Youth suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention guidelines: A resource for school personnel

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Youth suicide guidelines for school personnel [1]

This guide describes the components of a comprehensive school-based suicide prevention program. It also includes an assessment form for schools to determine if they are ready to manage suicidal behavior; detailed guidelines for implementing suicide intervention and postvention in schools; and appendices with related materials, including forms and handouts.

The Maine Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Guidelines were developed for school personnel in Maine but are suitable for schools anywhere. The manual provides rationale for developing protocols and includes discussion on planning for school-based suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. The manual contains a self-assessment, “Is Your School Prepared to Manage Suicidal Behavior?” and numerous appendices, including sample forms for documentation, announcements, issues to consider when a student returns following a mental health related absence, media guidelines, and other resources. The likelihood of students, faculty or staff encountering a suicidal student is real. Advanced planning to prevent youth suicide and to intervene in a crisis can significantly improve the ability of school personnel to respond quickly and effectively, with the least disruption to school routines, when suicidal behavior becomes an issue. The Guidelines were developed through a review of the literature followed by input from various stakeholder groups, including the Maine School Management Association, the Maine Principals’ Association, the Maine Attorney General’s Office, and various school officials. In 2002, the first edition was published and disseminated to all Maine school superintendents. The document was revised in 2006.

Objectives
The Guidelines provide information that should help users to:
1. Understand the nature of youth suicide, including the myths and facts, risk and protective factors, warning signs and appropriate intervention steps.
2. Provide guidance to better enable schools to establish school-based protocols for suicide prevention, crisis intervention, and postvention.
3. Build connections within a community and among regional support services.
4. Educate school personnel, parents, and students about effective suicide prevention and intervention.

Implementation Essential:
• The Guidelines contain some information that is unique to Maine (statistics, applicable laws, and resources);
these should be changed to reflect circumstances in the state of use.

Links within this resource