



Lifelines

A Suicide Prevention Program

A Workshop for Parents



Handouts for Parents

Lifelines

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Q: Who considers suicide?

A: In general, people (of all ages) who are depressed or having trouble coping with their feelings may consider suicide if they don't have other coping skills. People of all ages, races, faiths, and cultures die by suicide, as do individuals from all walks of life and all income levels. Both popular, well-connected people who seem to have everything going for them and those who are less well-off die by suicide. Suicidal youth come from all kinds of families, rich and poor, happy and sad, two-parent and single-parent. It is really important to understand that suicidal behavior knows no boundaries.

Q: Can a teen really be suicidal? They haven't lived long enough to know what real problems are!

A: In part, that is exactly the problem. It is widely believed that childhood is free from the stress and problems of adult life and is a time for fun. However, the world is a much different place now than it was when you were a teenager. We live in an information-packed and high-stress society. Competition for college acceptance and jobs is fierce. Teens are expected to go to school full-time, participate in school activities, work twenty to twenty-five hours a week in their "part-time job," and manage to get their chores and homework done on the side. It doesn't leave much time for fun. Many teens don't get enough sleep. This tends to make teens easily frustrated and angry. The expectations placed on teens in our society can be very difficult to handle, as they have not yet developed the skills needed to deal with these stresses. A loss that seems minor to an adult can feel life-threatening to teens if they cannot find a way to cope with the feelings or find a solution. Also, they feel the need to solve the problem as fast as they can in a culture obsessed with "now" (e-mail, voice mail, cell phones, pagers, etc.). For teens, each day is as big as it gets.

Q: Why do people choose to die by suicide?

A: Suicidal behavior is one of the most complicated human behaviors. This question cannot be answered briefly. There is no research that shows that a certain set of risk factors can accurately predict the likelihood of imminent danger of suicide for any one person. It is fair to say that suicidal people are experiencing varying degrees of outside stresses, internal conflict, and neurological dysfunction, and these factors contribute to their state of mind. Depression, anxiety, conduct disorders, and substance abuse all contribute to the possibility of suicide, but they do not cause suicide. A "final straw" for suicide is usually the last thing that a person who kills himself or herself is thinking about, and many left behind want to blame that person or event, but the "final straw" was not the cause of the suicide. Many people who

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P3-1

The Role of Parents

- Understand the school's policies and procedures
- Recognize signs of trouble in their children
- Know what to do and where to go for resources
- Understand how to respond to other at-risk youth
- Not My Kid: What every Parent Should Know About Youth Suicide Prevention is a short video available at no cost on the SPTS website, www.sptsusa.org



How Real Is Youth Suicide?

- Every year, there are approximately 10 suicides for every 100,000 youth
- Every day, there are approximately 11 youth suicides
- Every 2 hours and 11 minutes, a person under the age of 25 dies by suicide



CDC Study

- Almost 7% of high school students report making a suicide attempt
- 14.5% of high school students report suicidal thoughts or ideation



What Is the School's Role in Suicide Prevention?

- Critical but limited
- Can normalize talking about suicide and asking for help
- Can reinforce protective factors that buffer students from stress and suicide risk factors



How Our School Is Addressing Youth Suicide Prevention

Lifelines
A Suicide Prevention Program



Lifelines Objectives

1. To increase the probability that persons who come into contact with potentially suicidal adolescents:

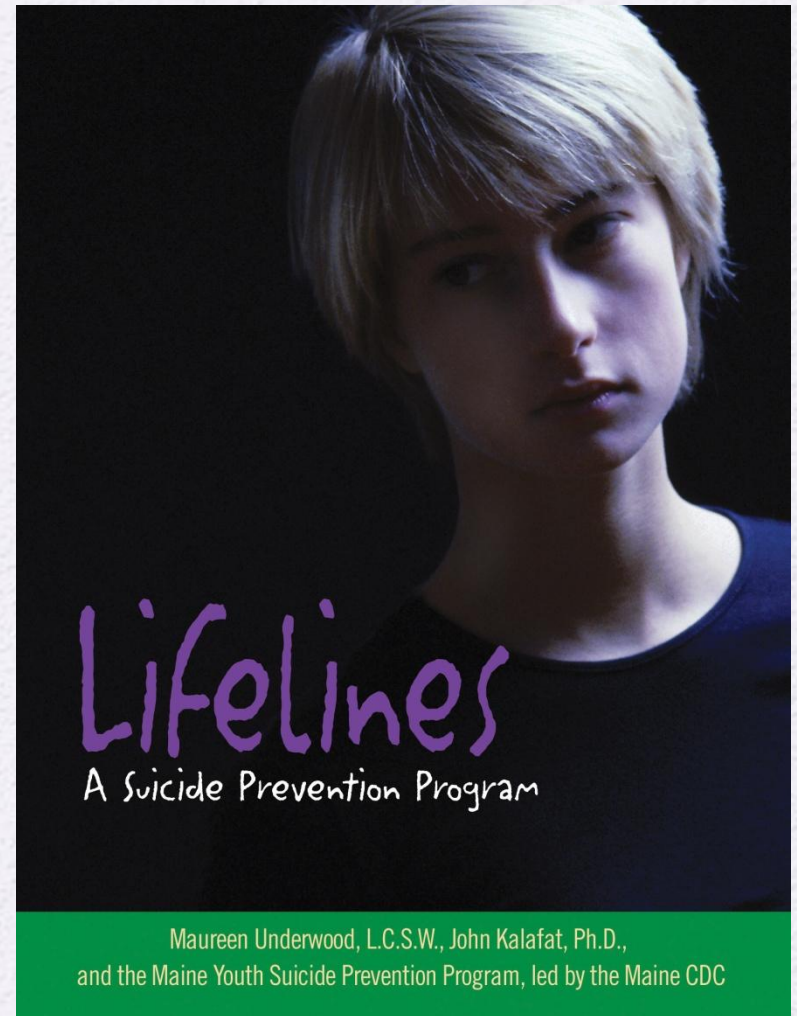
- a. can more readily identify them
- b. know how to respond to them
- c. know how to rapidly obtain help for them
- d. will be consistently inclined to take such action

2. To make sure troubled youth are aware of and have access to helping resources so that they are inclined to seek help as an alternative to suicide



The *Lifelines* Program

- Administrative Readiness Consultation
- Faculty and Staff Training
- Parent Workshop
- Student Curriculum



Student Curriculum Objectives

- To present relevant facts about suicide
- To alert students to signs of suicide risk in peers and encourage serious responses
- To outline ways to respond to troubled peers
- To demonstrate positive attitudes about intervention and help-seeking behavior
- To identify resources





What Is Your Role
as Parents in Youth
Suicide Prevention?

Lifelines
A Suicide Prevention Program

Talk about Suicide!

1. Pick a good time
2. Be conversational
3. Be honest
4. Be direct
5. Listen to what your child has to say
6. If you get worried, ask more questions
7. Revisit the conversation



Warning Signs

F = Feelings

A = Actions

C = Changes

T = Threats

S = Situations

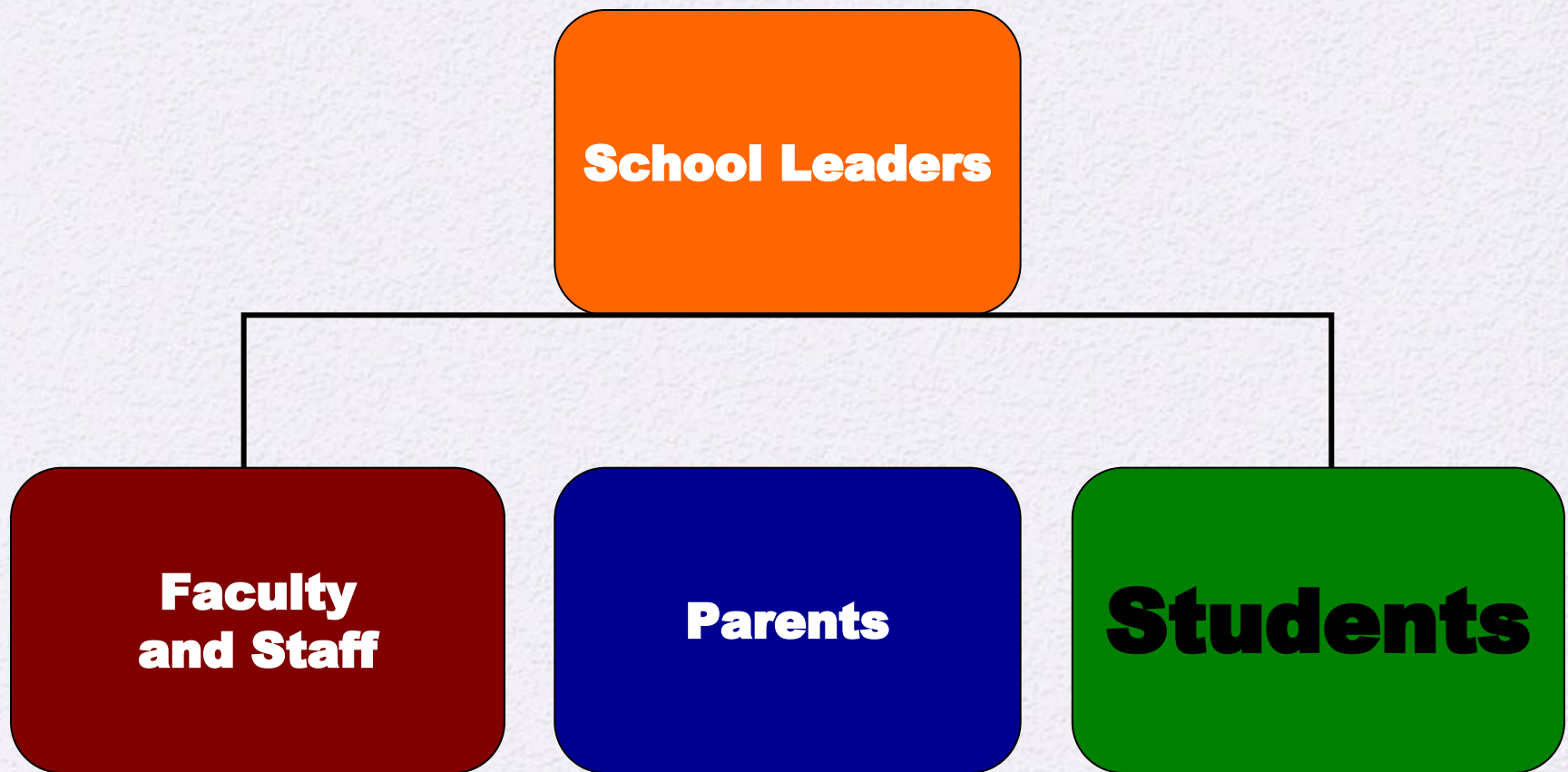


If You Are Concerned . . .

- Don't worry about overreacting
- Be specific about your concerns
- Expect your child to discount your concerns
- Ask directly about suicide
- Seek professional consultation



A Competent School Community



The Role of Students



- Awareness of warning signs
- Strategies for getting help personally
- Knowledge of ways to help peers
- Awareness of school and community resources
- Identification of 'caring' adults

Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program

- Established educational principles employed in lessons
- Devoid of mental health jargon
- Problem- versus content-focused
- Contemporary issues
- Uses participatory learning
- Only 3-4 objectives per 45-minute lesson
- Correlated with National Health Education Standards

Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program

- Four session unit; usually taught in 8th or 9th grade health classes
- Includes detailed lesson plans correlated to National curriculum standards and audiovisual aids that cover facts about suicide and the students role in suicide prevention
- Reviews in-school and community resources
- Designed to be taught by a school faculty member

Lifelines Instructional Objectives

A Suicide Prevention Program

Students Will:

- Recognize the threat of suicidal thoughts and behavior and take troubled peers seriously
- Know relevant facts about suicide, including warning signs
- Demonstrate positive attitudes about intervention and help-seeking behavior
- Know how to respond to troubled peers
- Know resources: be able to name one adult and know how resources will respond

Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program

Session 1: When is a Friend in Trouble?

- Define reasons for a unit on suicide
- Examine personal reactions to a situation involving a peer's suicidal behavior
- Examine the ways in which our feelings about suicide influence our actions
- Identify basic facts about suicide



Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program

Session 2: How do I help a friend?

- Organize warning signs around FACTS Warning Signs

Feelings

Actions

Changes

Threats

Situations

- Name three basic suicide intervention steps
- Identify the words to use to ask about suicide

Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program

Session 3: Where can I get help?

- Recognize specific warning signs of suicide
- Identify the steps in a successful peer intervention
- Define traits of helpful people
- Identify school procedures for responding to suicidal students



Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program

Session 4: How can I use what I've learned?

- Demonstrate ability to help a troubled friend through scripted role-plays
- Demonstrate willingness to help self or troubled friend by signing a “Help-Seeking Pledge”
- Identify the “wallet card” as a resource



Lifelines Student Curriculum

A Suicide Prevention Program



Evaluation Results

- Increased knowledge about suicide and school resources
- Increased inclination to tell an adult about an at-risk peer
- Increased confidence in school's response capability
- Increased referrals

Resources for Teens, Parents & Educators



www.sptsusa.org

Questions or Concerns

Student Assistance Programs Coordinator

- Kitrena Hime: himek@mustangps.org

Freshman Success Teachers:

- pattersonk@mustangps.org (Mrs. Patterson)
- keyn@mustangps.org (Ms. Key)
- fergusonw@mustangps.org (Mr. Ferguson)

Counselors

- daya@mustangps.org (letters A-K)
- chappellr@mustangps.org (letters L-Z)