



# September is.....Suicide Prevention Month

**Suicide prevention** refers to the collective efforts of local community organizations, mental health practitioners, and related professionals to reduce the incidence of suicide through education, awareness, and services.

**Suicide** is defined as death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

## School and Classroom Activities to Promote Suicide Prevention Month

### Activity: “Know the Signs” Campaign

- Create school-wide awareness on the signs of depression and suicide
- Display the “Know the Signs” posters/materials throughout the school and in classrooms
- Available for download at <http://suicideispreventable.org> (Click on Resource Center tab-Posters and Brochures)
- Hold a tabling event during lunch time and have material available to handout



### Activity: Educational Workshops and Presentations

- Contact LAUSD School Mental Health to request staff trainings and/or parent workshops on suicide prevention and other mental health topics
- For a listing of topics, visit <http://smh.lausd.net> and click on Programs and Services
- Contact Ailleth Tom to request a workshop, presentation or training: email [ailleth.tom@lausd.net](mailto:ailleth.tom@lausd.net) phone (213) 241-3841

### Activity: Educational Assembly and Presentations

- Student assembly webinar and discussion questions
  - Student classroom presentations, facilitation guide and lesson plans
- Available for download at <http://www.walkinourshoes.org/for-grownups>

### Activity: Interactive Website

Share the Walk In Our Shoes interactive website in the classroom.

- Through this activity, students will be able to diminish attitudes of stigma and gain knowledge of mental illness.
- Click on a shoe and learn about each person's journey with mental health
- Students can create their own “shoe” and their own story <https://www.walkinourshoes.org>

### Activity: Film Contest

- Directing Change is part of Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement and statewide efforts to prevent suicide, reduce stigma and discrimination related to mental illness, and to promote the mental health and wellness of students.
- Promote and encourage student ideas and thoughts on how they can create awareness through film
- Provide contest rules and information
- Deadline to register March 1, 2016  
[www.directingchange.org](http://www.directingchange.org)

## Be the Change: Promote Awareness and Stigma Reduction

- **Educate.** Inform staff and students that in many cases suicide can be preventable.
- **Engage.** Discuss with students and staff how you can work together to reduce stigma and increase help-seeking behavior.
- **Empower.** Foster resiliency through encouraging students to know the signs and where they can get help.
- **Embrace.** Make your office or classroom a safe space where all students feel welcome to get help.



## Other Specially Recognized Days in September

### Addiction Recovery Month

Promotes the societal benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery for mental and substance use disorders. In addition, it is an opportunity to celebrate people in recovery, honor the contributions of treatment and service providers, as well as promote the message that recovery in all its forms is possible.

#### Activity: In Classroom information announcement

- Have teachers share the importance of living well and the benefits of being on a pathway to wellness
- Remind students that they can make a difference by making healthy choices and supporting someone in recovery

**Prompt Example:** There are four major dimensions that support a life of recovery: Health: Overcome or manage one's disease(s) or symptoms – and make informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being;

**Home:** Have a stable and safe place to live; **Purpose:** Participate in meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteer opportunities, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, as well as have the independence, income, and resources to participate in society

**Community:** Enjoy relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

For more information visit:

<http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>

<http://www.recoverymonth.gov/Recovery-Month-Kit.aspx>

### International Day of Peace, September 21<sup>st</sup>

The United Nations General Assembly devotes this day to strengthening the ideals of peace. This year's Day of Peace theme is "Partnerships for Peace-Dignity for All", which aims to highlight the importance of all segments of society to work together to strive for peace.

- Conduct a role play exercise on how to resolve conflict, along with a discussion of how conflict resolution relates to peace.

For more information visit:

<http://www.un.org/>

# Understanding Suicide

Suicide (i.e., taking one's own life) is a serious yet preventable public health problem that affects even young people. For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death. It results in approximately 4600 lives lost each year. The top three methods used in suicides of young people include firearm (45%), suffocation (40%), and poisoning (8%).

Deaths from youth suicide are only part of the problem. More young people survive suicide attempts than actually die.

Suicide affects all youth, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Boys are more likely than girls to die from suicide. Of the reported suicides in the 10 to 24 age group, 81% of the deaths were males and 19% were females. Girls, however, are more likely to report attempting suicide than boys.

### Risk Factors

- History of depression, mental illness or substance/alcohol abuse disorders
- Family history of suicide or suicide in community
- Presence of a firearm or rope
- Hopelessness
- Isolation or lack of social support
- Impulsivity
- Situational crises
- Incarceration

### What You Can Do

\*Ask. Stay calm and ask directly, "Are you thinking of killing?"

\*Listen. Create a safe environment where they will be comfortable to express their feelings. Do not judge, listen with compassion.

\*Action If it is safe, calmly remove any means that could be used for self-injury. Do not leave them alone or assume they are ok to "walk off their thoughts". Escort them to the nearest "designated reporter", hospital, or mental health professional.

### Hotlines

**Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Hotline**

**1 (877) 727-4747**

**County Crisis Line 1 (800) 854-7771**

**Trevor Lifeline 1(866) 488-7386**

**Teen Line 1(800) 852-8336**

**LAUSD SMH 1 (213) 241-3841**

For more information visit:

<http://smh.lausd.net>

<http://www.cdc.gov>

### Warning Signs

- Suicide threats. Both direct ("I want to kill myself") and indirect ("I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up") threats need to be taken seriously.
- Suicide notes and plans. The greater the planning (intent to commit suicide, means to do so, and a plan to execute), the greater the risk of suicidal behavior.
- Prior suicidal behavior.
- Making final arrangements. Giving away prized possessions, writing a will, and/or making funeral arrangements may be warning signs of impending suicidal behavior.
- Preoccupation with death. Excessive talking, drawing, reading, and/or writing about death may suggest suicidal thinking.
- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings. Thoughts and feelings may be affected by a loss such as a breakup, school suspension, academic failure, or difficulty at home.

