

YELLOW RIBBON

Be a Link!®

Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training Workshop I

Please turn to Tab 1



Why is the Children's Wellness Curriculum important?

The role of the School in Suicide Prevention for children is important as children spend a substantial part of their day in school under the supervision of school personnel.

It is crucial for all school staff to be familiar with protective and risk factors and warning signs of suicidal behavior, and know how to intervene and respond.



Why is the Children's Wellness Curriculum important?

Education programs for students and school personnel which teach children how to ask for help for themselves or a friend and which give gatekeepers skills in identifying children at risk and sources of help are shown to be good strategy for preventing child suicide².



Why is the Children's Wellness Curriculum important?

It is a primary prevention approach to teaching children a vital life skill, that it is okay to ask for help!

This unique program fills a gap and moves “upstream” by helping children develop skills so that by the time they reach adolescence, help seeking behavior is ingrained



Why is the Children's Wellness Curriculum important?

Many teachers and school faculty have asked the critical question; how do I talk to my own kids about such a subject. As an elementary-level educator, you may find yourself needing to have this knowledge for your students, as well as your own family.

Data shows that parents do have a powerful influence on children to reduce suicidal ideation⁷



Children and Suicide

- ❖ Though suicide is very rare under age 14, studies show high rates of nonfatal suicidal behaviors and ideation. Statistics also verify that children do act upon suicidal thoughts.⁸
- ❖ Research has found that children by ages 8-9, do have an understanding of suicide, and that younger children understand the concept of “killing oneself”⁸
- ❖ An undetermined number of traumatic injuries and “accidental” self-poisonings are believed to be suicidal in their intent⁸



Objectives of this Training

- ❖ To learn Protective Factors and Connectedness as a strategic direction for the prevention of suicidal behavior
- ❖ To learn the Warning Signs, and to be aware of developing risk factors and how these can be mediated.
- ❖ To learn about and identify resources that you can use in a safe and timely manner
- ❖ To learn how to respond when a child asks for help



Warning Signs / Behaviors

Warning Signs are observable behaviors

- ❖ Excessive somatic complaints (head - body aches)¹¹
- ❖ Poor school performance, marked decline in work¹¹
- ❖ Anxiety or worry. sleep problems or nightmares^{12,13}
- ❖ Absenteeism, not wanting to go to school^{13,14}
- ❖ Hyperkinesia; fidgeting, constant movement¹³



Warning Signs / Behaviors

- ❖ Bullying or being bullied¹²
- ❖ Suicidal threats or ideation (thoughts of suicide)¹³
- ❖ Attempt to harm self i.e.: cutting skin or rubbing objects (pencil eraser) on their body to break the skin¹³
- ❖ Children often express their pain in writing – artwork¹³
- ❖ Anger, frustration, frequent temper tantrums¹⁴



Risk Factors/Stressors

Risk Factors are markers;
traits and characteristics

Stressors are situations (events);
that may contribute to suicide risk factor



Risk Factors/Stressors

Internal Contributors

- ❖ Learning difficulties/disabilities
- ❖ Developmental disorders
- ❖ Disorders, such as ADD/ADHD
- ❖ Illness
- ❖ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



Risk Factors/Stressors

External Contributors

- ❖ Exposure to violence: Tragic public events; school shootings, etc. - repeated TV coverage of tragedies^{13,18}
- ❖ Witnessing/experiencing family abuse^{15,16,18}
- ❖ Death, suicide, illness of family members¹⁶
- ❖ Family moving, single family structure¹⁷



Protective Factors

Are the positive conditions, personal and social resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential for youth suicide as well as other related high-risk behavior³



Protective Factors

Internal- Personal

- ❖ Knowing when and how to ask for help²
- ❖ Strong connections to family¹⁹
- ❖ Strong sense of self-worth or self-esteem¹⁹
- ❖ Strong attitudes and beliefs about the meaning and value of life¹⁹
- ❖ Cultural identity²⁰



Protective Factors

External- Environmental

- ❖ Cultural support¹⁸
- ❖ Reasonably safe and stable environment¹⁹
- ❖ Strong relationships with family¹⁹
- ❖ Pets – responsibilities/duties to others¹⁹
- ❖ Connections to community²⁰



Assisting a Child in Crisis

Teachers are often the trusted adult that children and adolescents feel they can talk to.

But if that child came to a teacher feeling desperate, hopeless and contemplating suicide...



Assisting a Child in Crisis

1. Are children just looking for attention?
Any talk of ending life is an ominous warning sign and should be treated seriously²¹
2. What if we “misdiagnose”?
Don’t diagnose, assess ‘at-risk’ behavior and refer to an appropriate person within school
3. Should we talk about suicide?
”Talking about suicide is the first step to preventing it, to breaking down the terrible isolation that a person considering it feels”²²



Assisting a Child in Crisis

- ❖ Tell them that it's OK to Ask for Help!
- ❖ Remain calm²³ – Don't act surprised
- ❖ Don't dismiss the problem or leave child alone, stay with them until help arrives²³
- ❖ Listen with empathy - child may not be able to put his/her pain into words
- ❖ Report your concerns, follow school protocol



Introducing the Ask 4 Help!® Card

Children in your class may recognize this other tool, the Ask 4 Help!® Card, if they have older siblings and make the link to what you are teaching about asking for help.



THIS RIBBON IS A LIFELINE!®
It carries the message that there are those who care and will help! If you are in need and don't know how to ask for help, take this card to a counselor, teacher, clergy, doctor, parent or friend and say:
"I NEED TO USE MY YELLOW RIBBON"
The Yellow Ribbon Program is in loving memory of Michael Emme

BE-A-LINK® – SAVE A LIFE!
If you have received this Card, it is a Cry for Help:

- Stay with the person - you are their *lifeline!*
- Listen, *really listen*. Take them seriously!
 - Get, or call, **help immediately!**

It's OK to Ask 4 Help!®

800-273-TALK (8255) or 800-SUICIDE (784.2433)

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Training Sequence

- ❖ Be A Link!® Suicide Prevention Training for Staff
(Includes Curriculum Implementation)

- ❖ Be A Link!® Suicide Prevention Training for parents and community *(Includes Curriculum review and is an optional training)*

- ❖ Ask 4 Help!® Student's Training – Children's Wellness Curriculum



Questions?

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