

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION

Student Support Division

OVERVIEW

According to the department of health, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington youth between the ages of 10 and 24. Suicide rates among Washington's youth remain higher than the national average. An increasing body of research shows an association between adverse childhood experiences such as trauma, violence, or abuse, and decreased student learning and achievement. Teachers and other school staff who interact with students daily are in a prime position to recognize signs of emotional or behavioral distress and make appropriate referrals. School personnel need effective training to help build skills and confidence to identify and assist youth in seeking help.

Contact Us

Suicide Prevention Program

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Suicide Prevention Program Web Page

<http://www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter/YouthSuicide/SuicidePrevention.aspx>

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SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTED THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION APPROACH.

The goal of the suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention program is to provide resources to support Educational Service Districts and school districts in the development of suicide prevention plans as per ESHB 1336 (2013). Educators are not necessarily trained to address significant social, emotional, or behavioral issues exhibited by youth. Best practice guidelines suggest that school districts should form partnerships with qualified behavioral health and primary care agencies to provide support.

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, each school district must adopt a plan for recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students, including but not limited to indicators of possible substance abuse, violence, and youth suicide. ESBH1336 (2013)

State funding (SSB 6431, 2014) tasks OSPI with focusing on the following priorities:

Technical Assistance for Schools and Educational Service Districts – as ESDs and Districts establish plans based on the criteria listed in ESHB 1336, OSPI is working to gain an understanding of the best practices in suicide prevention planning and to provide examples of what is working for other districts across the state and nationwide. OSPI currently consults with the Department of Health and the Professional Educator Standards Board to maintain the list of approved trainings that meet the requirements for suicide prevention training for Educational Staff Associate certification.

Draft Model Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Plan – in response to HB1336, OSPI and the Youth Suicide Prevention Program reviewed best practice language and policy recommendations for school districts and compiled a draft model plan that is available on the OSPI Suicide Prevention web page. This model plan includes prevention, intervention, and postvention planning documents.

Forefront Innovations in Suicide Prevention – OSPI contracts with University of Washington's Forefront to provide direct support for coordinators in Okanogan, Stevens, and Island Counties to coordinate suicide prevention community coalitions. The coalitions use a community readiness model to plan and implement suicide prevention strategies in the communities with local stakeholder involvement. Forefront provides training for school staff and community members including SafeTALK which meets the required training for ESA certification, and LEARN which is a recognition and referral training appropriate for parents and community members.

Participation in Statewide Suicide Prevention Planning – ESHB 2315, (2014) required the Department of Health (DOH) complete a plan for statewide suicide prevention by November 15, 2015. OSPI participated in the development of the plan, and will continue to partner with DOH, the Department of Social and Health Services, and other stakeholders on plan implementation.