- Learn to ACT – Acknowledge, Care, Tell
- Review risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors
- Discuss of Sources of Strength

# MS SOS

Curriculum is delivered to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students during their Physical Education class as the content aligns with the social/emotional health standards. All lessons are delivered in the Fall (usually Oct/Nov time frame).

- Watch the Friends for Life video and discuss how to ACT
- Learn ACT – Acknowledge, Care, Tell
- Review risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors
- Integrate Sources of Strength as the Middle School staff and students are trained and begin implementing across the school setting.

# Look, Listen, Link

Look, Listen, Link is a prevention curriculum that focuses on building healthy coping strategies, as well as, understanding risk factors and warning signs for depression and anxiety. Counseling staff believes that this curriculum is more developmentally appropriate for the 11-12 year-old age group.

Curriculum consists of 4 lessons and students learn the skills of:

- **LOOK** – awareness of risk factors and warning signs that a friend may be experiencing depression and/or anxiety.
- **LISTEN** – how to hear what a friend is saying without judgment, and hear when they need help from an adult.
- **LINK** – How to recognize when a friend's problem is beyond what they can help solve, and how to get help from a trusted adult.



SOS Gatekeeper  
Video

# TRAINING TRUSTED ADULTS

TRAINING TRUSTED ADULTS VIDEO

# 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.

# Sad, Shock, Trauma to HOPE, HELP, STRENGTH



# Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength Mission Statement

DCC Sources of Strength



Questions?