

More information about the SOS Program

SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program is an award-winning, nationally recognized program designed for middle and high school-age students. The program teaches students how to identify the symptoms of depression and suicidality in themselves or their friends, and encourages help-seeking through the use of the ACT® technique (Acknowledge, Care, Tell).

Program Goals:

- Decrease suicide & attempts by increasing knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- Encourage individual help-seeking and help-seeking on behalf of a friends
- Link suicide to mental illness that, like physical illness, requires treatment
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention by educating them to identify signs of depression and suicide and provide information about referral resources
- Reduce stigma associated with mental health problems
- Encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships

Acknowledge

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

Care

Let your friend know you care about them and that you are concerned that he or she needs help you cannot provide

Tell

Tell a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend

What does depression look like?

- Anger, irritability, sadness, changes in mood
- Frequently crying
- Not interested in doing anything, especially activities they typically enjoy
- Feeling sick all the time
- Not eating or sleeping normally (either eating/sleeping too much, or eating/sleep too little)
- Engaging in dangerous activities and breaking rules at school
- Fighting with friends
- Withdrawing from friends

Signs student may be planning/thinking about suicide:

- Saying “I’m no good”, “I hate myself”, “you’d be better off without me”, “I don’t care anymore”, “I wish I were dead”
- Giving away their belongings
- Isolating themselves
- Putting themselves in danger

Do’s and Don’ts of speaking with someone who may be depressed:

<u>DO</u>	<u>DON’T</u>
Take someone seriously, even if they try to take it back	Call the person “dramatic” or say “just give it time”
Help them find an adult they can talk to	Ignore someone saying they wish they were dead
Let them know that you will say something if they don’t	Think it’s just an attitude “problem”
	Tell them just to relax
	Leave the person alone

Feeling Sad vs. Feeling Depressed

Sad: a feeling everyone experiences from time to time in their life

Depressed: a serious illness that impacts people in a much longer way that impacts all areas of their lives (school, home, with friends and family, sports)- Can lead to feeling suicidal

Does talking about depression make it worse?

NO. Talking about it makes it better. By talking, you are getting help, reaching out to people, learning to understand your feelings and reasons for your feelings.

More Resources:

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/back-school-preventing-suicide>

https://afsp.org/our-work/education/talk-saves-lives-introduction-suicide-prevention/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMImpYleeS3gIVjp6fCh2V-w6HEAAYASAAEgJjGvD_BwE