

Readiness to Prevent Student Suicide

School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students is a project by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness an applied research center at The Pennsylvania State University and is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity Grant number HE1254-19-0009.

For more information click on the links below:

<https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>

<https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>

<https://www.psu.edu/>

<https://dodeagrants.org/>

Our goal is to provide school personnel with free, evidence-based resources to support military-connected students. This training is part of our Suicide Prevention series.

Important Reminders

Before starting this training, please read the items below carefully and check the box in front of each item to indicate your understanding.

- The following content discusses suicide and may be upsetting to some individuals.
- Follow all district, local, state, and federal regulations. This training is **NOT** intended to replace or override existing procedures or laws.

Introduction

What is the purpose of this training?

Student support personnel (i.e., school psychologists, school counselors, and school nurses) are charged with wide-ranging roles as they serve children with a variety of academic, socio-emotional, and behavioral needs. Despite the tireless efforts of training programs to prepare student support personnel for their varied roles in the schools, it is difficult to keep the pace. Having so many different jobs to do can be referred to as role saturation. With demands for proficient assessment practices, understanding of program evaluation, consultation, and intervention planning of other kinds, sometimes the nuances of social-emotional and mental health go under-represented in training.

In addition to role saturation, student support personnel also experience role confusion. It is not uncommon for personnel to be confused about the degree to which they are expected to participate in the prevention, identification, and intervention with students who are at risk for suicide and self-harm. For example, sometimes school psychologists are regularly consulted on these matters and included in student assistant programs or building crisis teams and thus have found a way to be active in serving the needs of students at risk. In other schools, school counselors, school nurses, and other personnel are included more actively in such processes, and therefore school psychologists serve a more traditional role of assessment and special education.

Objective

The goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Create a plan to improve the readiness of you and your school to detect and respond to student suicide ideation.

How confident are you in your ability to do this now?

Please click on the link below to submit your response.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gp3iBHLvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide01

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below before proceeding with this training.

Answered the survey question in the link.

Clicked the arrow underneath the survey question to submit your response.

Recorded the ID number provided after you submitted your answer to the survey question. You will need it to complete the survey at the end of this training.

Research

What is most important for me to know?

Surveying School Psychologists



Research

Over a third of school psychologists have experienced a student death by suicide, and of those, over half have experienced more than one student death by suicide. More than half of school psychologists have worked with a student who has made a non-fatal attempt at suicide. Although many school psychologists have experienced student death by suicide and suicidal behavior, only about a fifth of school psychologists believed that they have the required training to manage suicide.

The alarming truth is that this means that over 75% of school psychologists feel ill-prepared to manage suicide based on their graduate training experiences. If school psychologists are not receiving the necessary coursework, this is also likely the case for other school staff members (Erbacher, Singer, & Poland, 2015).

Implications

These statistics are disturbing given the alarming rates of suicide for children and youth. Many professionals think of suicide and non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) as rare or low base-rate phenomena, but there is still cause for vigilance.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide was the second leading cause of death in 2014 for youth between the ages of 10 and 24, behind unintentional injury. Recent studies demonstrate that although there was a general decline in deaths by suicide for youth between the ages of 10 and 19 years from 1990-2004, there have been increases in other areas. Specifically, there has been an increase in death by suicide for females ages 10 to 19, and for older males (ages 15 to 19). In the lower age range of 10 to 14 years, there was a 51% increase in suicide from 1981-2004.

Given the mixed data, it seems that although there is a general decline in completed suicides, there are other subgroups of students in support service personnel's charge that are still at significant risk. More recently, looking at the period from 2001 to 2015, youth suicide rates have stayed mostly steady. From the 2013 results of the National Youth Risk Behavior

Survey, 17% of high school students seriously considered suicide, and 8% made an attempt. Further, since the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016), there has been an increase in attempts at suicide for middle school girls.

Application

How might this look in my professional practice?

Remember that the goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Create a plan to improve the readiness of you and your school to detect and respond to student suicide ideation.

Before you can create an effective plan, you should reflect on your current practices and level of readiness. Below is a list of all of the suicide prevention trainings that are available. Consider your personal level of readiness as well as the readiness of your school and check the box in front of trainings that you feel should be a priority for you or your school to complete. If you would like to explore any of the trainings now, you can do so by clicking the link to navigate to the training.

- Readiness to Prevent Student Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_01-readiness-to-prevent-student-suicide_201022/
- Personal Beliefs Related to Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_02-personal-beliefs-related-to-suicide_201022/
- Crisis Management Processes - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_03-crisis-management-processes_201022/
- Readiness to Respond to a Completed Student Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_04-readiness-to-respond-to-a-completed-suicide_201022/
- Legal Issues Related to Student Suicide for Schools - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_05-legal-issues-related-to-student-suicide-for-schools_201022/
- Ethical Issues for School Mental Health Personnel - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_06-ethical-issues-for-school-mental-health-personnel_201022/
- Best Practices to Promote a Safe School Climate - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_07-best-practices-to-promote-a-safe-school-climate_201022/
- Programs to Improve School Climate - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_08-programs-to-improve-school-climate_201022/
- Programs to Prevent Student Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_09-programs-to-prevent-student-suicide_201022/
- Risk Factors of Student Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_10-risk-factors-of-student-suicide_201022/
- Warning Signs and Stressful Precipitating Events of Student Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_11-warning-signs-and-stressful-precipitating-events-of-student-suicide_201022/
- Suicide Risk Assessment Best Practices - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_12-suicide-risk-assessment-best-practices_201022/
- Reflective Listening in Times of Crisis - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_13-reflective-listening-in-times-of-crisis_201022/

- Student Confidentiality and Parental Rights - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_14-student-confidentiality-and-parental-rights_201022/
- Protocol for Handling Suspected Suicide Risk - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_15-protocol-for-handling-suspected-suicide-risk_201022/
- Brief Suicidal Risk Screening Tools - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_16-brief-suicidal-risk-screening-tools_201022/
- Full Suicidal Risk Screening Tool - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_17-full-suicidal-risk-screening-tool_201022/
- Suicidal Risk Screening Outcomes - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_18-suicidal-risk-screening-outcomes_201022/
- Suicide Screening Process Documentation - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_19-suicide-screening-process-documentation_201022/
- Interventions by Suicide Risk Screening Outcomes - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_20-interventions-by-suicide-risk-screening-outcomes_201022/
- Parent Notification Following a Suicide Risk Assessment - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_21-parent-notification-following-a-suicide-risk-assessment_201022/
- Transfer of Responsibilities for a Student - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_22-transfer-of-responsibilities-for-a-student_201022/
- Suicidal Ideation and Mandated Reporting - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_23-suicidal-ideation-and-mandated-reporting_201022/
- Safety Plans to Prevent Student Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_24-safety-plans-to-prevent-student-suicide_201022/
- Programs and Counseling Treatments for At-Risk Students - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_25-programs-and-counseling-treatments-for-at-risk-students_201022/
- Outside Referral for Student Mental Health Services - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_26-outside-referral-for-student-mental-health-services_201022/
- Re-entry and Management Following Student Absence - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_27-re-entry-and-management-following-student-absence_201022/
- Continued Monitoring of Student Suicide Risk - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_28-continued-monitoring-of-student-suicide-risk_201022/
- Documentation of Suicide Prevention Efforts - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_29-documentation-of-suicide-prevention-efforts_201022/
- Crisis Team Response to a Completed Suicide - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_30-crisis-team-response-to-a-completed-suicide/
- Student Grief Processes - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_31-

[student-grief-processes_201022/](#)

- Psychological First Aid - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_32-psychological-first-aid_201022/
- Student Contagion and Suicide on School Property - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_33-suicide-contagion-and-suicide-on-school-property_201022/
- Universal Supports After a Student Suicide (Tier I Response) - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_34-universal-supports-after-a-student-suicide-tier-i-response_201022/
- Students that Require Some Additional Support After a Student Suicide (Tier II Response) - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_35-students-that-require-some-additional-support-after-a-student-suicide-tier-ii-response_201022/
- Students that Require Extensive Support After a Student Suicide (Tier III Response) - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_36-students-that-require-extensive-support-after-a-student-suicide-tier-iii-response_201022/
- Memorials, Anniversaries, and the New Normal - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_37-memorials-anniversaries-and-the-new-normal_201022/
- Signs and Symptoms of Burnout - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_38-signs-and-symptoms-of-burnout_201022/
- Contributing Factors to Burnout - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_39-contributing-factors-to-burnout_201022/
- Responding to Feelings of Burnout - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_40-responding-to-feelings-of-burnout_201022/
- Self-Care - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_41-self-care_201022/
- Maintaining Wellness - https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_42-maintaining-wellness_201022/

Implementation

How can I effectively implement this content in my professional practice?

Please review the considerations below regarding potential implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, and collaboration strategies related to this content. This will help you coordinate the next steps as you begin to incorporate the information presented in this training into your professional practice.

This information can also be found on a handout that you will be able to download at the end of this training.

Implementation Strategies

- School-wide training regarding signs of suicide and how to intervene with students at risk
- Ongoing coaching and consultation for teachers and other staff regarding how to help students who they believe may be at risk

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

- Continue to examine your own level of efficacy regarding handling threats or warning signs related to suicide and NSSI.
- Engage in professional development, role play, and consultation with colleagues to assuage concerns about readiness.

Collaboration Strategies

- Be sure that everyone in your school (including office staff, janitorial staff, and volunteers) are all aware of crisis and suicide prevention strategies including who to ask for help, how to help students, and what to do when suicidal ideation is suspected.
- Have regular check-ins with teachers to discuss questions they have, concerns they have about students, or to clarify information.
- Have ongoing consultation with professionals to discuss ways to mitigate risk.

Resources

Are there any resources available to help me implement this content?

Click on the link below to download a tool that you can use to implement this content in your professional practice.

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:cf6c097b-ca0c-4ad8-b21d-9e6e9e8c90ee>

Feedback

How can I help improve this training?

The objective of this training was to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Create a plan to improve the readiness of you and your school to detect and respond to student suicide ideation.

Answer the questions in the link below to let us know how well this training increased your confidence in your ability to accomplish this objective. Once you have answered all of the questions, click the blue arrow button underneath to submit your responses.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide01

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below.

Answered all of the survey questions above. You may have to scroll to see all of the questions.
Clicked the arrow underneath the last survey question to submit your responses.

Additional Readings

Where can I learn more about this content?

The following resources were used to create this training. If you would like more information about the information presented in this training, we encourage you to start here.

Curtin, S. C., & Heron, M. (2019). Death Rates Due to Suicide and Homicide Among Persons Aged 10-24: United States, 2000-2017. NCHS Data Brief, 352, 1-8.

Erbacher, T. A., Singer, J. B., & Poland, S. (2015). School-based practice in action. Suicide in schools: A practitioner's guide to multi-level prevention, assessment, intervention, and postvention. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this training. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at schoolresources@psu.edu.

Proceed to the next training

Click on the link below to move on to the next training titled *Personal Beliefs Related to Suicide*. In this training, you will increase your confidence in your ability to identify and develop a plan to manage personal biases, discomfort, and need for additional training and practice related to working with students at increased risk of suicide.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_02-personal-beliefs-related-to-suicide_201022/

Return to the module directory

Click on this button to return to the module directory.

<https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/modules/>