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SOS SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Parent Training

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Prevalence of Youth Suicide

In the past year, U.S. students report:

- Seriously considered attempting suicide (17%)
- Making a plan about how they would attempt suicide (14%)
- Attempting suicide one or more times (7%)
- Attempting suicide that resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse (2%)

Raising Awareness

Thoughts of suicide are often hidden because youth are confused, embarrassed or ashamed

- Research shows:
  - 50-90% of parents were unaware of their child's suicidal thoughts
  - 60-95% of parents were unaware of suicide attempts reported by their child
- We must work together to watch for warning signs and connect children to help when needed; please talk to our school's counseling staff if you are concerned

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Youth Suicide Prevention

- What increases risk?
- What are the common warning signs?
- What can parents do?
- What is our school doing?

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Mental Health

- Over 90% of people who die by suicide have a mental health disorder (most commonly depression)
- Depression is treatable but without treatment, a young person may begin to feel so hopeless that they consider suicide

Talk to your child's doctor or our school's counseling staff if you are concerned

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Substance Use

- Many young people who struggle with depression also struggle with alcohol and/or drug use
- Talk to your child about the dangers of using alcohol or drugs to cope with negative emotions

If you are aware of your child using substances, seek support

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Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

Non-suicidal self-injury is when someone hurts their body on purpose without the intention of dying

- Some people use self-injury to try to manage emotional pain
- Even though self-injury isn't the same as a suicide attempt, it is a risk factor
- Seek professional help for self-injury as soon as possible

Access to Guns

- Suicide crises are often short-term but having access to a gun makes it easier to carry out the act in an instant
- Reduce suicide risk by not storing a gun in your home. If you choose to keep a gun in your home, keep it locked, unloaded, and lock/store ammunition separately

Firearms used in youth suicides usually belong to a family member.

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

It Is Okay to Talk About Suicide

MYTH:

Talking to youth about suicide or asking a teen if they are suicidal is risky because it might put the idea in their head.

FACT:

- You don’t give a suicidal person morbid ideas by talking about suicide
- The opposite is true. Bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do

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

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Our School's Role in Suicide Prevention

- Our school has chosen an evidence-based approach to help prevent youth suicide: SOS Signs of Suicide
- SOS includes training and resources for faculty/staff and parents
- Most importantly SOS focuses on training students to identify warning signs and seek help for themselves or a friend

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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

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Schilling et al., 2016

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

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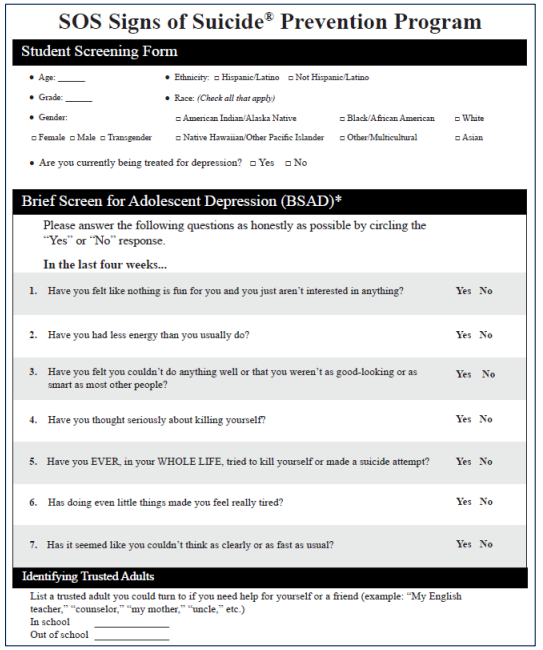
SOS Components

Suicide prevention education:
video and guided discussion

Mental health screening:
depression and signs of suicide



SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program

Student Screening Form

- Age: _____
- Grade: _____
- Gender: □ Female □ Male □ Transgender
- Ethnicity: □ Hispanic/Latino □ Not Hispanic/Latino
- Race: *(Check all that apply)*
  □ American Indian/Alaska Native □ Black/African American □ White
  □ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander □ Other/Multicultural □ 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 Trusted Adults

List a trusted adult you could turn to if you need help for yourself or a friend (example: "My English teacher," "counselor," "my mother," "uncle," etc.)
In school _____
Out of school _____

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The Value of Screening

"Screening for possible suicidal behavior in students presents a variety of logistical challenges, but the fact remains that *student screening likely represents the most direct and efficient way to identify potentially suicidal youth, and it is a critically important element of any public health approach to school-based suicide prevention*."

– David Miller, Past President
American Association of Suicidology 2016 Keynote

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Access SOS Portal

- Visit sossignsofsuicide.org/parent

  Username: longfellowms-par

  Password: Longfellow

- 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

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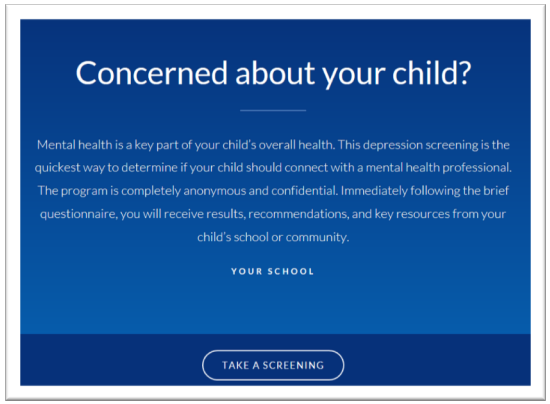
Parent Access to SOS Portal

SPOT THE SIGNS | TAKE THE SCREENING | WATCH THE VIDEOS | TALK TO YOUR CHILD | EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

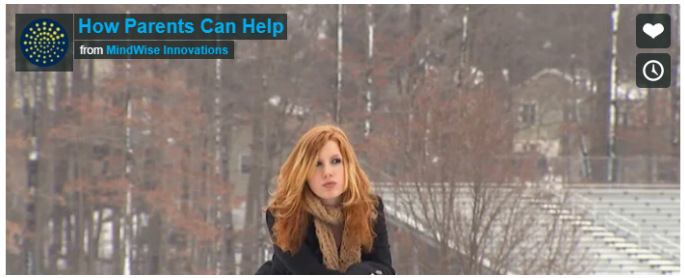
Talk to Your Child

We encourage you to talk to your child about the suicide prevention education they are receiving in school. Through this program, we are teaching students to reach out to trusted adults if they are worried about themselves or a friend. While some students will reach out to school staff, many will reach out to their own parents with concerns.



How Parents Can Help

This clip demonstrates the importance of a father recognizing warning signs and leading his daughter to finding the help she needs. Sommer struggles with substance use and depression but then seeks treatment with her father's guidance. You'll learn that there are several treatment options for depression, highlighting the fact that suicide is preventable.



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National Resources

Call 1-800-273-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.

Questions?

Counselor Contact Information:

Explorers/ Titans- Jill Scharl – jmscharl@fcps.edu

Red Fox/Dragons- Shannon Lopynski- salopynski@fcps.edu

Phoenix/Spartans-Debbie Wright- dgwright@fcps.edu

Islanders/Olympia- Bruce Walker- bmwalker@fcps.edu

Polaris/Renegades- Samantha Kramer- spkramer@fcps.edu

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