

TYPES OF STUDENT PROGRAMS INFORMATION SHEET**1. CURRICULA FOR ALL STUDENTS**

Purpose: These curricula:

- Provide information about suicide prevention
- Promote positive attitudes
- Increase students' ability to recognize if they or their peers are at risk for suicide
- Encourage students to seek help for themselves and their peers

Content: Typical content includes:

- Basic information about depression and suicide
- Warning signs that indicate a student may be in imminent danger of suicide
- Underlying factors that place a student at higher risk of suicide
- Appropriate responses when someone is depressed or suicidal
- Help-seeking skills and resources

Participants: These curricula are usually offered to all students in a class or a grade. Some programs, schools, districts, and funders require consent from parents for their child to participate. The children of parents who do not give consent are provided with an alternative activity.

Format: These curricula are typically given in one to four class periods of 45-60 minutes each. They are often given as part of a class, such as a health, family life, or life skills class, which addresses related topics (e.g., mental health issues, substance abuse, bullying, and other violence). This enables the connections between the issues to be highlighted. Sometimes they are implemented during other classes, such as English.

Health education standards: Almost all of the curricula address at least some, if not most, of the National Health Education Standards. Some states have their own standards. State standards are typically aligned with the national standards.

2. SKILL-BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK OF SUICIDE

Purpose: These programs help protect at-risk students from suicide by:

- Building their coping, problem-solving, and cognitive skills
- Addressing related problems such as depression and other mental health issues, anger, and substance abuse

Content: Typical content includes exercises and activities to:

- Increase problem-solving and coping skills
- Improve resilience and interpersonal relationships
- Prevent or reduce self-destructive behavior

Format: These programs fit into regular class periods and are given as a separate class. They typically last from 12 weeks to a semester.

3. PEER LEADER PROGRAMS

Purpose: Peer leader programs teach selected students skills to identify and help peers who may be at risk. The most effective programs teach peer leaders to build connectedness not only among students but also between students and staff, which improves the school environment.

Format: These programs are usually held outside of class time.

Peer Leader Roles: Roles vary greatly by program and may include:

- Listening to and supporting peers, educating them about mental health problems, and encouraging them to seek help, as well as talking with adults about students possibly at risk for suicide and other mental health problems
- Presenting lessons to their peers in high school classes, to middle school students, and/or to youth in the community
- Developing and promoting messages to change the school environment through public service announcements, posters, videos, Web sites, and text messaging

Peer Leader Training: The training varies according to the roles taken on by the peer leaders.

Basic components of these trainings include:

- Teaching about the risk factors and warning signs of suicide
- Dispelling myths about suicide
- Destigmatizing mental illness and seeking help
- Learning about other physical and mental health problems, as well as other common issues teenagers face

Three examples of programs with evidence to support their use in suicide prevention, stigma reduction or mental health awareness includes:

- [Sources of Strength](#)
- [Youth Aware of Mental Health](#)
- [Let's Bring Change 2 Mind](#)