

Directing Change



Program & Film Contest



SUICIDE PREVENTION FACT SHEET

Statistics on Help-Seeking and Suicide Behavior in California

- Student programs that address suicide can play a significant role in reducing risk for suicide when they are used in conjunction with other strategies¹.
- Research indicates that most youth who are suicidal talk with peers about their concerns rather than with adults²:
 - A recently published review of the research on help-seeking by young people found that although 40-68 percent of young people experiencing suicidal ideation turn to peer and family for assistance, fewer than 25 percent of the peers tell an adult about a friend's problem or urge the young person in crisis to go to an adult for help³.
- Between 1991 and 2010, suicide deaths by California youth have fallen from a rate of 6.5/100,000 to 4/100,000.⁴
- Based on responses from the 2011 CA Healthy Kids Survey, 17% of 11th graders and 19% of 9th graders reported having seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 month period.⁵
- Number of youth in California who died by suicide in 2010: 129 (a rate of 4/100,000)⁶
- In 2011, 105,142 calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline were made from California.⁷ The majority of these calls were answered by crisis centers in California.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools*, <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA12-4669/SMA12-4669.pdf> (May 2013)

² Michelmore, L., & Hindley, P. (2012). Help-seeking for suicidal thoughts and self-harm in young people: A systematic review. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 42(5):507-24.

³ ibid

⁴ CA Department of Public Health-Safe and Active Communities Branch, CA Electronic Violent Death Reporting System, <http://epicenter.cdph.ca.gov>

⁵ CA Health Kids Survey, 2009-2010, http://chks.wested.org/resources/a-text_0910.pdf (May 2013)

⁶ CA Department of Public Health-Safe and Active Communities Branch, CA Electronic Violent Death Reporting System, <http://epicenter.cdph.ca.gov>

⁷ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (2012). California Call Volume Report: January, 01, 2011 – December 31, 2011. Report generated by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline on August 8, 2012.

Recommended Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-8255**
 - www.suicidepreventionlifeline.com
- Know the Signs: www.SuicideisPreventable.org
 - For information on warning signs, how to find the words to offer help and local resources in every county.

Safe and Effective Messaging on Suicide⁸

- Suicide is a complex issue and research shows that certain presentations of suicide may influence a person towards suicide behavior, or towards seeking help. Directing Change encourages all students to apply best practices based on *Safe and Effective Messaging Recommendations for Suicide Prevention*, as published by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

Recommendations for Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention:

“Do’s”

- Emphasizing help-seeking behavior
- Focus on prevention
- List the warning signs, as well as risk and protective factors of suicide
- Highlight effective treatments for underlying mental health problems

“Don’ts”

- Don’t glorify suicide or romanticize suicide or people who have died by suicide
 - Don’t normalize suicide by presenting it as a common event
 - Don’t present suicide as an inexplicable act or explain it a result of stress only
 - Don’t focus on personal details of people who have died by suicide
 - Don’t present overly detailed descriptions of suicide victims or methods of suicide
- For more information on *Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention*, visit: <http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/SafeMessagingrevised.pdf>

Further Information Regarding Youth Suicide Prevention

(Based on information found in the SAMHSA *Suicide Prevention: A Toolkit for High Schools*⁹)

- **Warning signs** are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Most people show one or more warning signs, so it is important to know the signs and take them seriously especially if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

⁸ Suicide Prevention Resource Center, *Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention*, <http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/SafeMessagingrevised.pdf> (May 2013)

⁹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools*, <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA12-4669/SMA12-4669.pdf> (May 2013)

Seek immediate help from a mental health provider, 9-1-1 or your local emergency provider, or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) when you hear or see any one of these behaviors:

- Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- Someone looking for ways to kill themselves: seeking access to pills, weapons, or other means
- Someone talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person

Warning Signs

- Hopelessness—expresses no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life
- Rage, anger, seeking revenge
- Recklessness or risky behavior, seemingly without thinking
- Expressions of feeling trapped—like there's no way out
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or society
- Anxiety, agitation, inability to sleep, or constant sleep
- Dramatic mood changes
- No reason for living, no sense of purpose in life