

- [Introduce yourself and your school suicide prevention program]
- [Introduce YSPP] – YSPP started because a 16 year old boy ended his life. His parents became advocates for suicide prevention and lobbied the state legislature to get funding for a youth suicide prevention plan. YSPP puts the plan into action by raising awareness about the problem of youth suicide, educating students, parents, teachers and others who work with youth and training individuals about how to intervene when someone is at risk for suicide.

**What's the goal?**

- Recognize when a friend is in trouble
- Know what you can do to help
- Know where to find that help

Knowing this could **save a life.**

www.yspp.org 2

- By the end of this class we want you to be able to:
  - Recognize when a friend is in trouble
  - Know what you can do as a friend
  - Know where to find help
- Feel free to ask questions as we go through the presentation. If at any point you feel triggered or need to step outside or check in with someone, please feel free to do so. Some students find that they need to talk individually to a teacher or counselor after participating in this lesson. That's okay. Think about who you might want to talk with. **[Name anyone who has been designated to be available to talk one-on-one]**

## Why the Concern?

- Two Washington State Youth (10-24 years old) die by suicide each week.
- 19% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 17% of seniors reported seriously considering suicide in the last year.
- Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death.
- 80% of people who die by suicide have given off clues or talked about suicide.



[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

3

- So, how big is this problem in Washington state? Let's look at some of the facts.
- **[Review stats on the slide]**
- There are lots of taboos associated with suicide so the facts aren't well known and myths are thought to be true.
- We want to help teach you about what to look for and where to go to for help so that we have less youth making attempts and dying by suicide in our state.
- It's important to know this information so that suicide can be prevented!
- You can find out more on the Washington Department of Health website or by visiting the Healthy Youth Survey website.

What is **STRESS**?

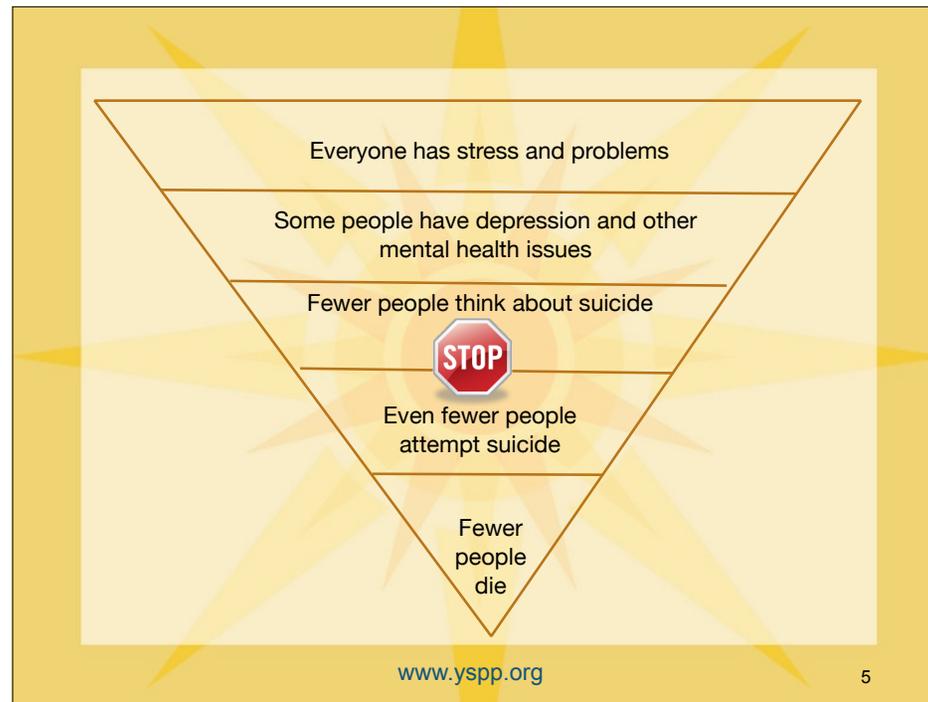
➤ The way our minds and bodies respond to challenges and threats



How does stress affect us?

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org) 4

- Stress refers to the ways our minds and bodies respond to challenges and threats.
- [If you have time, do this activity here: Draw a picture of a person with a large thought bubble coming from their head. Explain to the group that stress has an effect on our bodies and our minds. Ask for volunteers to come up and write or draw physical and mental effects of stress]
- [If you have limited time, do a short brainstorm and simply list the answers on the



- Let me ask you something: Who here has never had a problem or experienced stress? **[Ask for show of hands]** Exactly! Everyone experiences stress and when we're scared to talk about suicide we may think that suicide is inevitable when something bad happens to a person. But, that isn't true. There *are* ways to prevent suicide and this diagram shows that people are doing just that.
- Depression or other mental health issues aren't experienced by everyone, but are still fairly common - it's estimated that about one in eight adolescents is experiencing depression at any given time, and there are other mental health

## What is DEPRESSION?

- Feelings of intense sadness that last at least two weeks and keep a person from functioning “normally” or being themselves
- A treatable illness that is **not** the person’s fault

### **Causes:**

- Brain chemistry
- Situations and experiences

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

6

- This is a simple explanation of depression. [**Go over definition of depression and causes on slide**]

## Signs & Symptoms of Depression

- Anxiety or irritability
- Changes in eating/sleeping
- Physical complaints
- Poor school performance
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Moodiness, hopelessness, withdrawal



[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

7

- How many of you have known someone who was depressed? [**Ask for a show of hands**].
- How did you know that they were depressed? [**Invite responses from the class - be sure that answers include sad or depressed mood, anger-irritability, trouble concentrating, crying, changes in eating and sleeping behaviors, physical complaints, drug and alcohol use, self-harm, and thoughts of suicide**].
- Depression is when feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and despair persist over time and interfere with day-to-day functioning.
- Everyone gets sad or feels down at times.
- Depression becomes a concern when that bad or sad mood lasts for several

### **What experiences could trigger thoughts of suicide?**

- Ongoing stress like being bullied, being abused or feeling socially isolated
- The death of a family member, community member or friend
- A breakup
- Another stressful event like getting arrested, divorce, experiencing violence, failing a class or unplanned pregnancy

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

8

- Not everyone who is depressed has thoughts of suicide. Usually there is a trigger, a stressful event in their life that also increases the risk. These experiences are linked to depression and suicide risk.
- This is not the same for everyone.
- Some of these are common experiences (like breakups and sudden difficult events), but these are harder for someone who is already vulnerable.

Signs of suicidal thinking:  
The **FACTS**

**F**eelings  
Sad, lonely, hopeless, in pain, moody, irritable

**A**ctions  
Pushing away friends and family, giving away important possessions, using alcohol or drugs, making unsafe decisions, making or researching suicide plans, making art or writing about death

**C**hanges  
Changes in school performance, changes in appearance or hygiene, changes in personality or attitude, just not seeming like themselves

**T**hreats  
Saying they're going to kill themselves, saying goodbye

**S**ituations  
Has the person had a crisis or trigger situation, especially in the last couple of weeks?

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org) 9

- **[Ask for show of hands]** How many of you have ever been concerned that someone you knew might be suicidal.
- How did you know?
- What did the person say or do that concerned you?
  
- **[Go over the FACTS framework]**
- The FACTS is an acronym that stands for **F**eelings, **A**ctions, **C**hanges, **T**hreats and **S**ituations. These are some helpful signs to look for when you are concerned

## What is NOT Helpful

- Ignoring or dismissing the issue**
  - "Oh, let's talk about something else."
  - "You'll meet another girl and forget this one; you're a great guy."
- Acting shocked or embarrassed**
  - "You aren't REALLY thinking of suicide, are you?"
- Challenging or debating**
  - "So go ahead; see if things really DO get better."
  - "Don't you know that it is wrong to kill yourself?"
- Giving harmful advice**
  - "Let's go get drunk and forget about all our problems."

www.yspp.org 10

- Now that you know what to look for, here are some things to keep in mind that most people are tempted to do, but aren't very helpful to someone who's thinking about suicide.
- Why do you think these statements aren't helpful? How might they make the person feel? **[Invite responses from group]**
- These kinds of reactions can be silencing and hurtful and makes it less likely that the person will want to open up and talk about what's going on with them.



- Let's take a look at your role in helping a friend who might be at risk for suicide.
- If you have a friend thinking about suicide or who has talked about it – it is serious! You have a role to play in helping your friend, but it is not to be the adult or to be a counselor. **[Go over friend and adult roles on the slide]**
- There is a very important role for a friend that includes being a good friend and educating yourself about suicide so you know what to look for and when to be concerned: What does it mean to “be a good friend?” **[Invite responses from group]**
- The adult's role is also to be able to assess the seriousness of the suicide talk. When the crisis has resolved they can also teach new skills for coping and dealing

## S.A.G.

- **Show you care**
  - ✓ “I’m concerned for you; I want to help.”
- **Ask the question**
  - ✓ “Are you thinking about suicide?”
- **Get help**
  - ✓ Do not leave them alone
  - ✓ “You are not alone, let me help you find help.”



[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

12

- There are three helpful phrases to say to a suicidal friend and we want to teach you what they are and have you practice saying them.
- All you have to do is remember these three strategies in order to be helpful to a suicidal friend.
- You show someone you care when you listen carefully to what they are saying and tell them that you are concerned about their feelings. What are some other ways you can show you care? **[Solicit some responses and reinforce helpful ones]**
- The only way to really know if someone is suicidal is to ask, “are you thinking of suicide?” The question may be difficult to ask but it is important that you ask it in a direct, caring and non-judgmental way. It is important to use the word suicide and

## Resources for Help

- Trusted adult friend
- School counselor
- Teachers or coaches
- Faith community
- Older sibling
- Parents or other close family
- For Immediate Help:  
Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK  
LGBTQ 1-866-4U-TREVOR



[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org) 13

- Let's talk about the resources that are available for a suicidal teen. There are resources in the school as well as in the community.
- Where would you go to if you were worried about a friend? **[Invite responses from group]**
- The crisis hot-line is available 24-hours a day. Talking on the phone may feel more comfortable to some people than sharing concerns face-to-face. We are going to pass out help cards that we want you to keep with you. The web site for the youth suicide prevention program is on the front of the card. It has lots of information about suicide prevention. On the back of the card are the three things that you can do to help a suicidal friend.

## Practice scenario

Your friend Carlos has always been the class clown. But ever since his dad got sick a couple of months ago, he's been quiet and serious. He sometimes acts sad and has even quit the soccer team. You think he might be depressed.

Carlos has been dating Jamie since school started. He told you he loves Jamie so much he would want to die if their relationship ended. You just found out they broke up last night and you're going to see Carlos next period in lunch.

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

14

- Now, we're going to practice these skills. **[Ask a volunteer to read the scenario out loud]**
- **[If you don't have time, this scenario and the questions are on the handout. A teacher may want to give it as homework or as classwork on a future day]**

**What are the FACTS?**

**F**eelings  
Sad, serious, depressed

**A**ctions  
Quit the soccer team

**C**hanges  
Went from being the class clown to acting quiet and serious

**T**hreats  
Said he'd want to die if he & Jamie broke up

**S**ituations  
Dad is sick, important relationship just ended

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org) 15

- [Remind the students about the **FACTS** and talk them through what feelings, actions, changes, threats, and situations they see that are concerning]
- Do you think Carlos **MIGHT** be thinking about suicide? [**We want them to get to a YES answer**]



- Now that you are concerned about Carlos, it's time to use the three steps. **[Invite responses from the group for the following questions]**
- How would you show Carlos that you care?
- How would you ask the question?
- How would you get help?

## Important Points To Recap!

- Youth suicide is a big problem in Washington.
- Most young people who experience stress and depression *do not* attempt suicide.
- Many teens in crisis go to a friend first. You are a key part of the support network for a peer in crisis!
- Using **SAG** and connecting your peer with a helpful adult can save their life, BUT...
- **Another person's choices are not your fault.**

- [Wrap up with this slide, emphasizing the last point about not being responsible for another person's choices and that it's important to do what we can]

**Remember: S.A.G**

- **Show you care**
- **Ask the question**
- **Get help**

**Knowing the signs could  
save a life.**

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org) 18

•Remember the helping steps. We know that you may not currently know anyone who is having thoughts of suicide, but you never know when this information is going to be helpful.

# Have more questions?

You can contact me at:

206-478-3038

[charhys@yspp.org](mailto:charhys@yspp.org)

[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)



[www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org)

19

- Are there any remaining questions?
- Thanks for being such a great audience and having the courage to talk openly about suicide. We believe that suicide is preventable and that we make a difference in the lives of our friends.