SUICIDE PREVENTION FACT SHEET

Help-Seeking and Suicide Behavior among youth

Programs designed to engage and educate youth about suicide prevention can reduce risk for suicide when they are used in conjunction with other strategies, such as protocols and staff training[1].

Help-Seeking

Youth suicide prevention education should include information about: recognizing warning signs, how to appropriately respond to a friend, available crisis resources, and the importance of telling a trusted adult.

- Youth who are suicidal talk with their peers rather than with adults about their concerns[2].

- Although 40-68 percent of young people experiencing suicidal ideation turn to their peers and family for assistance, fewer than 25 percent of those peers told an adult about their friend's problem or urged the young person in crisis to go to an adult for help[3].

Suicidal Behavior

High School

- Although youth die by suicide at lower rates compared to older age groups, about one in five youth report thoughts of suicide[4].

- About 17 percent of high school students reported seriously considering suicide and about 7% attempted suicide in the past year[5].

College

- About 7 percent of college-aged youth (ages 18-24), reported seriously considering suicide in the previous 12-month period[6].

- However, the suicide rate for young adults not attending college is about <u>double that of those who do attend college</u>[7].

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[1] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools*, http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA12-4669/SMA12-4669.pdf (June 2012)

[2] Michelmore, L., & Hindley, P. (2012). *Help-seeking for suicidal thoughts and self-harm in young people: A systematic review*. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 42(5):507-24.

[3] ibid

[4] MMWR and Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance- United States, 2017, (Jun 2018)

[5] MMWR and Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance- United States, 2017, (Jun 2018)

[6] Suicide Prevention Resource Center, Suicide among College and University Students in the United States, https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/SuicideAmongCollegeStudentsInUS.pdf (February 2014)

[7] Suicide Prevention Resource Center, Suicide Among College and University Students, http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/SuicideAmongCollegeStudentsInUS.pdf (Aug 2017)

Recommended Resources
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-8255**
    - www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org
    - **Lifeline Crisis Chat available 24/7**:
        - http://chat.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx

- Crisis Text Line:
    - Text "Home" to 741-741

- Know the Signs:
    - www.SuicideIsPreventable.org
    - For more information on warning signs, how to find the words to offer help, and local resources in every county

Further Information Regarding Youth Suicide Prevention

Recognizing When Help is Needed

Warning signs are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Most suicidal people show one or more warning signs, so it is important to know the signs and take them seriously, especially if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

The following signs may mean that a youth is at risk for suicide, particularly in youth who have attempted suicide in the past. The presence of more than one of the following warning signs may increase a youth's risk for engaging in suicidal behaviors in the near future.

Youth Suicide Warning Signs[8]
- Talking about or making plans for suicide
- Expressing hopelessness about the future
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. Specifically, this includes significant:
    - Withdrawal from or changes in social connections/situations
    - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
    - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
    - Recent increased agitation or irritability

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[8] Youth Suicide Warning Signs, www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org (Aug 2017)

What to do…

If you are having thoughts of suicide:
- Please reach out for support by contacting a friend, family member, or a trusted adult
- You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting "Home" to "741-741"

If you are concerned about someone:
- Ask them directly if they are having thoughts of suicide (talking to someone about suicide will not put the thought in their head)
  - o To learn more about having the conversations, visit: www.SuicideIsPreventable.org
- Talk to a trusted adult. Your friend may ask you not to tell anyone, but it's important to share this information to get your friend the help they need
- You can always call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255 or other crisis resource (see above for more information on resources)
  - o You don't have to be the person in crisis to call. If you are supporting someone through a difficult time, call the Lifeline and they can support you and provide resources for your friend

Safe and Effective Messaging on Suicide Prevention:
Considerations when Creating Public Messages about Suicide Prevention

When creating your film, it is important to remember that suicide is a complex issue and research shows that certain presentations may influence a person towards suicide behavior, or towards seeking help. The Directing Change Program encourages all youth and young adult filmmakers to apply best practices based on the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's Framework for Successful Messaging[9].

Positive Narrative
The Positive Narrative component of the Framework for Successful Messaging is designed to increase "promoting the positive" about suicide prevention.

Content to Include:
- There are actions that people can take to help prevent suicide
- Prevention works
- Resilience and recovery are possible
- Effective programs and services exist
- Help is available

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[9] National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, Framework for Successful Messaging,
http://suicidepreventionmessaging.org/ (Aug 2017)

Safety

The Safety (or "safe messaging") component of the Framework for Successful Messaging focuses on avoiding potentially harmful messaging content. Certain types of messages about suicide can increase the likelihood that at-risk individuals will consider or attempt suicide themselves. Content that undermines prevention goals is problematic as well.

Content to Avoid:
- Repeated, prominent, or sensational coverage
- Details about suicide method or location
- Portraying suicide as a common or acceptable response to adversity
- Glamorizing or romanticizing suicide
- Presenting simplistic explanations for suicide
- Including personal details that encourage identification with the person who died

For more information on the *National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Framework for Successful Messaging*, visit: http://suicidepreventionmessaging.org