

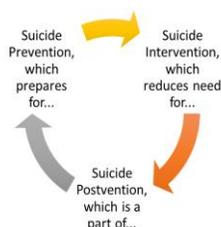


September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Suicide, particularly in teens, is a public health crisis. Though the public may see severe depression and suicidality as being beyond the scope of teens, these issues are of real concern for school-aged youth. With last year's release of Netflix's 13 Reasons Why, the conversations around teen suicide and its prevention have come to the forefront of many minds. Using this nationwide awareness, it is important to understand the role that adults play in preventing and intervening for teens before or during crisis and how to proceed following a death by suicide occurring in one's community (postvention).

What Schools and Communities Can Do: Prevention, Intervention, Postvention

Teens spend much of their time at schools – this means that the adults who work in these buildings have an up-close look at how these teens normally behave – their habits, relationships, and importantly, when something is happening that raises red flags. There are a large number of resources available to schools for education and outreach for their students. Resources and programming are often broken down into three tiers: prevention, intervention, and postvention.



Prevention: The first tier in teen suicide resources and education is prevention. This focuses on awareness of signs, symptoms, and deviation from normal adolescent development. Direct impact of prevention services allows for screening and identification of students suffering from mental health disorders and referring them to mental health services within and/or outside of the school.

Intervention: The focus of this tier of services is to help a student who is at high risk of suicide, has previously attempted suicide, or attempts suicide on school property. Intervention can be complicated for schools as many teachers and school staff must respect legal and ethical boundaries for students. Training school staff on how to appropriately handle crisis situations, inform parents, maintain the safety of other students, and get the student in crisis to the help he or she needs is crucial to safe and healthy school environments.

Postvention: This tier begins after a school or community has lost a young person to suicide. Having a plan in place before a crisis happens allows the school staff to have set procedures and expectations, easing the response process during a difficult time. Postvention also wraps around and can be used as prevention. Addressing the loss of a student to suicide helps prevent a contagion effect, wherein the death of one student by suicide causes several more to occur in the school or community.

For a list of resources by county, please visit continuum.oberlinkconsulting.net.

The Project AWARE Ohio team includes partners in 3 county ESCs. If you are from those local areas and want more information about Project AWARE services, please contact:

Cuyahoga County ESC: Mary Wise; (216) 901-4201; mary.wise@esc-cc.org

Warren County ESC: Vycki Haught; (513) 379-2310; vycki.haught@warrencountyesc.com

Wood County ESC: Angela Patchen; (419) 354-9010 x228; apatchen@wcesc.org

For information about Project AWARE in other regions of the state, please contact:

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