Students and schools create a safety net to prevent youth suicide

YOUTH SUICIDE

Youth suicide is a serious but largely preventable public health problem. In the U.S.:
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 10-14; about 4,600 lives are lost each year.
- More young people survive suicide attempts and suffer non-fatal injuries than those who die from suicide.

In Rhode Island, 31 youth ages 0-18 died from suicide from 2004-2012. In 2011, surveyed high school students reported that:
- 8.7% had attempted suicide one or more times and 12.3% had seriously considered attempting suicide, and
- 3.9% had made a suicide attempt that resulted in an injury, poisoning or overdose requiring medical attention.

PROGRAM

The Rhode Island Youth Suicide Prevention Project (RIYSPP) reaches youth and young adults ages 15-24 in 6 large cities that have high rates of youth suicide risk factors (e.g., poverty, large minority populations, child abuse/neglect, over-representation of youth in juvenile justice/child welfare systems). The RIYSPP provides a safety net for at-risk youth by instituting screening, identification and referral protocols, training gatekeepers, and conducting a media campaign.

Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR) training was conducted among thousands of public and private school teachers, administrators and staff, as well as local organizations serving youth, so they can recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and use 3 simple, life-saving steps to question, persuade and refer someone to help.

Signs of Suicide (SOS) – a nationally-recognized best-practice, evidence-based youth suicide prevention program – was conducted in 4 Providence metro area high schools and 7 community organizations.

IMPACT

Since 2010, the Rhode Island Youth Suicide Prevention Project has:
- Referred over 550 youth at risk for suicide to appropriate services via contact with QPR-trained teachers/school staff in 38 schools and 15 community organizations,
- Trained over 3,300 adult teachers/school staff (located in 62% of Rhode Island’s school districts) in QPR, and over 750 youth in 6 schools in SOS, and
- Recorded 0 suicide deaths among youth ages 18 and under in the state for 2013.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAM FEATURED ABOVE
www.health.ri.gov/violence/about/suicide
www.risas.org

20 Lives Saved

To mark its recent 20th anniversary, the Safe States Alliance is highlighting 20 of the many lives saved through injury and violence prevention over the last two decades. These examples show the significant impact that injury and violence prevention has on the lives of real people, every day.

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