

Signs of Suicide (SOS) Parent Program

October 24, 2019

Bedford Public Schools

Collaboration: Counseling Department & Health Department



MindWise
SOS SIGNS OF SUICIDE



Why Universal Prevention?

- Overrides adults' assumptions about who may be most at risk so that no student flies under the radar
- Raises awareness and debunks myths about mental health throughout the school so that students may feel comfortable reaching out
- Trains all students to recognize warning signs and seek help for friends so that peers can help each other



Why SOS Signs of Suicide?

- Only universal school-based suicide prevention program that has shown a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts in randomized controlled trials
- Compared with students in the control group, students who received SOS:
 - were **64% less likely** to report a suicide attempt in the next 3 months
 - reported **more favorable attitudes toward getting help** for themselves or friends for depression and/or suicidal thoughts

Schilling et al., 2016

Goals of S.O.S.

- Help students understand that depression is a treatable illness.
- Explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression.
- Reduce the stigma associated with depression and other mental health concerns.
- Increase "help-seeking" behaviors for students concerned about themselves or a friend
- Provide students with training in how to help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns.
- Help students know to whom in the school they can turn to for help.



Teaching Students to ACT

Acknowledge that you are seeing signs of depression or suicide and that it is serious

Care: Let your friend know how much you care about them

Tell a trusted adult so your friend can get help





SOS Components

Suicide prevention education: video and guided discussion

SOS for High School Students



Mental health screening: depression and signs of suicide

SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program

Student Screening Form

- Age _____
- Grade _____
- Gender _____
- Ethnicity: ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Other Hispanic/Latino
- Race (Check all that apply): ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Black/African American ☐ White
- ☐ Pacific ☐ Male ☐ Transgender ☐ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ☐ Other Multiracial ☐ Asian
- Are you currently being treated for depression? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Brief Screen for Adolescent Depression (BSAD)*

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible by circling the "Yes" or "No" response.

In the last four weeks...

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Have you felt like nothing is fun for you and you just aren't interested in anything? | Yes No |
| 2. Have you had less energy than you usually do? | Yes No |
| 3. Have you felt you couldn't do anything well or that you weren't as good-looking or as smart as most other people? | Yes No |
| 4. Have you thought seriously about killing yourself? | Yes No |
| 5. Have you EVER, in your WHOLE LIFE, tried to kill yourself or made a suicide attempt? | Yes No |
| 6. Has doing even little things made you feel really tired? | Yes No |
| 7. Has it seemed like you couldn't think as clearly or as fast as usual? | Yes No |

Identifying Trained Adults

List a trained adult you could turn to if you need help for yourself or a friend (example: "My English teacher," "counselor," "my mother," "nurse," etc.)

In school _____

Out of school _____



Delivery for SOS

- **JGMS: Grade 8 English Class**
- **BHS: Grade 10 Health Classes**
- **Co-taught by Health Teachers and School Adjustment Counselors**
- **If necessary, immediate follow up with Counselor**
- **Parent communication, as required**

S.O.S Screening Tools

Two tools to identify students in need: a validated adolescent depression screening tool and response cards that encourage help-seeking

- BSADD Screening Tool
- Student Response Cards

****Both Screening Tools will be carefully reviewed by our health teachers and clinical counseling staff.**

****Student identified by the Screening Tools will be immediately referred to the Counseling Department.**



Access SOS Portal

- Visit sossignsofsuicide.org/parent
- View clips of the program videos to learn more about the program your child is receiving
- Take an anonymous mental health screening on behalf of your child and receive immediate results indicating whether it is likely that your child is experiencing depression





Talking To Your Child

- We are encouraging students to tell a trusted adult at home or at school if they are worried about themselves or a friend
- Talking about these issues can be tough for families; mental health isn't often discussed openly like physical health

You can help protect your child and their friends by opening up a conversation about mental health



Warning Signs: Watch and Listen

- Watch for significant changes in behavior, particularly:
 - Extreme withdrawal
 - Increased or decreased sleep
 - Anger or hostility that is out of character or out of context
 - Increased agitation or irritability
- Listen for:
 - Talk about suicide
 - Sounding hopeless
 - Sounding overwhelmed by emotional pain or distress

Students at Higher Risk

- History of mental illness;
- History of alcohol and substance use;
- Feelings of hopelessness;
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies;
- Barriers to access mental health treatment;
- Loss or interpersonal conflict; social isolation;
- Victims or perpetrators of bullying;
- Students who engage in non-suicidal self-injury;
- Exposure to suicidal behaviors in others;
- Access to lethal means



Local Resources

School Counselors

School Adjustment Counselors - connect with students' school counselor

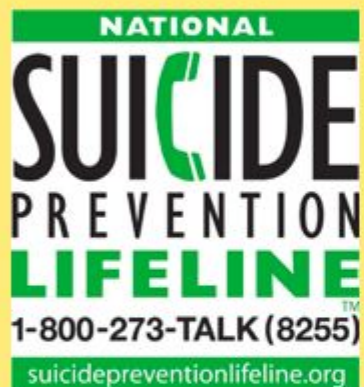
Assistant Principals

Bedford Youth and Family Services & The Elliot Center

Your Pediatrician



National Resources



CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Text **ACT** to 741741.

Call 1-800-237-TALK (8255) National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: for 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

Text ACT to 741741 Crisis Text Line for 24/7, free and crisis support.