

# Evidence-based Strategies for Suicide Prevention with Youth



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## Agenda

DATA ON SUICIDE & SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN  
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION  
PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE  
FACTORS BETWEEN  
ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND SUICIDE PREVENTION  
RESOURCES

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## Suicide & Youth

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL DATA:  
GEORGIA AND NATIONALLY

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### Epidemiological Data

- **Between 2012-2014,**
  - 3,593 people died by suicide in Georgia
  - 101 youths ages 5-17 died by suicide in Georgia
    - ✦ 32 deaths in 2012
    - ✦ 39 deaths in 2013
    - ✦ 30 deaths in 2014

(Source: Georgia Online Analytical Statistical Information System OASIS)

- **In 2014, suicide was the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for 10-14, 15-24, and 25-34 year olds nationally and the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death in Georgia**

(Source: CDC vital statistics [http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading\\_causes\\_death.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading_causes_death.html))

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- **Between 2012-2014, youth ages 5-17 who died by suicide in Georgia were**
  - 77% male
  - 72% white
  - 23% black or African American
  - 5% Hispanic/Latino
  - 4% Asian and multi-racial

(Source: Georgia Online Analytical Statistical Information System OASIS)

- **Between 2011-2013,**
  - 41% of youth aged 5-19 who died by suicide nationally used firearms
  - 48% of youth aged 5-19 who died by suicide in Georgia used firearms

(Source: CDC National Violent Death Reporting System)

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### Georgia Youth Grades 6-12, 2015-2016

(Source: Georgia Student Health Survey II)

- **Anonymous, self-reported responses from youth collected annually**
  - 57,548 students reported seriously considering attempting suicide during the past 12 months, representing **8.7%** of all students who responded
  - 26,959 students reported attempting suicide at least once in the past 12 months, representing **4.1%** of all students who responded
    - ✦ 4,722 students reported attempting suicide more than 5 times in the past 12 months, representing **0.7%** of all students who responded
  - 146,583 students reported that they disagreed with the statement "I know an adult at school that I can talk with if I need help." representing **22.1%** of all students who responded

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## Evidence-based programs for youth

SOURCES OF STRENGTH  
SIGNS OF SUICIDE  
LIFELINES PREVENTION  
LEADS: LINKING EDUCATION AND  
AWARENESS OF DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

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### Upstream Suicide Prevention

Upstream suicide prevention uses a public health model of reaching all students with messages around

- Awareness of the issues
- Mental health promotion
- Positive relationship skills and helping
- Coping skills through difficult situations
- Substance abuse prevention
- How to identify a positive adult or adults to help you

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### Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength is the first suicide prevention program involving peer leaders to enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide at the school population level.

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- Sources of Strength is a strength-based comprehensive wellness program that focuses on suicide prevention. However, as a wellness program it also seeks to impact social issues such as bullying, substance abuse, and violence. The program does this by using peer leaders and Hope, Help, and Strength messaging to positively change school and/or community cultures around help seeking behavior, codes of silence, and perceptions of adult support. These strength messages are strategically designed by Sources of Strength and the local peer teams, to engage local culture and impact local groups of youth, teens, young adults, and/or parents.

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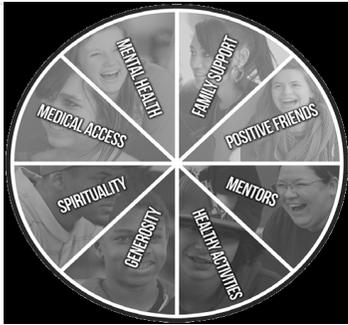
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**SOURCES OF STRENGTH**  
An Example of Upstream Prevention in Georgia




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Sources of Strength has been shown to:

- Increase youth-adult connectedness
- Increase in Peer Leader's school engagement
- Peer Leaders in larger schools were four times more likely to refer a suicidal friend to an adult
- Increase positive perceptions of adult support for suicidal youth and the acceptability of seeking help

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### Practical Matters

Needs:

- Team of adult advisors
- Team of peer leaders
- Ongoing meetings, communication and contact
- Ongoing communication with youth
- Initial training for adults and peers
- Funding (initially \$5,000 for training and start-up) and yearly funding of \$500 + materials)

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### SIGNS OF SUICIDE (SOS)

- The SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program (SOS) is a universal, school-based depression awareness and suicide prevention program designed for middle-school (ages 11–13) or high-school (ages 13–17) students.

The goals are to

- 1) decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing student knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression,
- 2) encourage personal help-seeking and/or help-seeking on behalf of a friend,
- 3) reduce the stigma of mental illness and acknowledge the importance of seeking help or treatment,
- 4) engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention through "gatekeeper" education, and
- 5) encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships to support student mental health.

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The SOS Programs will help you and other school staff members **facilitate an open discussion with students about mental health** and **identify those students who need further evaluation.**

Through research we have learned that a positive relationship with an adult is one of the most critical factors in preventing student violence, suicide, and bullying. The SOS Program encourages students to identify a trusted adult in their life such as a school counselor, teacher, or coach, and to turn to them when in need.

Also included in the SOS Program is a validated screening tool to assess students for the signs of depression. The screening tool is not diagnostic but indicates the presence of symptoms consistent with depression.

While we highly recommend using both the screening tool and the educational video components, schools are not required to use the screening tool. The 40% reduction in suicide attempts in the randomized controlled study is a result of schools using both the screening and education components.

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### SOS Gatekeeper Training

- Plan, Prepare, Prevent, a 90-minute interactive course providing in-depth suicide prevention education and guidance on implementation of the SOS Program. The online module offers free contact hours towards licensure for some school professionals.
- The second tool is the “Training Trusted Adults” DVD, ideal for parent, community, and staff trainings. This video details the issue of depression and suicide among youth and emphasizes the important role parents and school personnel can play in helping at-risk students. The DVD comes with a discussion guide to help you start community conversation.

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### SOS Practical Matters

- High school, middle school and screening tools under \$500. Sold separately
- Need buy-in from schools to bring the program into the schools
- Gatekeeper training and family programs are suitable for community use as well

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### LIFELINES PREVENTION

- Objectives:
- Introduce strategies to members of the school community so they can more readily identify potentially suicidal adolescents, know how to initially respond to them, and know how to rapidly obtain help for them
- Introduce strategies and a curriculum so that adolescents are aware of and have immediate access to helping resources and seek such help as an alternative to suicidal actions.

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The training teaches participants to implement the four components of the program: Administrative Readiness Consultation, Training for School Faculty and Staff, Parent Workshop and Student Curriculum (implemented after first three components)

The four session curriculum teaches students

- Relevant facts about suicide, including warning signs
- How to recognize the threat of suicidal thoughts and behavior and to take troubled peers seriously
- How to respond to troubled peers
- To demonstrate positive attitudes about intervention and help-seeking behaviors
- To identify resources, be able to name one helpful adult, and know how resources will respond

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### LEADS

LEADS is intended for students in grades 9-12 and creates opportunities for conversations within the classroom around suicide and depression and the stigma surrounding suicide. Included in the curriculum is a Teacher's Guide, group and individual activities, suicide prevention resources and a template for a school suicide crisis management plan.

The curriculum focuses on signs and symptoms of depression, identification of warning signs of suicide and barriers and benefits to seeking help. LEADS emphasizes linking students and teachers to school and community resources and empowering students to get help for themselves or for others.

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### QUESTION, PERSUADE, AND REFER (QPR)

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## PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

### SOURCES OF STRENGTH

#### THE GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME

#### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

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## THE GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME

- The Good Behavior Game is an evidence-based behavioral classroom management strategy that helps children learn how to work together to create a positive learning environment. It promotes each child's positive behavior by rewarding student teams for complying with criteria set for appropriate behavior, such as working quietly, following directions, or being polite to each other. The team-based approach uses peer encouragement to help children follow rules and learn how to be good students. It also enables teachers to build strong academic skills and positive behaviors among students.
- The Good Behavior Game (GBG) is a team-based classroom behavior management strategy that helps young children master the role of student while developing the discipline needed to sit still, pay attention and complete their school work.

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## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

- The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is a nationally and internationally recognized parenting and family strengthening program for high-risk and general population families. SFP is an evidence-based family skills training program found to significantly improve parenting skills and family relationships, reduce problem behaviors, delinquency and alcohol and drug abuse in children and to improve social competencies and school performance. Child maltreatment also decreases as parents strengthen bonds with their children and learn more effective parenting skills.

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SOURCES OF STRENGTH

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Discussion

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