

Suicide Prevention in Schools

Climate Connection is a monthly publication
of the NYS Center for School Safety.




CLIMATE CONNECTION

Information and strategies
linking Climate and School Safety.

According to NYS Department of Health [Community Health Indicator Reports](#)...

1700 

New Yorkers die by suicide each year, of which about **70-80** are **15-19** year olds.

1000+ youth  ages 15-19 are hospitalized each year in NY for self-inflicted injuries.

Help is Available!

Formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, **988** provides 24/7 talk and text support for all mental health concerns, including suicide. Visit the NYS Office of Mental Health [webpage](#) for tools to share this important resource with your school community.

**Join the
GOT5
Challenge**

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

Schools can help raise student awareness about the Crisis Text Line by enrolling in the [GOT5 Challenge](#). Be one of the first 200 schools and get promotional resources from Crisis Text.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month and a great time to raise awareness about suicide and assess your school's suicide prevention policies and practices. The NYS Education Department's [Guide for Suicide Prevention for School Personnel](#), released in 2022, provides concrete steps to develop a comprehensive plan for supporting students experiencing suicide-related thoughts and behaviors.

Guide for Suicide Prevention for School Personnel

Companion Guide to the New York State
Office of Mental Health's *A Guide for Suicide
Prevention in New York Schools*

2022



The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Office of Student Support Services


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

- The NYS Office of Mental Health and the [Suicide Prevention Center of NY](#) have published [A Guide to Suicide Prevention in New York State Schools](#) with additional information and resources.
- To promote awareness, visit [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources for NYS Schools, Families and Students](#) from the NYS Education Department's Office of Student Support Services.
- School teams can join an [Out of the Darkness Community Walk](#) with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). AFSP also provides school and community presentations, and support for survivors of suicide loss.

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The first step to preventing suicide, is to **EDUCATE** students, families and school staff. Adults are often concerned about talking openly to youth about suicide. However, providing developmentally appropriate information that stresses the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult and practicing healthy coping strategies can save a life. Similarly, adults, both at school and in the home, should be knowledgeable about suicide so they can best support students who struggle with mental health challenges and other risk factors that leave them vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

ACTION STEPS to EDUCATE: Help students develop positive coping strategies with a robust Social-Emotional Learning curriculum. Visit [NYSSED](#) for benchmarks and resources. For parent education, consider the program, *Not My Kid*, from the [Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#).

Most students experiencing suicidal thoughts exhibit warning signs (i.e. verbal, behavioral, written). It is important that ALL school staff are educated to **RECOGNIZE and REFER** students to school-based mental health professionals trained in risk assessment; intervention practices, such as safety planning; and to collaborate with families and community providers.



ACTION STEPS to RECOGNIZE and REFER: Visit the [Suicide Prevention Center of NY](#) to request two trainings: *Suicide Safety for Teachers and School Staff* to educate staff about warning signs and school protocols for referral, and *Helping Students at Risk* to build the assessment and intervention skills of school-based mental health professionals.



Managing suicide risk is an emotional experience for students, families and school personnel involved in the intervention process. School Crisis Teams can help establish policies and initiatives that prioritize **SUPPORT** for the mental health and wellness of everyone involved. For students, this includes giving them a voice in deciding what information can be shared with teachers and other school personnel, and identifying accommodations that support learning while they focus on their mental health. For families, schools should consider a plan for regular check-ins by a trusted staff member, and an on-going assessment of the families' needs. Finally, school staff, including those who made the referral and the mental health staff conducting risk assessments, must be given an opportunity to debrief following concerns about suicide. Together, these strategies promote safety and healing, and help to reduce the stigma that too often impedes help-seeking for suicide and other mental health concerns.

ACTION STEP to SUPPORT: Review the [NYSSED Guide](#) for information about School Crisis Teams and the [NYS OMH Guide](#) for student interventions strategies.