

YOUTH SUICIDE

Rhode Island Department of Health

Rhode Island Youth Suicide Prevention Project, Violence and Injury
Prevention Program

Rhode Island Student Assistance Services



SAFE STATES

*Injury & Violence Prevention
Saves Lives*



Lives Saved

A 17-year-old high school student told her school counselor that a friend had posted a suicidal message on Facebook the night before. She remembered the Acknowledge-Care-Tell message from a *Signs of Suicide* (SOS) training she completed at school two years prior. The school counselor (trained in *Question, Persuade & Refer* [QPR]) informed the school nurse and administrator (both QPR-trained) and determined that the friend was not in school and her parents could not be reached. The school's social worker and psychologist (both QPR-trained) went to the friend's house, conducted an assessment with her, and connected her to a community mental health center. A safety plan was put in place. The friend receives ongoing counseling at the center, and is followed by her school's wellness team (all QPR-trained).

“ Students often avoid telling an adult out of fear of being disloyal. The SOS program empowers youth to know how to help their friends and be heroes. ”

Melissa Mastrostefano, High School Counselor

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.