

# Signs of Suicide: Suicide Prevention Program Among Middle School Students

Keschia Daussy - Professional School Counseling - University of North Carolina at Pembroke

## What is Signs of Suicide (SOS)?

“A nationally accredited and evidence-based suicide prevention program that is offered by The Center for Suicide Prevention and Research at Nationwide Children’s Hospital to middle and high schools”  
(Nationwide Children’s, 2020)

Teaches students, school staff, parents/guardians how to recognize and identify signs of depression and suicide as well as how to take the appropriate action

Developed from MindWise Innovations by Mental Health Professionals



## Evaluation Results

- Effective in initiating help seeking among students
- Safe for students
- Received and rated positively by users
- Results proved a reduction of self-reported attempts by 40-64% in a randomized controlled setting after program implemented (MindWise Innovations. (n.d.)).

## Suicide Prevention in Schools

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for the age ranges of 10-34 years (National Institute of Mental Health, 2018)

Suicide prevention programs are important for maintaining student safety inside and out of schools

Suicide and depressions can affect anyone regardless of background, culture, race, gender, etc.

For North Carolina, in 2020, the number of suicides for the ages of 15-24 was 13.3 persons out of 100,000 (Nationwide Childrens, 2020)

## Goals of Program

- Decreases suicide attempts and suicidal ideation by students
- Increases ability to identify signs and symptoms of depression or suicide within themselves or peers around them and to respond in the safest and most appropriate way
- Encourages students to seek help for themselves or a friend and to start conversations about mental health issues
- Reduces stigma associated with mental health issues by communicating that they are treatable conditions
- Teaches not only students but school staff and parents that suicide is preventable by promoting the ACT message

## Program Training Components

Training: Suicide prevention training is provided to all school staff to maximize the number of adults knowledgeable and capable of responding to students displaying warning signs of suicide

Peer-To-Peer Middle Program: DVDs, PowerPoints, guides for discussion, and any other relevant supplementary materials that are provided

Screening: A brief screening tool is used to identify students who are at-risk for suicide, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, or depression

- Qualified school staff will follow-up if positive screen and will outsource to a mental health professional as needed

Consultation: ongoing support is available to schools regarding implementation of program, risk assessment and consultation about policies related to suicide prevention and crisis response



## References:

- Americas Health Rankings. (n.d.). *Suicide in North Carolina*. Americas Health Rankings. <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Suicide/state/NC>
- Hansen, R. (2020). Finish your story [online image]. My God, My Music, My Life. <https://mygodmymusicmylife.com/tag/reach-out-speak-up/>
- Lake Dallas High School. (n.d.). SOS signs of suicide prevention program [online image]. Lake Dallas High School. <https://www.lidsd.net/Page/7059>
- MindWise Innovations. (n.d.). *Suicide prevention programs overview*. MindWise Innovations. <https://www.mindwise.org/what-we-offer/suicide-prevention-programs/>
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2018). *Suicide*. National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>
- Nationwide Children’s. (2020). *Center for suicide prevention and research*. Nationwide Children’s. <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/research/areas-of-research/suicide-prevention-and-research>
- True Recovery. (2016). Suicide prevention is everybody’s business [online image]. True Recovery. <https://truerecovery.com/blog/suicide-prevention-guide/>

## Implementation of SOS Program

### Implementation

- School will send home a permission form with information and goals of the Signs of Suicide Program and whether a parent/guardian would like their child to participate
- Trained school personnel will implement with materials provided (online video, discussion prompts, screening forms)
- Should take the amount of one class period for all activities
- Complete suicide screening form after discussion

If you’re concerned about yourself or a friend, don’t be afraid to ACT.



MindWise.org/ACT

### **Acknowledge**

that you’re seeing signs of depression and/or suicide in yourself or others

### **Care**

By letting them know you’re worried about them

### **Tell**

Tell a trusted adult