



“A Promise For Tomorrow”



A YOUTH CURRICULUM UNIT FOR THE
AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE

Teacher Manual



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Teacher Resource Information

This form can be used to list information that can be a resource for teachers to respond to student needs in the area of emotional health. The teacher should call any local numbers to determine if the numbers are correct and if the agency provides services for youth.

Your Local Crisis Line _____

Your Local Mental Health Center _____

Other Local Agencies _____

National Resources – 1-800-SUICIDE, 1-800-273-TALK

The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) is an educational organization dedicated to the awareness and prevention of youth suicide. JFI believes that awareness and education are the first steps to prevention. We encourage you, students, parents and all teachers/youth workers to download “A Friend Asks” smart phone app to help provide the information, tools and resources to help someone who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. www.jasonfoundation.com

“A Friend Asks” Smart-phone App



APPLE



ANDROID

Thank You for Getting Involved

To the Program Instructor:

You have taken an important step to help the young people with whom you interact. In this packet, you will find a complete “teacher-friendly” lesson plan to present a multi-session program on awareness and prevention of youth suicide. We ask that you study the materials closely so that you may be able to present the lessons in a relaxed manner.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE – This program is **NOT** intended as a tool to be utilized in the aftermath of a suicide or suicide attempt. During those times, emotions could be highly sensitive, and it is a time for professional counseling rather than teaching methods of prevention. We suggest waiting several months between a suicide incident and any

presentation of prevention materials. You should check with your local mental health counselors to determine the appropriate time after a suicide or suicide attempt to present a positive peer-support prevention program for your students. Instead of presenting the prevention program to the students/young people immediately after an incident, this may be a good time to have a Jason Foundation staff development program for your teachers and school personnel and/or a suicide awareness and prevention seminar for parents.

Upon completion of the student awareness program, we ask that you complete the teacher’s evaluation form and also ask your students to complete the enclosed assessment form and then return these forms to us. These are important tools for the assessment and evaluation of our program.



Information About The Jason Foundation

What We Are

The Jason Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of youth suicide through educational programs.

Who We Are

The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) consists of corporate officers, corporate staff, board of directors, business and personal partners, and hundreds of caring volunteers. Our many volunteers include educators, students, parents, business professionals, physicians, nurses, government officials, coaches, clergy, celebrities, and others. JFI, in fact, utilizes a broad spectrum of passionate volunteers to spread the positive message that youth suicide is preventable.

Why We Are in Existence

Youth suicide is the second leading cause of death for our youth ages 10-24, and third leading cause of death for our college age youth. (2011 CDC WISQARS) Our goal is to help young people realize that suicide is not an answer for life's problems and disappointments. Our mission is the prevention of youth suicide through awareness and education.

When We Were Formed

Clark Flatt founded The Jason Foundation on October 1, 1997 – less than three months after the tragic death of his son, Jason C. Flatt. Realizing that approximately one hundred families or more each week lose a son or daughter to suicide, Clark made a commitment to fight the “Silent Epidemic” we call suicide.

Where We Are

The Jason Foundation's corporate office is located in Hendersonville, Tennessee, just out of Nashville; however, JFI's programs are in use across the United States and several foreign countries.

How You Can Help

Educate yourself about the prevention of youth suicide. Don't be afraid to discuss the subject with others. One person **can** make a difference.

**Knowledge is power . . .
Knowledge is prevention.**

For more information
please visit our website:
www.jasonfoundation.com

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Important: Disclaimer

Although The Jason Foundation, Inc. feels that its programs are well formatted and directly address the problem of youth suicide, there is no single way to combat the problem. Understanding this variability in youth suicide, we must stress that there are no implied or otherwise suggested statements that this program can guarantee it will prevent suicides or suicide attempts from occurring. **PROFESSIONAL HELP** should be sought **WHENEVER** there is a possibility of suicidal ideation. **NEVER** try to solve the problem without obtaining (local, if possible) **PROFESSIONAL** help.

Implementation Strategies and Suggestions

The program “A Promise for Tomorrow” presents a positive look at how students can help friends who may be depressed or having suicidal thoughts. Research tells us that four out of five completed suicides gave “clear warning signs” before the attempt. The purpose of this curriculum is to provide information and strategies needed to be a life saving influence.

The program is designed for students in grades 7-12 and is based on a five lesson format for the traditional high school schedule of 50 to 60 minute classes. A three day alternative is provided to accommodate block schedules or A Day B Day formats with class sessions of 60 to 90 minutes. The curriculum is designed to be taught as an integrated unit of study. None of the lessons or components is intended to be used by itself. For example, the DVD “Choices” is included in this curriculum. It features the stories of two teenagers faced with suicidal ideation and the interaction they have with their families and friends. “Choices” is intended to be a springboard for discussion after students have been introduced to the topic and have had an opportunity to participate in class discussion. “Choices” is **NOT** a stand-alone presentation and should not be used in this manner or with a general class discussion.

We encourage you to read the entire unit several times before presenting the lessons. It is important to be familiar and comfortable with the topic in order to encourage discussion. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, we recommend that no grades be given for student discussion participation. In some cultures, and for some students, the topic is not one they feel comfortable discussing in an open forum. For some students discussing the topic may be so

uncomfortable due to personal situations or views that they do not want to participate at all. These requests should be honored and an alternative study plan should be offered, as necessary. It is also important for the teacher to establish certain “ground rules” for the discussion that include respecting privacy by not using names and being respectful to those who are offering personal stories or opinions.

The atmosphere in the classroom should be kept light. Keep the instructional flow going, discussion times under control and end each session on a positive note. Avoid using scare tactics. It is not necessary to share common methods of suicide or to describe the aftermath of a suicide. Scaring people will not deter those who may be experiencing suicidal ideation and it may keep students from sharing their feelings and opinions openly. Additionally, do not glorify the act of suicide or memorialize someone who died by suicide.

This study unit should never be used in response to a recent suicide or known suicide attempt in your school or group. If this has occurred, now is the time for professional counseling and intervention, not a prevention program. If there has been a recent suicide incident, you should wait several months before presenting this program. Check with local mental health counselors to determine an appropriate length of time to wait.

You may also want to consult with your counseling staff prior to presenting this program.

A PowerPoint presentation is included with the curriculum which correlates with different parts of the lesson plan and serves as good visual aids to foster discussion. Also included are “Promise Cards” for use in the final lesson. The use of these cards is optional and may be offered as a voluntary extension of classroom activities. You may request additional cards to accommodate your entire class by calling The Jason Foundation office nearest you, accessing the website at www.jasonfoundation.com, or emailing contact@jasonfoundation.com.

You are encouraged to read the entire unit several times before presenting the lessons.



A Promise for Tomorrow – Lesson Plan

Unit Description:

This is a five-lesson unit based on a 50 minute or one hour class schedule. There is an alternative lesson plan for a three lesson presentation to accommodate block-schedules or A-day B-day formats.

Goal:

To provide students with knowledge, skills, and strategies that will enable them to help a friend (or themselves) who may be depressed or considering suicide.

Objectives:

1. Students will gain knowledge about the current statistics and common myths about youth suicide.
2. Students will gain knowledge about some of the main warning signs associated with suicidal thoughts.
3. Students will become aware of ways to help a friend who is depressed or may be considering suicide.
4. Students will become aware of resources available to help depressed or suicidal friends.
5. Optional – Students may pledge to be there for their friends through the information/pledge program, “A Promise for Tomorrow”.
6. Optional – Take the B1 Pledge.

Materials:

- Lesson A:** You will need a computer or laptop, LCD projector, screen and a chalkboard or flipchart. “A Promise for Tomorrow” PowerPoint presentation is included for this lesson (and lessons C and E).
- Lesson B:** A TV, DVD player, (or a computer and LCD projector), the “Choices” DVD, and worksheets for cooperative groups are needed for this lesson. Internet Access available at <http://jasonfoundation.com/choices-video>
- Lesson C:** You will need a computer or laptop, LCD projector, screen, and a chalkboard or flipchart. “A Promise for Tomorrow” PowerPoint presentation is included for this lesson (and lessons A and E).
- Lesson D:** A TV, DVD player, (or a computer and LCD projector), and the “Choices” DVD are needed for this lesson. Internet Access available at <http://jasonfoundation.com/choices-video>
- Lesson E:** A computer or laptop, LCD projector, screen and a chalkboard or flipchart are needed for this lesson. “A Promise for Tomorrow” PowerPoint presentation is included for this lesson (and lessons A and C).

LESSON OUTLINES

Five Day Plan

Lesson A – Day 1

- Introduction to the problem of youth suicide
- Activity – Worksheet #1
- Discussion
- Assignment

Lesson B – Day 2

- Introduction
- Video presentation – “**Choices**”
- Activity Worksheets #2, #3, #4 – Cooperative groups
- Whole group process of information
- Assignment

Lesson C – Day 3

- Introduction
- Activity – Brainstorm word list
- Present and discuss warning signs

Lesson D – Day 4

- Review information previously presented
- Watch “**Choices**” to identify the warning signs presented
- Share findings in a whole group process

Lesson E – Day 5

- General review of information (any questions or concerns)
- Introduce the Rascal Flatts B1 Program
- Discuss local resources to help a friend in trouble (refer to assignment from Day 1)
- Assignment
- Program Evaluation

Three Day Plan

Lesson A – Day 1 (same as presented on the five day plan)

- Introduction to the problem of youth suicide
- Activity – Worksheet #1
- Discussion
- Assignment

Lesson B – Day 2

(combination of Lesson B and C of the five day plan)

- Activity – Brainstorm word list
- Present and discuss warning signs
- Watch “**Choices**” to identify the warning signs presented
- Assignment from Lesson B of the five day plan

Lesson C – Day 3 (Lesson E of the five day plan)

- Discuss the warning signs evident in “**Choices**”
- Introduce the Rascal Flatts B1 Program
- Discuss local resources to help a friend in trouble (refer to assignment from Day 1)

Student Evaluation:

Prior to starting these lessons and for student evaluation purposes, please have students complete a pre-assessment test. Upon completion of the lessons, please have the students complete a post-assessment test. Forms for this purpose are located in the back of this manual.

Pre-Assessment Options:

1. Activity Worksheet # 1, “Youth Suicide, What Do You Already Know”, can be used as an informal pre-assessment to determine prior knowledge and to determine direction and depth of instruction.
2. There is a multiple choice pre-assessment form, “Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention”, which can be used to determine prior knowledge. (This same test can be given after the unit instruction to evaluate increased knowledge.)

Post-Assessment Options:

1. “A Promise for Tomorrow” Student Assessment Form can be used to assess student knowledge and understanding. It can also be used for a grade, if needed.
2. The post-assessment form, “Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention”, can be used to evaluate increased knowledge. (The post-assessment form includes the same questions as the pre-assessment form.)

Lesson A – Day 1

(For both the 5 and 3-day plan)

This lesson will introduce the problem of youth suicide in the United States and provide statistics to enhance awareness about the magnitude of this silent epidemic.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Say to the students:

Sometimes we must study some tough subjects in our class in order to prepare you to help yourself and your friends for life's challenges. Today we are going to begin to look at one such subject.

Slide 3. When Dr. David Satcher was the U.S. Surgeon General, he studied the problem of suicide and declared it to be a National Health Problem in the United States. It was not because that year was a particularly tragic year for suicide deaths. In fact, suicide in the general population had been in the top ten leading causes of death for the past thirty years. However, due to several reasons, very little had been done to confront the problem. Those reasons include the lack of knowledge about the subject and the stigma surrounding the topic of suicide. These, in turn, caused a lack of funding resources to develop prevention and awareness programs. This all changed when Dr. Satcher proclaimed that suicide is now recognized and categorized as a health problem for our nation. Dr. Satcher's report specifically listed suicide as a major national concern for youth and the elderly. After a two- year nationwide fact-finding and resource gathering campaign, the Surgeon General released the "National Strategy for Suicide Prevention". As a result of that "Call

to Action" many states have formulated their own Statewide Suicide Prevention Programs. These programs will help provide individuals with the information and resources necessary to combat this national health problem of suicide.

Today in our school/organization, we begin to answer this "Call to Action" by equipping ourselves with the information and resources needed to help a friend who may be depressed, having trouble in relationships, or may be considering suicide. Suicide has been labeled the number one **preventable** cause of death in our nation today. It is **preventable** because, for those individuals who need it, there is help available that can make a positive difference in their lives.

Important to say to your students:

So, what can you expect from these lessons about youth suicide?

First, I want you to learn about the current statistics and some common myths that surround the topic of suicide.

Next, you will learn about some behaviors that are often shown by a young person who is depressed or thinking about suicide.

Third, you will learn some ways you can help a friend who may be depressed or considering suicide.

And last, we will explore some resources that you could turn to if a friend needs help. You will have an opportunity to take a pledge to be there for your friends and to design a plan of action to help your friends if the need arises.

The Story of Jason and The Jason Foundation, Inc.

I want to emphasize to you that most young people never consider suicide but even one is too many. This study will give us information and tools to use to help a friend who may be at risk. Sometimes we do all we can and it still does not help, but the point is we must TRY.

Slide 4. These lessons were designed by The Jason Foundation, Inc. You have probably already determined that this foundation is named for someone. It is named for a young man who died by suicide in 1997. His name was Jason and he was a typical teenager. Jason played football, made B's in school and lived with his mom, dad and older brother. He and his family went to church together and got along well with each other. Jason had many friends and was popular in school. He didn't drink alcohol or abuse drugs. Jason was sixteen and had just gotten his driver's license. He had even been given a used car to drive. One would think that he had a great life and he did. But, something was terribly wrong. For some reason, Jason made a decision that changed the lives of everyone around him. His decision eliminated the chance for him to find another solution to his pain and unhappiness. Jason took his own life on July 16, 1997. If only he had shared with someone how he felt, he could have gotten help and most likely would still be here today.

After Jason died, his family started to learn about youth suicide. They learned many things that they now want to share with you. The main thing they learned is that when a young person is thinking about suicide

there are almost always warning signs in their words and/or behavior. When they learned some of these signs they thought back about Jason. He had shown several of those signs before he died. If his family and friends had been educated to recognize the warning signs, they would have realized how troubled Jason was and could have gotten help for him.

What we want to accomplish here is to provide you with the information to recognize any of these signs so that if you ever have a friend who is thinking of suicide, you will know what to do to help. The one thing you need to always remember is that time changes circumstances. Time will solve most all of our personal problems. Jason did not give himself any time to feel better or solve any of his problems. Problems are temporary; suicide is permanent. We must learn to help our friends find other solutions to their problems and help them understand that time can change things, if we just hold on and persevere.



Lesson A – Day 1 *CONTINUED*

Before we begin to learn how to help our friends, let's find out what we already know about this serious problem.

Give out activity worksheet # 1. Have individual students circle their responses without discussion. When they have finished, use the PowerPoint presentation, slides 5-20, for group discussion.

IMPORTANT

Say to the students:

You need to understand that most young people never attempt suicide and weather the storms of adolescence with no major problems. However, entirely too many young people have extreme difficulties and develop severe depression which can lead to suicidal thoughts. Most teens who have attempted suicide say that they did not want to die. They wanted the pain to go away. We want to be able to identify our friends who are in pain and know what to do to help.

TRUE or FALSE?

Slides 6-8. Question 1. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24. TRUE (The first leading cause is accidents of all kinds.)

Slide 9. Approximately how many young people, ages 10-24, do you think take their lives each year in the United States? (Ask for guesses.)

Slide 10. The correct answer is approximately 5,000 young people.

Try to present a visual idea of how many people this is. For example, this would be enough people to fill our high school gymnasium five times or more or equal the total enrollment of our local college. By the time our freshman class graduates, 20,000

young people will have lost their lives to suicide unless we can change this trend. Give the students a minute to visualize how many lives are lost.

Say to the students:

Slide 11. It is estimated that we lose approximately 100 young people, every week to suicide.

Let us think about this in another way. We lose approximately 100 young people to suicide each week in this country. If there were a virus or bacteria sweeping the country causing these deaths, would we hear about it anywhere? Of course, it would be on the news. Your parents would be worried and contacting your doctor. The problem with the silent epidemic of suicide is that we **are** losing about 100 young people each week but no one is willing to talk about it. We do not need to hear about each individual suicide; however, we do need to know that this problem exists.

Share the following information:

Many experts believe that the total number of young people we lose each year is more than 5,000. Some experts feel the actual number of youth suicides could be 10% to 30% higher than reported because of misreporting. **Ask students:** What could be a misreported suicide? **Wait for responses.** Many suicides are incorrectly reported as accidents. (Car accidents, drug overdose, etc.)

Ask:

What do you think is needed to classify something as a suicide? Evidence. (A note, a witness, etc.) If no evidence is found, many times the death will be classified as an accident. Knowing this, do you agree with the experts who believe there are more suicides than are reported?

Slides 12-13. Question 2. People who talk about

or threaten suicide rarely die by suicide. FALSE (This is a common myth believed by many people. It is totally untrue.)

Many times people who are thinking about suicide make statements or threats about it. They may make statements like, "I'd be better off if I weren't even here", or, "I won't be bothering you much longer". People who talk about suicide are thinking about it and should be taken seriously. Even if they are not suicidal, it is obvious that they are not happy. We need to ask questions and find out what is so wrong in their lives. They are desperately asking for help. We want to be able to provide that help.

Ask the students:

Why would someone threaten suicide? Sometimes it is to see if anyone notices that they are in pain and to see if someone is willing to help them.

Slides 14-15. Question 3. Approximately one young person dies from suicide every two hours in the United States. TRUE

Do you realize that some parent loses a son or daughter to suicide approximately every two hours? If you allow for misreported suicides, some experts believe that the rate is every 1 hour 15 minutes or even more frequent...that would increase the number of youth suicides greatly.

Consider this:

From the time you get up in the morning until school begins, one young person in the United States has died by suicide.

During the time it takes for you to enjoy a movie or a basketball game, another young person has died because of suicide.

Slides 16-17. Question 4. Talking to a person about

his or her suicidal feelings may cause them to attempt suicide. FALSE (This is another common myth believed by many people. It is totally untrue.)

Talking about it can only help if done in a compassionate and knowledgeable manner. The thoughts of suicide come from a feeling of hopelessness and the belief that no one can help them!

Ask the students:

Have you ever had a problem that worried you so much that you could not sleep? When you finally dealt with the problem by talking to your girlfriend or boyfriend, parent or teacher (whomever), did it relieve some of the pressure? It is the same with young people who are thinking about suicide. They do not want to die; they want the pain to go away. Helping your friend get that pain "out on the table", and talk about it, will only relieve some of the pressure and together you can begin to look for much better ways to solve their problems.

Tell your students: One thing you need to remember is that time takes care of most all of our individual problems. You must give yourself time because time will change our circumstances. Young people who take their own lives cut off their time. They do not wait to experience the changes that will surely come. Whatever seems so hard or bad today may be gone tomorrow. We must wait to see what better things are in the future.

Ask:

How do you think talking about feelings and what causes those feelings can help a person in trouble? **(Identify the problem, discover solutions, realize you are not alone, etc.)**

Lesson A – Day 1 – *CONTINUED*

Slides 18-19. Question 5. Suicide is a preventable cause of death. **TRUE**

We discussed this answer a few moments ago. I am glad you were paying attention!

Ask:

What makes this preventable? **(We would want to stop someone from hurting our friend so we have the right to stop our friend from hurting himself/herself.)**

We want to be able to recognize the need and know what to do. That is what we hope to accomplish during this unit of study.

Slides 20-21. Question 6. People who are contemplating suicide will often tell someone beforehand. **TRUE**

Slide 22. Four out five completed suicides gave “clear warning signs” before the attempt.

Ask:

In what ways do you think someone might share these thoughts or feelings?

(They may say something like “I’d be better off dead! or “You won’t have to worry about me much longer.” Sometimes they will actually say “I am going to kill myself.”)

Say:

What we must realize is that many times young people will tell a friend about what they plan to do but ask them to keep it a secret. We must tell our friend that this information is too important to keep secret. **Do not promise that you will keep this information secret. It is very possible that your friend will become angry that**

you may betray their trust. What we must remember is that the only reason they are telling us is so we will help them. We must be willing to risk our friendship to save a friend’s life. People get over anger but death is permanent. We cannot take the chance. We must get a responsible adult involved immediately.

Slide 23. Review the statistics and reemphasize the magnitude of the problem.

Closing statement and assignment:

Now that we have looked at and have become aware of the problem that exists, we are going to spend the next few lessons learning how to help a friend who may be having trouble. There are things we can do and ways to help our friends.

I would like for you to think of and list some resources you might use to help a friend. Where and to whom would you go for help? (There will be a reference back to this assignment after the students have learned the correct ways to respond and where to go for help.)

Teacher Note: The five day Lesson B – Day 2 will take the full class time. Students will need to be in cooperative groups. You may wish to assign the groups on Day1 to save time. You will need a minimum of six groups, if possible.

For the three day program you will present in a whole group session.

Lesson B – Day 2

Slide 24. Lesson B will take a full period to present. The DVD presentation, “Choices”, is approximately thirty-seven minutes in length. Students need to be in six cooperative groups, if possible. Each group needs a person to **record their ideas and a person to report their findings to the rest of the class.** Internet Access available at <http://jasonfoundation.com/choices-video>

Say to the students:

Last class period we began a study in the awareness of youth suicide. Today we are going to watch the DVD, **“Choices”**. I want you to watch the entire video without discussion; however, I am going to assign each group a specific character(s) for special attention. Be sure you are aware of every main character but watch the behavior of your assigned character(s) closely.

Assign the characters for each group before showing the DVD. Character study questions are included in the lesson plan book.

Cast of Characters:

Mark	High School Senior	_____
Jan	High School Senior/Cheerleader	_____
Coach Parks	Coach/Classroom Teacher	_____
Cathy	Jan’s Best Friend	_____
Tomarcus	Mark’s Best Friend	_____
Parents:	Mark’s Father	_____
	Jan’s Mother	_____

Activity Worksheets #2, 3, & 4:

Show the DVD, **“Choices”**. After viewing the DVD, hand out the discussion questions for each cooperative group. Give students time to discuss the questions and record their responses.

Ask the reporters for each group to share the key points of their discussion. Encourage additional thoughts, questions, or opinions from the entire class.

Writing Assignment:

Pretend you are an advice columnist for a teen magazine. You have received a letter from a desperate teen contemplating suicide. Write your response to that young person.

Lesson C – Day 3

Slide 25. This lesson will introduce the fact that, at times, everyone feels badly or is sad in their lives and that this is normal. It also contains information about the main warning signs of suicidal ideation. This information may help determine when the feelings may be more serious and require a response or help for the person.

Say the students:

There are times when most of us feel sad or down. Let's list some words that describe how you feel on those really bad days. **(Possible responses: lonely, bored, tired, misunderstood, frustrated, etc.)**

List the words on the chalkboard or flip chart

Slide 26. Continue asking the students:

- Do you think everyone feels down at times?
- When you felt sad or down, did you act differently than you normally do?
- How were you different?
- Did anyone notice the change in your behavior?
- Did you tell anyone how you were feeling?
- Who were you willing to talk to about your feelings?
- Who were you not willing to talk to about your feelings?

Say to the students:

Things happen in our lives that cause us concern and sometimes unhappiness. Failed relationships and failed dreams (such as not making a team or winning an election, divorce in the family, breaking up with girlfriends or boyfriends, bad grades, traumatic events, or feeling humiliated or ashamed) can be very difficult. **(Do not downplay the importance of these disappointments to young people with**

statements like “you will have many more boyfriends in your life”). The question is: How are you going to know if your friend is just having a bad day, or if there is something more?

Slide 27. Teacher Note: Express the following to the students: **It is important to stress that these are general warning signs that may or may not indicate suicidal thoughts.** These do not, by themselves, necessarily mean that a person is suicidal. They should alert us to ask questions about our friend's feelings and emotional health. They could be signs of problems associated with normal adolescence, depression, or other types of emotional disturbances. However, if these signs are seen in combination and continue for several days, we need to be intentional about helping our friends.

Say to the students:

Let's look at a few of the main signs of concern which indicate a person may be thinking about suicide as a way to solve his/her problems.

Show the slides for each of these warning signs as you direct and encourage discussion.

Slide 28.

1. Suicide threats

If someone says...

- I would be better off dead.
- Nobody would miss me if I was dead.
- My family/friends would be better off if I was not here.

Discussion Notes: Say: If you hear one of your friends saying these kind of things, they may or may not be suicidal. The point is they are certainly unhappy. As a friend you need to ask questions and find out why your friend is so sad, why are they saying these things, and what could be done to help.

Ask students if they can think of any other comments they have heard that would lead them to be concerned about a friend.

Slide 29.

2. Previous suicide attempts

- One out of three completed suicides are NOT the first attempt.
- Physical mutilation (cutting) and/or other self-harm behaviors are a sign of wanting to hurt one's self physically to relieve an emotional pain. When that no longer relieves the pain, thoughts could turn to suicide.
- Even if the attempt seems to be “only for attention,” take it as a serious attempt.

Discussion Notes: Ask students why someone would make a suicide attempt. (Possible responses: to see if it hurts, to see if they can go through with it, and the most common reason is to see if anyone notices that they are in pain. Will anyone help them?)

Slide 30.

3. Sudden changes in behavior

- A quiet person becomes very loud and obvious.
- A loud person becomes very quiet and reserved.
- A person withdraws from activities he or she used to enjoy.
- A gentle person becomes aggressive and angers easily.
- An outgoing person suddenly becomes withdrawn.
- Changes in grades or class attendance.

Discussion Notes: For some people, these are their normal behaviors and/or personality traits. It is when there is a **sudden change** that we need to be diligent and pay close attention. Continue to stress that these must be changes in behavior and/or personality. The concern is when the behavior is very different from the way the person has behaved in the past. Also, explain that changing grades in one subject is not usually a concern. The concern comes when there is a change in grades in almost all subjects. This would indicate a general lack of effort or caring.

Slide 31.

4. Depression

- Feeling sad and hopeless for long periods of time.
- Feelings of being alone or of no one caring.
- Sleeplessness or wanting to sleep an abnormal amount of time.
- Eating problems - eating too much or not enough.
- Lack of interest in activities once enjoyed.

Discussion Notes: Stress again that feeling sad or unhappy for a short period is normal for everyone. However, when these feelings remain for two weeks or longer, a more serious situation may exist.

Slide 32.

5. Final arrangements

- Giving away "prized" possessions:
- Card collection
- Favorite jacket
- Driver's license
- Other items
- Actually making funeral plans...sending notes to friends asking them to “take care” of something if they are not around anymore. Selecting music for their funeral, “if something happens to me”.

Discussion Notes: If this behavior is seen in conjunction with some of the others listed here, this is an indication that the crisis level is heightened and immediate help must be sought for this person. This behavior alone is probably not very important, but along with other signs, it is very significant. **Explain to the students that if they have seen two or more of the other four signs and then see this one, it could indicate that the situation is more critical. Alone, this behavior is probably not very important. It is when this one is seen along with others that the need for immediate help is indicated.**

Lesson D – Day 4

Slide 33. Review the main discussion points of the first three lessons: magnitude of the problem, feelings involved, warning signs of serious trouble, etc.

Say to the students:

We are going to watch the DVD, “Choices” once again. I want each of you to watch Mark and Jan very carefully. Now that you are familiar with the main warning signs of suicidal thoughts, see if you can identify the warning signs shown by Mark or Jan. On a piece of paper, list all of the warning signs you see and the name of the character(s) who demonstrated this behavior beside each one.

Show “Choices”

Ask students to share and compare their findings with a partner. Then conduct a whole group discussion of the identified signs. Record the group’s list on the chalkboard or flipchart.

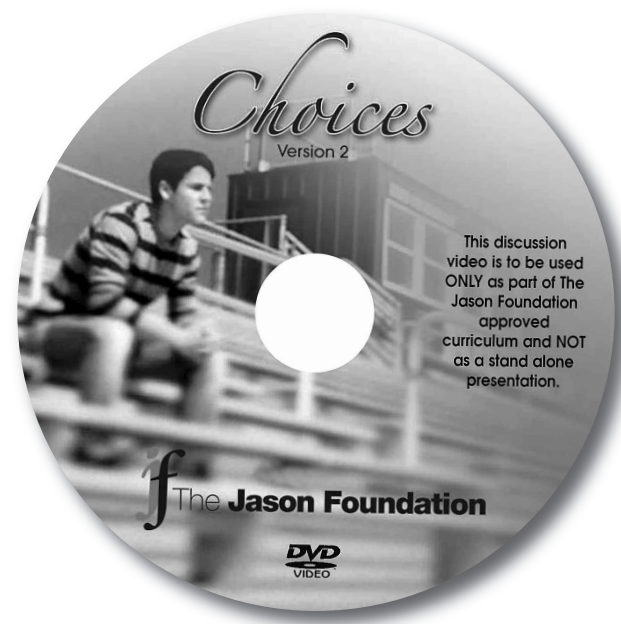
IMPORTANT

Teacher Note: Express to the students – It is important to stress that these are general warning signs that may or may not indicate suicidal thoughts. These do not, by themselves, necessarily mean that a person is suicidal. They should alert us to **ask questions** about our friend’s feelings and emotional health. They can be signs of problems associated with normal adolescence, depression, or other types of emotional disturbances. When these signs are seen in combination and continue for several days, we need to be intentional about helping our friends.

Say to the students:

You may never encounter this problem. Most young people never become suicidal or have suicidal thoughts but it is good to be aware and to know what to do if a friend needs your help. Even one young person taking his/her life is too many. We must all be prepared to help each other if needed.

I want each of you to watch Mark and Jan very carefully. Now that you are familiar with the main warning signs of suicidal thoughts, see if you can identify the warning signs shown by Mark or Jan.



Lesson E – Day 5

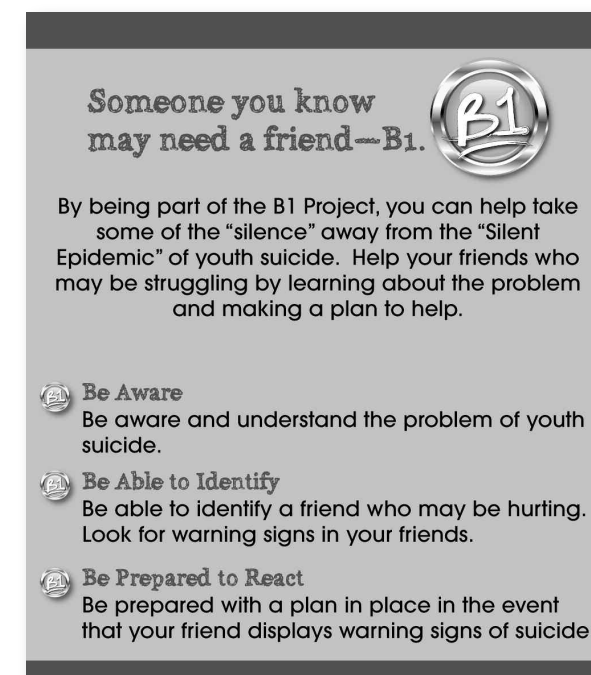
Slide 34. This lesson will teach the students what to do if they are approached by or become aware of a friend who is contemplating suicide.

Say to your students:

We have spent the last few class periods learning about youth suicide. Now that we have all of this information, what can we do about this terrible problem? Let’s talk about what this discussion is really about.

Slide 35. How to Help a Friend

How can you help someone who is thinking about suicide? How can we help our friend? What can we do? What we must do is Be Aware, Be Able and Be Prepared. We can use the Rascal Flatts B1 Program to accomplish this task.



B1 Project - Rascal Flatts and The Jason Foundation, Inc.

Slides 36. As an additional source of information on suicide awareness and prevention, Rascal Flatts (award-winning music group) and The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI) have started an awareness campaign known as B1. The program only takes a few minutes to complete. Encourage your students to view this program, www.rascalflattsb1.com, to make a pledge to be there for their friends. A brief synopsis of the program is listed below. Rascal Flatts and The Jason Foundation are working together to prevent youth suicide. In June 2010, Rascal Flatts became JFI Celebrity Ambassadors. The theme of their program is, “Someone you know may need a friend, **B1**. This program encourages young people to “B Aware, B Able and B Prepared” for their friends who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts.

B Aware

- Be aware and understand the problem of youth suicide.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. (2011 CDC WISQARS)
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for college age youth. (2011 CDC WISQARS)
- Suicide is PREVENTABLE.

By being part of the B1 Project, you can help take some of the “silence” away from the “silent epidemic” of youth suicide by learning about the problem and making a plan to help your friends who may be struggling.

Lesson E – Day 5 – *CONTINUED*

B Able

Be able to identify a friend who may be hurting. Look for these warning signs in your friends:

- Suicide threats
- Depression
- Anger, increased irritability
- Lack of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Sudden increase/decrease in appetite
- Sudden changes in appearance
- Dwindling academic performance
- Sudden failure to complete assignments
- Preoccupation with death and suicide
- An "I don't care" attitude about school or other activities.
- Previous suicide attempts
- Final arrangements

B Prepared

Have a game plan in place in the event any of your friends ever indicates they are hurting or thinking of hurting themselves. Don't be afraid to talk to someone who seems to be depressed or hurting. At the very least, your friends will know there is someone who cares for them. Where do I go for help?

- Your favorite teacher/coach
- Parents
- Clergy
- Guidance counselor
- Doctor
- Trusted adult
- Crisis line such as 1-800-237-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Be part of the solution

Visit the B1 website,
www.rascalflattsB1.com, and Take the Pledge.



Have students refer to the list of resource ideas they completed on the first day. Ask students to share some of the people or places they listed. Write these on the board.

Slide 37. Resources

Lead the students to identify a favorite teacher or coach, minister/clergy, guidance counselor, medical doctor, and parents or another trusted adult, etc. Share local information for agencies in your area that specialize in mental health issues, crises intervention lines, etc. You should call each before recommending them to your students to be sure that the numbers are current and that they provide services to adolescents. Use your Teacher Resource Sheet to record this information.

Say to students:

Slide 38. You could be the person that might help prevent the very unnecessary death of a friend. Sometimes we do all we can and it still does not help, but we must TRY!

I have a pledge card if you would like to participate in the Rascal Flatts B1 Program "Someone you know may need a friend-B1". It would be a very good thing for you to promise you will always be here for each other no matter what the future holds.

Show the card and read from the front and back.

FRONT

Learn How you can B1 for a friend. Take the pledge at www.rascalflattsB1.com.

INSIDE

Someone you know may need a friend – B1. You can help a friend who may be struggling by learning about the problem of youth suicide and make a plan to help.

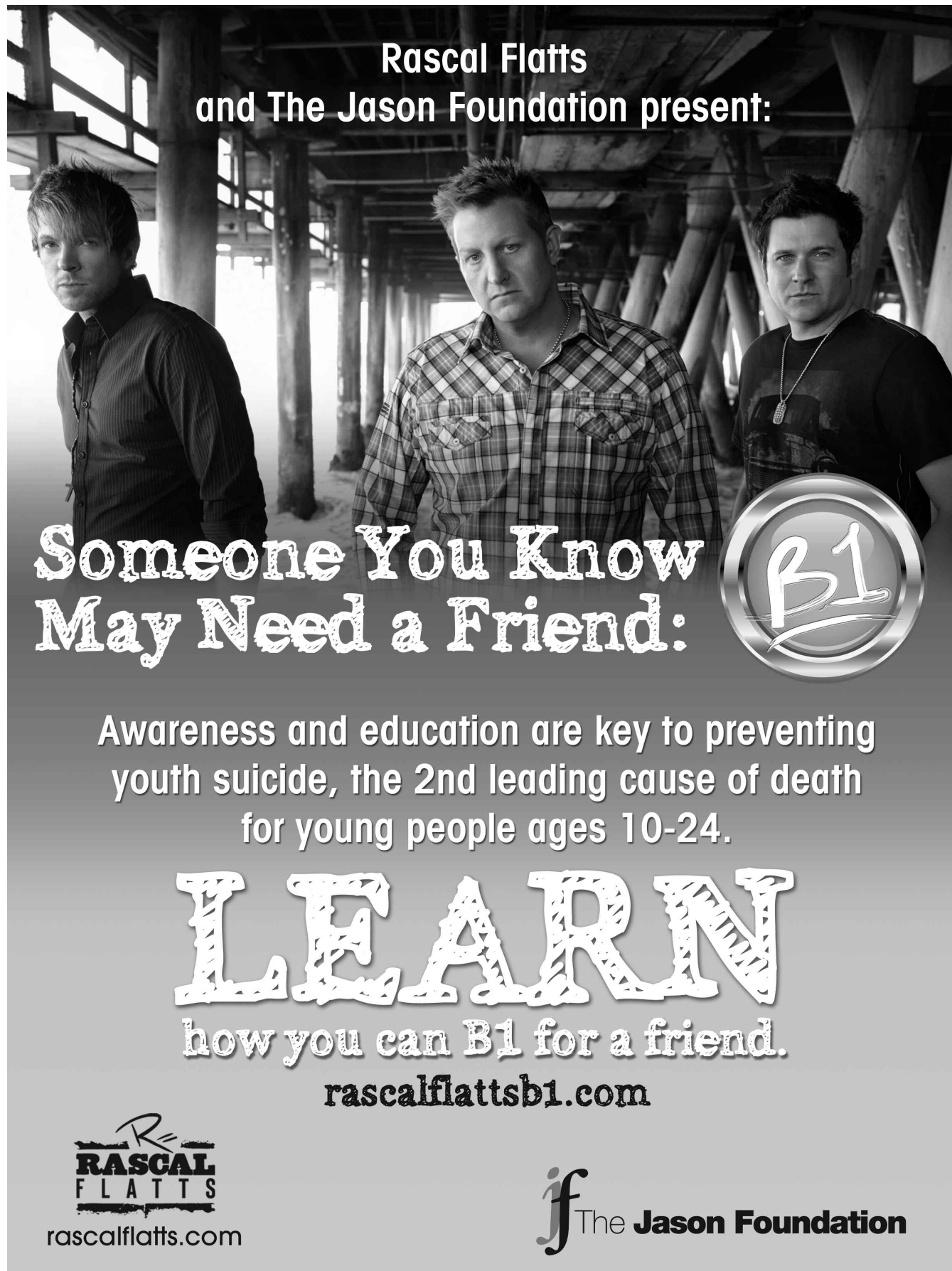
Be Aware – Be aware and understand the problem of youth suicide.

Be Able to Identify – Be able to identify a friend who may be hurting. Look for warning signs in your friend.

Be Prepared to React – Be prepared with a plan in place in the event that your friends display warning signs of suicide.

BACK

I promise to do my best to Be Aware, Be Able, and Be Prepared when a friend needs my help. Pledge to B1.



Rascal Flatts
and The Jason Foundation present:

Someone You Know
May Need a Friend:

Awareness and education are key to preventing
youth suicide, the 2nd leading cause of death
for young people ages 10-24.

LEARN
how you can B1 for a friend.
rascalflattsb1.com

RASCAL FLATTS
rascalflatts.com

fThe Jason Foundation



Life is Precious, let's all choose
to "Live Life" and keep
looking forward to our own
Promise for Tomorrow!

Assignment:

Write a "plan of action" you would use if a friend is thinking about suicide and is in need of your help. What would you say? Where would you go for help? How would you handle your relationship with your friend?

Optional Extension Activities:

1. Design a school-wide Suicide Prevention Week. Create posters and other visual presentations to share throughout the school.
2. Write a dialogue between two friends; one who is sad, depressed and contemplating suicide and the friend this young person has confided in and turned to for help.
3. Rewrite the ending for the DVD, "Choices". (Encourage positive outcomes.)
4. Research medical advances in the treatment of depression and suicidal ideation. (Helpful links can be found on The Jason Foundation website at www.jasonfoundation.com)
5. Participate in the Rascal Flatts B1 Project.
6. Download the free smart-phone app, "A Friend Asks".

A Friend Asks

 A Free Smart-phone App from
The Jason Foundation
www.jasonfoundation.com

Nationally...

**Over 1 out of 6 young people
“seriously considered suicide”
in the past 12 months**

(*) CDC 2013 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey

Youth Suicide has been declared a National Health Issue by the U. S. Surgeon General’s office.

Suicide is:

- For middle and high school age youth (ages 12-18), suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death. (2011 CDC WISQARS)
- For college age youth (ages 18-22), suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death. (2011 CDC WISQARS)
- Over-all, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for our youth ages 10-24. (2011 CDC WISQARS)

Suicide is not only a leading cause of death for our youth... It is a leading cause of PREVENTABLE death!

Four out of Five young people who will attempt suicide will give clear “Warning Signs”

A “Friend”...especially an “informed friend”... can help make a difference to someone who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

A Friend Asks is a free smart-phone app to help provide the information, tools, and resources to help a friend (or yourself) who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

“**WARNING SIGNS**” and “**HOW TO HELP A FRIEND**” along with other resources are provided as well as the “**GET HELP NOW**” instant connectivity to the National Suicide Prevention “Lifeline” are provided on this free downloadable app.



Available on Apple App Store, Android Market Store, The Jason Foundation website or Scan QR codes



Apple



Android

Youth Suicide What Do You Already Know?

1. **Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24.**
TRUE FALSE
2. **People who talk about or threaten suicide rarely attempt suicide.**
TRUE FALSE
3. **Approximately one young person dies from suicide every 2 hours.**
TRUE FALSE
4. **Talking to a person about his or her suicidal feelings may cause them to attempt suicide.**
TRUE FALSE
5. **Suicide is one of the leading preventable causes of death.**
TRUE FALSE
6. **People who are contemplating suicide almost always indicate their intentions to someone beforehand.**
TRUE FALSE

MARK

1. Had there been a change in Mark's behavior?
If yes, how had he changed?
2. What things contributed to Mark's feeling of worthlessness?
3. Did Mark try to let Tomarcus know he was in trouble? If yes, how?

JAN

1. Had there been a change in Jan's behavior?
If yes, how had she changed?
2. What things contributed to Jan's feeling of hopelessness?
3. Did Jan try to let Cathy know she was in trouble?
If yes, how?

TEACHER

1. Did Coach Parks recognize early that something was bothering Mark? If yes, how did he know?
2. What kind of relationship do you think Coach Parks had with many of his students? What makes you think so?
3. How did Coach Parks handle the information Tomarcus had obviously shared with him? Was the way he handled it appropriate?

PARENTS

1. How did Mark and Jan's parents react to the change in their behaviors?
2. Do you think the parents were in tune with what was going on in the lives of their teenagers? If no, what makes you think they weren't?
3. What would have been a positive way for each parent to deal with the changes in their teenager? Be specific.

TOMARCUS

- 1. What do you think made Mark and Tomarcus such good friends?**
- 2. Did Tomarcus realize his friend was in trouble?
If yes, how did he know?**
- 3. What did Tomarcus do when he realized Mark was acting and talking in a strange and different way?
How do you feel about what Tomarcus did?**

CATHY

- 1. What do you think made Jan and Cathy such good friends?**
- 2. Did Cathy realize her friend was in trouble?
If yes, how did she know?**
- 3. What did Cathy do when she realized Jan was acting and talking in a strange and different way?
How do you feel about what Cathy did?**

A Promise for Tomorrow Teacher Curriculum Unit Evaluation

Name _____ School _____

City _____ State _____

Grade Assignment _____ Number of Students _____

Date Taught _____

Please take a few moments to evaluate the JFI curriculum unit. We will use your input to update and revise our program to better serve students. Mail the evaluation to: The Jason Foundation, Inc., 18 Volunteer Drive, Hendersonville, TN 37075 or fax it to 615-264-0188.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

1. Was the JFI curriculum relevant to the needs of your students?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Were the teacher directions clear and easy to follow?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Were all of the materials needed to teach this program included in the curriculum?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, what additional materials are needed? _____

4. Would you recommend this curriculum unit to other educators?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. What part of the program did you like the best?

6. What part of the program did you like the least?

7. How could we improve our program to better meet the needs of your students?

A Promise for Tomorrow Student Assessment Form

Please take a minute to complete this form to the best of your ability. It is NOT a test. Please do not put your name, but we do request you list your school/organization name. The information from this assessment form will be used to help The Jason Foundation with modifications and/or revisions of our program(s).

School or Organization: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Date: _____ Grade Level: _____ Subject: _____

1. Name as many of the warning signs for suicidal thoughts as you can.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. What four things would you do if a friend confided in you that he/she was thinking about harming himself/herself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

3. What would you tell your friend if/she wanted you to promise not to tell anyone about his/her feelings concerning harming himself/herself?

4. Name two (2) resources (people or places) you would go to if you needed help for a friend in trouble.

1. _____
2. _____

Comments

Youth Suicide

What Do You Already Know? Pre-Assessment Circle The Correct Answer

1. Suicide is the _____ leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24.
A. First B. Second C. Third
2. It is estimated that over _____ young people between the age of 10 and 24 die by suicide each year in the United States.
A. 200 B. 100,000 C. 5,000
3. We lose a young person to suicide approximately every two hours.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
4. Which of these four things can one do to help a friend who is at-risk of suicide?
A. Promise to keep their feelings confidential. Talk them through their difficult time. Tell them what to do feel better. Tell them these feelings will pass and not to worry about them.
B. Listen, Insist on honesty, share Feelings, and Extend a helping hand to them.
C. Let them know these feeling aren't permanent. Let them know it is just a phase which will go away. Tell them most adults don't understand these kinds of thoughts. Tell them you will help and not to worry about it.
5. Talking to a person about his/her suicidal feelings will cause them to attempt suicide.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
6. People who are contemplating suicide almost always tell someone beforehand.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
7. Giving away prized possessions along with changes in behavior should never be considered a warning sign for suicidal feelings.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
8. Most young people never attempt suicide or suffer from suicidal thoughts.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
9. Suicide is never preventable.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
10. If a friend tells me that he/she is thinking about suicide, I must tell a responsible adult even if my friend becomes angry with me.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know

Youth Suicide

What Do You Already Know? Post-Assessment Circle The Correct Answer

1. Suicide is the _____ leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24.
A. First B. Second C. Third
2. It is estimated that over _____ young people between the age of 10 and 24 die by suicide each year in the United States.
A. 200 B. 100,000 C. 5,000
3. We lose a young person to suicide approximately every two hours.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
4. Which of these four things can one do to help a friend who is at-risk of suicide?
A. Promise to keep their feelings confidential. Talk them through their difficult time. Tell them what to do feel better. Tell them these feelings will pass and not to worry about them.
B. Listen, Insist on honesty, share Feelings, and Extend a helping hand to them.
C. Let them know these feeling aren't permanent. Let them know it is just a phase which will go away. Tell them most adults don't understand these kinds of thoughts. Tell them you will help and not to worry about it.
5. Talking to a person about his/her suicidal feelings will cause them to attempt suicide.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
6. People who are contemplating suicide almost always tell someone beforehand.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
7. Giving away prized possessions along with changes in behavior should never be considered a warning sign for suicidal feelings.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
8. Most young people never attempt suicide or suffer from suicidal thoughts.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
9. Suicide is never preventable.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know
10. If a friend tells me that he/she is thinking about suicide, I must tell a responsible adult even if my friend becomes angry with me.
A. True B. False C. Don't Know

Additional Resource Links

We suggest you check out the addresses prior to any distribution to students, teachers, and/or parents. Linked sites are not under the control of The Jason Foundation. The Jason Foundation, Inc. is not responsible for the contents of these sites. JFI is providing the sites only as a convenience, and the inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement of the site by The Jason Foundation.

The Jason Foundation
www.jasonfoundation.com

**National Strategy for
Suicide Prevention Summary:**
A summary available of the strategy for suicide prevention nationally.
www.sprc.org/library/nsspsummary.pdf

**American Association
of Suicidology:**
Listing of local crisis centers by state/resources/statistics
www.suicidology.org

**Suicide Prevention Action
Network USA (SPAN USA):**
A national leading advocacy organization. Updates on legislation both nationally and locally.
www.spanusa.org

Center for Disease Control (CDC):
Data and statistics (some by state) and information on suicide under "Health Topics A-Z". Click on suicide or youth risk behavior survey.
www.cdc.gov

References

Statistical data was primarily obtained from the following sources.

Center for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov

American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org

**American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention**
www.afsp.org

American Psychiatric Association
www.psych.org

**Suicide Prevention
Action Network USA**
www.spanusa.org

Mental Health America
www.nmha.org

**Academy of Child &
Adolescent Psychiatry**
www.aacap.org

**National Center for Injury
Prevention & Control**
www.cdc.gov/injury

Children's Safety Network
www.childrenssafetynetwork.org



Jason C. Flatt

March 20, 1981- July 16, 1997

The Story of The Jason Foundation, Inc.

The Jason Foundation's origin can be traced back to the life of one young man, Jason Flatt. Jason was a lively, athletic and bright sixteen-year-old who was excited about recently attaining his driver's license. He was a good student and looked forward to the upcoming football season. However, all of this excitement and anticipation ended on July 16, 1997, the day Jason took his own life. It took only one moment of a brash, irrational decision to take a son, a brother, and a friend from those who loved him. The lives of Jason's family and friends would never again be the same.

Following the initial shock of Jason's death, his family settled into the realization that he was gone; however, there were still questions unanswered. Why Jason? What made him take his own life? Trying to find a reason why this tragic event was not foreseen or clearly understood, we began to look into the problem of youth suicide for the answers. After discovering the overwhelming statistics about the prevalence of youth suicide, a frightening realization that any teenager could be at risk for suicidal thoughts or actions emerged. There was a clear need for more information and more resources for help to deal with youth suicide, including a lack of organizations dedicated to facing this "Silent Epidemic". Jason's family and friends made a resolution that the silence about the epidemic of youth suicide would go on no longer and thus, The Jason Foundation, Inc. was born.

Just three months after Jason's death, with the enormous efforts of many, The Jason Foundation, Inc. began its official organizational work in October of 1997. The mission of the organization was to take a leading role in the awareness, education, and prevention of youth suicide. One of the first endeavors to accomplish this mission was to develop educational seminars aimed at parents, youth and specific organizations that work with youth. These educational seminars were designed to provide information and statistics about the problem of youth suicide. Additionally, these programs empower individuals by teaching them ways of dealing with someone who might be suicidal. In order to reach the large target audience of young adults effectively and efficiently, the youth seminar evolved into the "A Promise for Tomorrow" educational program. This self-contained educational program has been developed to work within a school curriculum or other organizational settings that want to break the silence about youth suicide. It now serves as a complete teaching plan with multimedia-coordinated lessons and real-life situations to educate students about the problem of youth suicide and how breaking the silence can save a life, even his or her own.

The "A Promise for Tomorrow" program, as well as every other program and activity of The Jason Foundation, Inc., is dedicated to the memory of my brother, Jason Flatt, and to all the young people who have lost their tomorrows to this Silent Epidemic of youth suicide.

John A. Flatt, M.D.

Corporate Vice President

The Jason Foundation, Inc.

