

SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program

The SOS Signs of Suicide® 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 educational 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 Program is the only youth suicide prevention program that has demonstrated an improvement in students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression, as well as a reduction in actual suicide attempts. Listed on SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, the SOS Program has shown a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts by 40-64% in randomized control studies (Aseltine et al., 2007 & Schilling et al., 2016).

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 you are concerned that they need help you cannot provide.

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

Program Components

Training: SOS Certified Training Institute (train-the-trainer), SOS Program implementer training and gatekeeper training available for all adults interested in championing youth suicide prevention programming in their community or 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.