



Helping Every Living Person (HELP) Depression and Suicide Prevention Curriculum

Setting
Schools

Type of Program
Education & Training

NSSP Goals Addressed
1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 6.5

Program Description

Developed by Washington State's Youth Suicide Prevention Program, the *Helping Every Living Person: Depression and Suicide Prevention Curriculum (HELP)* educates students about depression and suicide prevention. *HELP* consists of four 45-minute lesson plans on the following topics:

- Stress and depression.
- Risk factors and warning signs of suicidal behavior.
- Suicide intervention skills.
- Practice of intervention skills and problem-solving skills (for overcoming obstacles).

HELP lessons integrate interactive teaching and participatory learning principles. The curriculum has a problem-solving orientation and is based on issues that students currently deal with, such as keeping confidences. Lessons are supplemented by a DVD, *A Cry for Help: How to Help a Friend Who is Depressed or Suicidal*, which features young people discussing some of the difficult issues associated with depression and suicide. The program does not take a therapeutic approach; rather, it empowers students to recognize the warning signs of suicide in their peers and to seek help. The curriculum materials are ideally suited for 9th grade students and can be incorporated into existing health classes.

The *HELP* Curriculum is based on the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) Guidelines for School-based Suicide Prevention Programs (found in Section II of the Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention).

Program Objectives

After participating in the curriculum, students should have:

1. Increased knowledge about stress, depression, and suicide prevention strategies.
2. Increased willingness to communicate about suicide with their peers.
3. Increased knowledge of helping resources within their school and their community.

Implementation Essentials

- Teachers should identify helping resources in the school and in the community prior to student instruction.
- A school-based crisis management plan, such as those found in the *Maine Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Guidelines* (found in Section III of the BPR) should be implemented prior to student instruction.

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Costs

HELP curriculum materials, including the program DVD, are available for \$100 (including shipping/handling) to schools in Washington State and \$250 for schools outside of WA.

While training for those implementing the *HELP* curriculum is strongly recommended, it is not required. The 3-hour training may be available for free for Washington State institutions and for a small fee for those outside of Washington. For additional information about training, contact [Sue Eastgard](#).

*The content of practices listed in Section III (Adherence to Standards) of the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry address specific goals of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and have been reviewed by a panel of three suicide prevention experts and found to meet standards of accuracy, safety, and programmatic guidelines. Practices were not reviewed for evidence of effectiveness. Additional information about the Best Practices Registry can be found at www.sprc.org.

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