

## LESSON TITLE: PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE

10 September -World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION: 90-120 minutes

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To learn key concepts of suicide prevention
- To understand the characteristics of students who are at higher risk to attempt suicide, warning signs of suicidal teens, and what to do if a friend is suicidal
- To practice needed skills by studying stories of suicidal teenagers
- To explain the importance of emotional health, and identify when and where to seek support for self and others
- To name emotions we all experience in our daily life

### ENGAGE:

*How will you introduce the lesson? (Be student centered)*

*How will you activate prior knowledge? This should be about the students, not about you!*

#### A.Find 25 plastic cups

Begin by introducing yourself. Then place one cup upside down on a table in front of you and say “Today I will be represented by this cup. I am this cup.” Then continue on to mention the following statements. Each time you mention a new statement, try to add another cup to the top of the cup, in the opposite direction so that it is stacked. At some point, the cups may begin falling off but just keep trying to pile them on:

- “I just moved recently to a new neighborhood. It is alright, but I still don’t have many friends.” (Add one cup)

- “I did make one friend though. She is pretty nice, but my mom thinks she is trouble because we got caught skipping school last week. I never skipped school at my old school.” (Add one cup)
- “My new friend took me to her house and we tried some of her dad’s alcohol from his alcohol cabinet.” (Add one cup)
- “We didn’t get drunk or anything, we just tried it but my parents were so mad that they grounded me for a whole month and told me I can’t hang out with her again!” (Add one cup)
- “And my parents have been fighting so much lately!” (Add one cup)
- “I can barely think at home. My grades are slipping and the teachers think I am stupid, I know it.” (Add one cup)
- “I don’t even like myself anymore.” (Add one cup)
- “I just don’t think I can take it anymore.” (Add one cup...and then let all of the cups fall, if they haven’t already.)

In this short activity, we got to see first-hand what happens to people who feel as though they can’t deal with everything that is coming at them. School work, friends, families, and all the stresses that come with these things can really leave you wondering how you can handle everything and stop the pain. Today we will be learning about suicide. We will be discussing possible warning signs, prevention methods, how to respond in a potential suicidal situation, who to talk to, and where to get help.

## B.Videos

[Study finds suicide rates among teens on the rise](#)



[Teen suicide on the rise](#)



[Parents of teens who died by suicide share grief and advice](#)



## EXPLORE:

*You cannot talk students into being critical thinkers. You have to let them think, get feedback and think some more. Start your lesson with students thinking rather than student's copying down notes. Do not do the thinking for them!*

### 1.Text

<https://teenshealth.org/en/teens/suicide.html>

#### 1a. Questions

- a. The teen suicide rate peaks around mid-adolescence. What is it about these years that might make a teen more susceptible to suicide? What factors put some teens more at risk than others?
- b. Teens who are thinking of committing suicide often show warning signs. What might they do or say?

c. If you spot the warning signs of suicide in a friend, should you wait it out or say something? What are helpful things to say? What are not helpful things to say?



<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age-13/mental-health-conditions-in-young-people/suicide/warning-signs-for-suicide>

d. Suicide is a difficult topic to talk about. How can we overcome the stigma so that people can get the help they need?

Tool: Discussion Kahoot

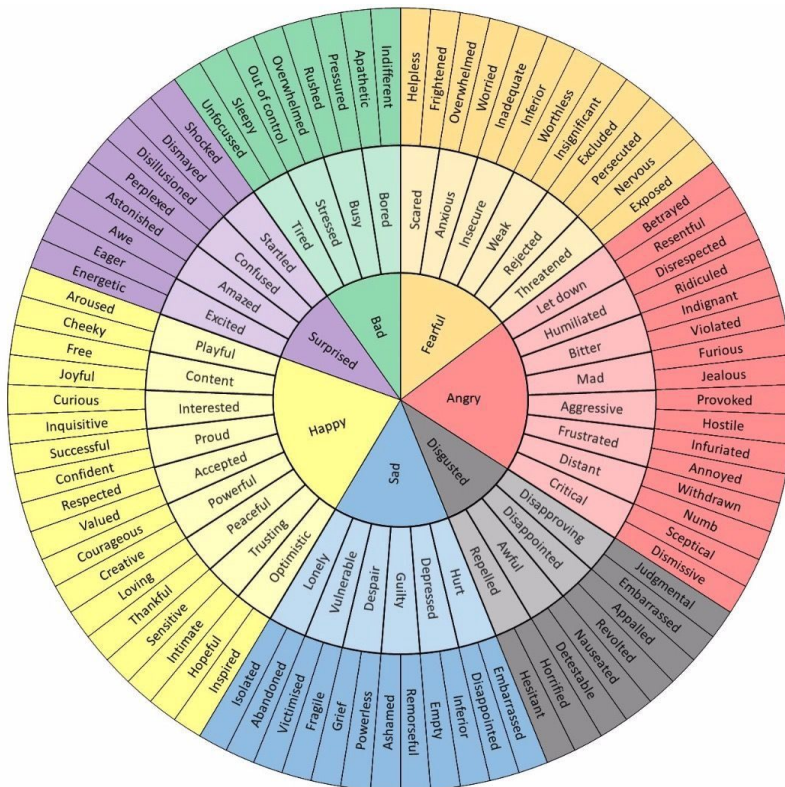
2. For each scenario below, write down any words or actions that you believe show the character might be at risk for suicide. (Red flags = warning signs.)

Scenario	Red flags-Warning signs
<p>Casey is the most talented actor in school, but she did not show up for rehearsals this week and has not told anyone why. You would think that she might have the flu or something, until you see her under the bleachers after school one day totally drunk. When you ask her what is going on, she tells you that she recently came out to her parents and that it did not go very well. They kicked her out of the house and she is staying with her aunt for now. She also tells you that she just found out that her aunt keeps a gun in her nightstand. She says she bets that her parents would not even miss her if she were gone.</p>	
<p>When Robin's cousin Mara, who was like a sister to her, committed suicide, Robin was the one that found her. Robin says that since then, no matter how hard she tries to move past it, she feels like she is just going through the motions. Her grades have dropped and have not gone back up. She also quit field hockey and track and has not played sports since. Soon it will be the 1- year anniversary of Mara's death, and Robin's friends have all been trying to keep her mind off it. They have tried to invite her to hang out, but she</p>	

<p>never comes. They have also tried to text her, but she never responds. Last night she tweeted, “Mara had it right. #abetterplace.”</p>	
<p>Leila hasn’t been the same since her mom died. It’s been especially tough because she doesn’t get along with her dad. For months, she’s been saying that if it weren’t for her boyfriend, Dillon, she wouldn’t have anyone who cares about her. But Dillon just broke up with her and Leila is devastated. She talks about needing to end her pain and just last night told you where the key to her diary was in case anyone wants to read it “afterward.”</p>	
<p>Oliver comes from a family of perfectionists. In Oliver’s family, the expectation is that he’ll go to an Ivy League college, just like his parents and his sister did. But he just took his SATs for the third time and his scores aren’t high enough. He thinks his grades might drop this semester, too. He’s so worried about not getting into a top college and letting his family down that he hasn’t been able to sleep or eat. His parents also grounded him for getting the family car in a fender-bender. Without access to a car he lost his part-time job delivering pizzas. He keeps saying how he’s tired of feeling like a disappointment and he sees no way out.</p>	
<p>Charles hates school because he gets bullied a lot. He has ADHD and has repeated a grade. Charles used to spend a lot of time playing video games with his older brother, Robert. But Robert joined the Army, and now Charles spends most of his time alone. Sometimes he skips school and it seems like when he’s not sleeping, he’s eating. He tells you that he’d like to talk more with his mom, but she’s exhausted when she gets home from her second job. He says he’d probably be doing her a favor if she didn’t have to worry about him anymore.</p>	



## 2a. The Emotion Wheel



Instructions: Firstly, ask your students to draw a circle and divide it into eight pies. Then, ask them to dedicate each pie to one emotion and fill in each pie with a corresponding colour or images that match their idea of what the emotion means to them. It may be that a student has a problem coming up with eight emotions. You can assist him but never choose instead of him. Don't push if he can't come up with eight. Work with whatever he manages to present. Ask students to mark emotions they feel while discussing today's topic or mental health in general.

After the teen is done with the drawing, initiate a dialogue. You may find these questions useful: *What does each image mean to you? What made you choose those particular colors? When in your life do you experience this emotion? What emotion is dominant for you nowadays? What emotion is the hardest to handle? And so on.*



## **EXPLAIN:**

*After seeing what your students ideas were, what do you now need to explain, clarify or demonstrate? How do you keep students at the center of the lesson? Explain does not mean direct instruction necessarily. What higher order thinking questions will you use to solicit student explanations and help them to justify their explanations. Resist the urge to do the thinking for the students.*

1. Go online and do some research to gather information about suicide in your country that will help you create educational materials – for a brochure, poster, factsheet, video, or infographic, etc. Topics should include:

- Statistics on teen suicide
- Who is at risk
- List of warning signs
- What to do if you suspect someone is considering suicide
- Where to get help

Use [Canva](#) or [Adobe Spark](#) to create your products.

## **EXTEND (also called Elaborate):**

*How will students build on the knowledge they built and you helped to explain? How will they go deeper? How will they practice? How do students see this applied in their daily lives?*

1. Host a guest speaker with experience in suicide prevention, such as psychologist, social worker, or suicide hotline staffer. School counselors, school psychologists, or school nurses may be able to help find a speaker or even give a presentation to your class, grade, or school themselves.

During week 41 and 42, we will host two guest speakers. Our sessions will be recorded which means your students will be able to watch them at their convenience.

2. Ask students to create an interview/ podcast with a person whose kid/ friend committed a suicide or with a social worker/ psychologist/ psychiatrist who works with people who have attempted suicide.

## EVALUATE:

*How will you know if students are learning the material? You do not only evaluate at the end of the lesson, it happens throughout the lesson. Evaluation does not have to be a test or a quiz.*

At the end of the lesson, students will be asked to submit exit tickets:

Today, the most useful thing I learned was ... <hr/> <hr/>
This lesson was: <input type="checkbox"/> 😊 Very useful <input type="checkbox"/> 😐 Useful <input type="checkbox"/> ☹️ Not useful
I want to learn more about... <hr/> <hr/>

## USEFUL LINKS/ RESOURCES

<https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/suicide-prevention-week-activation-toolkit-2019>

[https://nationalsave.org/pdf/SAVE\\_Manual\\_SuicidePrevention.pdf](https://nationalsave.org/pdf/SAVE_Manual_SuicidePrevention.pdf)

[2019 World Suicide Prevention Day](#)

