

Professional Learning Activity (PLA): Suicide Prevention

Learning Objectives

- Participants will identify key factors of suicide prevention.
- Participants will explore warning signs related to suicide.
- Participants will identify at least one method for responding to others who may be considering suicide.

Necessary Materials

- Internet access
- Conversation Notes handout (one per partnership or small group)

Intention and Awareness

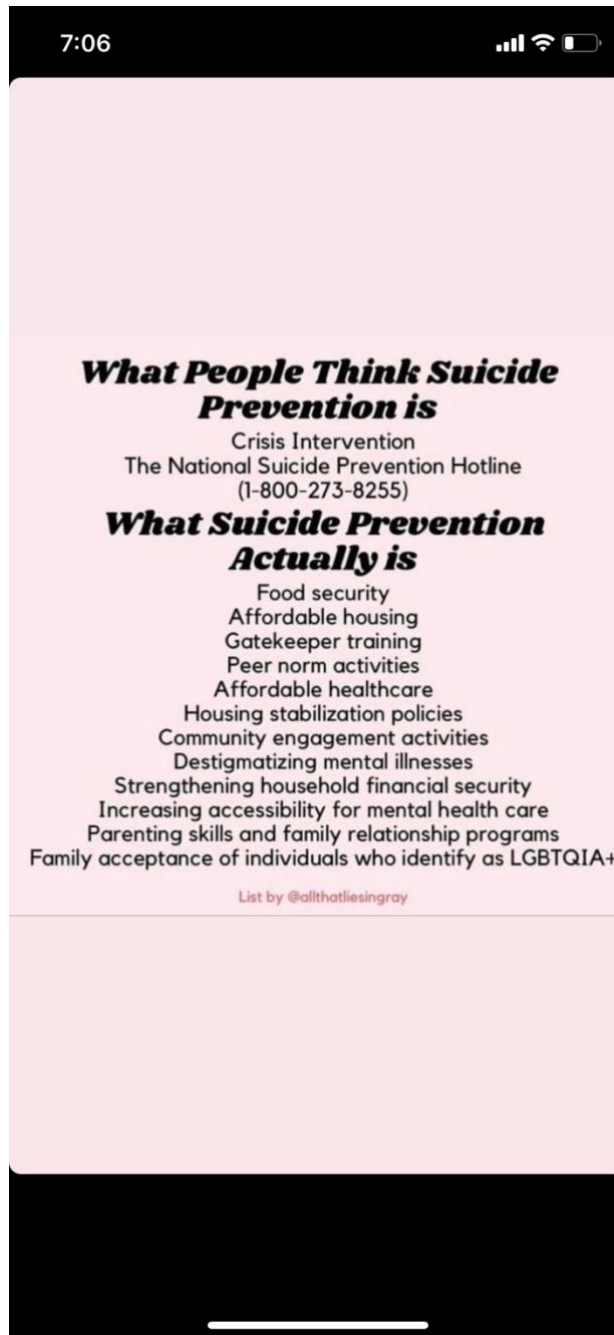
Before you begin, consider taking notes as you work through the content on this topic. To get started, take a look at the following introductory videos.

[What Do You Know About Mental Illness?](#)

[Preventing Youth Suicide](#)

Now, take a moment to consider your awareness about the topic of suicide prevention and set your learning intention with these three questions. You may want to jot your responses down for reflection later.

- What is your motivation for increasing your knowledge about suicide prevention?
- What do you already know about the topic?
- What is one learning goal you have related to the topic of suicide prevention?



Investigation

“Suicide itself is not a mental disorder, but one of the most important causes of suicide is mental illness – most often Depression, Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression), Schizophrenia, and Substance Use Disorders.”

- [TeenMentalHealth.org](https://www.teenmentalhealth.org)

To learn more about the warning signs of suicide and actions to take when you encounter someone who may be considering suicide, complete the following activities:

1. Review the [Infographic: Warning Signs](#) from the [National Institute of Mental Health](#). Place a reminder in your calendar to review these warning signs on a quarterly basis.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:
The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

TALKING ABOUT:

- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

FEELING:

- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:

- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying good bye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK

Crisis Text Line
Text "HELLO" to 741741

 National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

NIMH Identifier No. OM 19-4316

2. Read “[5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain](#)” from [NIMH](#) and “[Help Someone Else](#)” from [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). Consider sharing these resources with colleagues.
3. Take a look at “[Suicide Prevention Resources](#)” from the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#), and then bookmark the webpage on your computer.
4. Reflect on what you’ve learned. How will this information impact your professional practice or your personal life?

Application

Now that you are aware of the warning signs of suicide and have gathered a few resources and strategies around suicide prevention, it is important to apply this new information to your role or school environment. Choose one of the following activities based on the learning goal you set at the beginning of the PLA and/or the needs of the stakeholders in your school.

Option 1: Responding to Death by Suicide

To begin this option, read "[Guidelines for Schools Responding to a Death by Suicide](#)" from the [National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement \(NCSCB\)](#).

Next, review the plan your school has in place in the event of a suicide. Considering the information from all the resources you've reviewed, make note of where the plan aligns with the materials you've read and where the school plan could be improved. Think about sharing findings with your administrator for potential procedure/policy changes.

If your school does not have a plan in the event of a suicide, outline a plan based on what you've read and learned. Consider meeting with your administration to communicate the necessity of a plan for your school community.

Option 2: Resources

For this option, compile a list of resources on the topic of suicide prevention for colleagues, families, or students. You can include any of the resources we've provided, and of course, any you've found on your own. We strongly encourage you to find local resources and add them to the list you share. Your list of resources can be in any format you prefer, but the goal is to share the resources with others, so electronic formats work best.



If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, call [1-800-SUICIDE](tel:1-800-SUICIDE) (1-800-784-2433) or [1-800-273-TALK](tel:1-800-273-TALK) (1-800-273-8255).

This will connect you with a crisis center in your area: 1-800-784-2433 or review this [website](#).

Need additional information on Suicide Prevention?

[Suicide Prevention via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Suicide Statistics via the National Institute for Mental Health](#)

[Understanding Suicide Risks among Children and Preteens: A Synthesis Workshop](#)

Reflection

First, start by reflecting on the Conversation Note prompts in the attached handout.

Next, review the Learning Objectives at the beginning of this PLA. Assess your achievement of those objectives.

Return to the learning goal you set at the beginning of this activity and reflect on if you have met the goal you set.

Have you met the learning objectives and your learning goal for this activity?

- If so, congratulations!

If not, how might you learn more about the topic?

- What resources do you need?
- Who may be able to help you find the answers you seek?

For more opportunities to learn about mental health, Learners Edge offers the following:

[PD 141: Mental Health Basics for School Staff \(10 hours\)](#) or [OL 854: Caring for the Mental Health of Your Students \(1 credit\)](#)

[Course 5102-Anxiety Awareness: Empowering Students with Help and Hope \(3 credits\)](#)

[Webinar Series: Understanding Anxiety](#)

Professional Learning Activity (PLA): Suicide Prevention - Conversation Notes

| Discussion Prompts | Notes |
|---|-------|
| <i>As you are comfortable, share the learning goal you had for this PLA and any previous knowledge or experience you've had with suicide prevention.</i> | |
| <i>Share one takeaway from the articles and videos you reviewed that will positively impact your professional practice or personal life moving forward including why it was impactful to you.</i> | |
| <i>How will you implement and use ONE thing you learned from this activity in the next week?</i> | |
| <i>What more needs to be done in your school specific to mental health and suicide prevention? What ideas do you have? How might you help or learn more?</i> | |



