

## Strategies for Involving Youth in Suicide Prevention

*Preventing Suicide in Regions VII and VIII*  
Communities Working Together to Implement  
the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention in  
the Prairies and Mountain West  
October 28 – 30, 2003

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- Agency founded in 1987
- Established **KUTO Helpline in 1989**
- Launched **Peer Helper Team in 1992**
- Partnered with **Guide to Fast Living in 1996**
- Hosted 1<sup>st</sup> **WWW Youth Forum & Workshop in 2002**
- Collaborated with **SWAD & Spotlight Theater in 2003**

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## Key Value Statements

- Help young people find the strength and hope to cope *positively with the pressures and stressors in their lives*
- Encourage youth to identify and build positive skills  
*to manage stress, mediate conflict and work through their feelings*
- Serve as a clearinghouse *for information, resources and training to better address youth depression awareness, suicide prevention and crisis intervention*
- Promote an active community *based awareness, intervention and methodology approach to suicide prevention*
- Incorporate the core goals *of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention in reducing the incidence of suicide in our community*

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Telephone Hotline:  
***KUTO Crisis Helpline***

- Established in 1989
- Confidential telephone hotline staffed by youth volunteers for youth callers
- Non-judgmental, supportive service for troubled youth to express their concerns, explore feelings, identify stressors, and realize effective coping mechanisms

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**Helpline Details**

**VOLUNTEERS:**

- Volunteer average age: 16 ½
- AAS recommended Curriculum
- 46hr. Training plus Observation & Consultation
- Per month = 9 – 12hr  
3 shift minimum, 1weekend
- Length of tenure: 1.75yrs
- Public, private & parochial  
Community service, service learning
- 80% are female

**OPERATION:**

- Staffed: 4p -10 week days  
4p - 12a weekends
- Calls/month = +/-100
- Since 1993 = 14,586  
(10 yr. ave + 125/mo.)
- Key Caller issues: *information, relationships, stress, dating, depression, parents, third party*
- 9.1% express suicidal ideation
- 24% were referred by friends/family or counselor

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Gatekeeper Training:  
***KUTO Peer Helper Team***

- Peer Helpers are young people who serve as 'gatekeepers' in their schools
- Frontline serving as a link between adult & students
- Two-step skill building, communication and interaction
- Partner facilitation
- 'Structured Learning'
- Schools utilize their team as necessary

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Peer Mentoring  
*Winning With Wellness*

- Peer initiated service learning
- Development of positive life skills through team work and experiential activities
- Peer created dialogue and activities that inspire healthy lifestyle choices
- Collaboration with community resources and service providers

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*WWW Goals & Outcomes*

**GOALS:**

- Create enriched campus environment by way of student activism
- Broker partnerships
- Encourage teamwork and leadership
- Greater awareness of prevention and intervention strategies
- Modification of behaviors and attitudes
- 'Hands on' practice *'teens helping teens help themselves'*

**OUTCOMES:**

- Skills to serve as positive influences and mentors
- Inventory of 'life-skills'
- Realize consequences before negative habits are developed
- 'Positive peer pressure'
- Improve school environment regarding public health and wellness issues

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School Based Student Group

**SWAD** (*Students Working Against Depression*)

- **Background:** *founded by student in response to suicide of classmate*
- **Mission:** *to educate, inform and support student groups in exposing the causes, effects and current treatments for depression*
  - *Direct positive change in their community through depression education and support*
  - *Prevent depression and it's ill-effects*
  - *Serve as an information & resource clearinghouse*

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## Creative Avenues

### **Guide to Fast Living**

- Interactive website
- Mission: *delivering the message that there is hope*
- Goals:
  - *Positive outlets for negative feelings*
  - *Inspire better coping methods*
  - *'Livesourcing'*

### **Spotlight Theater**

- Reflective theater
- Mission: *bring issue-oriented theater to schools*
- Goals:
  - Forum for diversity, complexity & management of 'problems'
  - Awareness of the possible consequences of choices
  - Empathy for those dealing with life's roadblocks

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## Strategies for Success

### **Assure the Buy-in**

- *Brainstorming*
- *Clear Picture*
- *Different Strokes*
- *Like Minded*
- *Two Birds*
- *The Reward*
- *KISS*
- *It's Okay*

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