

SOS Signs of Suicide teaches STUDENTS TO ACT

SOS is an evidence-based suicide prevention program that educates students about the relationship between suicide and depression, and teaches them how to get help for themselves or a friend. SOS uses the ACT message to equip teens with knowledge and encourage help-seeking so students get the support they need before they reach a potential crisis.

Acknowledge that you are seeing signs of depression or suicide in yourself or a friend.

Care: Let your friend know you care about them.

Tell a trusted adult – take your friend with you or go alone if you need to.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

Talking about these issues can be tough for families. In our society, mental health isn't discussed openly like physical health. Feelings of depression are often hidden because youth are confused, embarrassed, or ashamed, and this secrecy can have dire consequences. You can help protect your child and their friends by starting a conversation about mental health.

- » **Ask open-ended questions.** Let your child steer the conversation to what they want to talk about.
- » **Don't rush to solve their problems.** Instead, ask what they think would help a situation.
- » **Be available and make sure your child knows it.** A simple "I'm around if you want to talk later" may help.
- » **Try talking in the car.** The relaxed atmosphere makes it easier for some kids to open up.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

A warning sign is an indication that someone might be having thoughts of suicide. Most people give clues or signals of their intentions. If you see/hear a warning sign, seek immediate help.

- **Listen:** "I wish I were dead" and "I won't be around to deal with this much longer" are warnings of serious suicidal thoughts.
- **Watch** for big changes, such as:
 - Significant differences in appearance or mood
 - Extreme withdrawal
 - Increase in risky behavior (including alcohol/drug use)
 - Decreased interest in things they once enjoyed



Why take a screening?

Mental health screening is an educational tool that teaches students about the symptoms of depression and encourages them to seek help based on their self-assessment.

MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS:

- **Are educational** and do not provide a diagnosis.
- **Teach students to identify symptoms** consistent with depression and/or suicide risk
- **Help school staff to advise** a complete professional evaluation.

TRUE OR FALSE

Asking someone about suicide will put the idea in their head.

TRUE

FALSE

Some parents may be concerned about depression/suicide screening because of this common myth. **Rest assured that evidence-based suicide prevention programming, including screening, is safe and effective.** After years of research, there is no evidence that screening youth for suicide induces suicidal thinking or behavior (Gould et al., 2007).

Have you accessed the SOS PARENT PAGE?

You can take a screening on behalf of your child, review portions of the SOS videos, or access other useful resources online.

SOSSignsofsuicide.org/parent



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

If you are concerned about your child, resources are always available.

1-800-237-TALK (8255) National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call for 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress and for prevention/crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

Crisis Text Line: Text 'ACT' to 741741 for free, 24/7 crisis support in the U.S.

Find quality treatment options close to home using **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's (SAMHSA)** confidential and anonymous online treatment locator: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

1-800-662-HELP (4357) SAMHSA's National Helpline: Call for 24/7 free and confidential information for individuals and family members facing substance abuse and mental health issues.

