

## SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program

The Signs of Suicide® (SOS) Prevention Program was developed to reduce the incidence of suicide among adolescents. SOS is unique among suicide prevention programs as it incorporates two prominent suicide prevention strategies into a single program: the psychoeducational curriculum which aims to raise awareness of suicide and its related issues and a brief screening for depression and other risk factors associated with suicidal behavior.

The SOS Signs of Suicide High School Prevention Program is the only school-based suicide prevention program listed on SAMSHA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts. In a randomized controlled study, the SOS program showed a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts by 40% (BMC Public Health, July 2007). The SOS Signs of Suicide Middle School Program is listed in Section III of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's (SPRC) Best Practices Registry.

The SOS Program can be easily implemented by existing school personnel within one school period. Participating schools receive program components containing everything needed to implement the program.

### The SOS Program is Designed to:

- **Decrease** suicide and attempts by increasing knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- **Encourage** individual help-seeking and help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- **Reduce** stigma: mental illness, like physical illness, requires treatment
- **Engage** parents and school staff as partners in prevention through gatekeeper education

### SOS Key Message: ACT

**Acknowledge** that you are seeing signs of depression or suicide in a friend and that it is serious.

**Care:** Let your friend know that you care about them and that you are concerned that s/he needs help you cannot provide.

**Tell** a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend.

### Program Components

**Training:** Online gatekeeper training (including CEUs) and in-person training available for all school staff interested in implementing evidence-based suicide prevention programming in their school.

**Parent Outreach:** Guidelines for parent outreach, seeking consent, and planning and implementing a parent night focused on gaining parent buy-in and training parents as gatekeepers. Online Parent Brief Screen for Adolescent Depression allows parents to assess their child for suicide or depression risk factors.

**Peer-to-Peer Middle or High School Student Program:** DVDs, discussion guides, newsletters and supplementary materials provided for the evidence-based SOS Prevention Program.

**Screening:** A validated, seven-item Brief Screen for Adolescent Depression designed to identify at-risk students for further evaluation. Screening forms are educational in nature and do not take the place of a formal diagnosis.

**Consultation:** Ongoing support is available to schools to strategize about implementation, assist facilitators, and help ensure the program is successful.

*For more information on the SOS program please contact Meghan Diamon, LCSW, Youth Programs Manager at:*

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