



SOS Signs of Suicide Middle School and High School Prevention Programs

Date: 2016(For resources, this is the publication date. For programs, this is the date posted.)

Information

Type: Program/Practice, Education/Training Program, Program with Evidence of Effectiveness

Organization: MindWise Innovations (formerly Screening for Mental Health)

Costs:

Visit the [program website](#) [1] for training options and costs. Also see the [archived NREPP listing](#) [2].

Contact

Visit the [program website](#) [1].

SOS Signs of Suicide (SOS) is a universal, school-based prevention program designed for middle school (ages 11-13) and high school (ages 13-17) students. The goals of this program are:

- Decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing student knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- Encourage personal help-seeking and/or help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- Reduce the stigma of mental illness and acknowledge the importance of seeking help or treatment
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention through “gatekeeper” education
- Encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships to support student mental health

Through a video and guided discussion, students learn to identify warning signs of suicide and depression in a single class period. At the end of the session, students complete a seven-question screening for depression (anonymous or signed – the school can decide) to further encourage help-seeking and connect students at risk with trusted adults. The curriculum raises awareness about behavioral health and encourages students to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) when worried about themselves or their peers. Schools can purchase a program license through MindWise Innovations (formerly Screening for Mental Health, Inc.).

The annual license provides access to planning materials, classroom videos, curricula, and screening forms as well as resources for training faculty, staff, and parents. Although training is not required to deliver SOS, many schools/districts prefer a structured training to help increase awareness and ensure fidelity to the program. MindWise Innovations offers an in-person Train-the-Trainer workshop that prepares participants to train students, faculty/staff, and parents in youth suicide prevention.

Designation as a "Program with Evidence of Effectiveness"

SPRC designated this intervention as a “program with evidence of effectiveness” based on its inclusion in SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).



Outcome(s) Reviewed (Evidence Rating)*

- Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors (Promising)
- Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs about Mental Health (Promising)
- Receipt of Mental Health and/or Substance Use Treatment (Ineffective)
- Social Competence Related to Help-Seeking (specifically, seeking help when feeling depressed or suicidal) (Ineffective)

Read more about this [program's ratings](#) [2].

* NREPP changed its review criteria in 2015. This program was reviewed under the post-2015 criteria. To help practitioners find programs that fit their needs, NREPP reviews the evidence for specific outcomes, not overall programs. Each outcome was assigned an evidence rating of Effective, Promising, or Ineffective. A single program may have multiple outcomes with different ratings. *When considering programs, we recommend (a) assessing whether the specific outcomes achieved by the program are a fit for your needs; and (b) examining the strength of evidence for each outcome.*

Implementation Essentials

- SOS provides school staff planning materials to help staff prepare for timely follow up. SOS encourages students to seek help through the ACT: Acknowledge, Care, Tell message. Refer to the Quick Start Guide and Planning Checklist.
- A school-based crisis management plan, such as that found in the [Maine Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Guidelines](#) [3], should be created prior to implementing the SOS Signs of Suicide program.

2012 NSSP Objectives Addressed:

Objective 5.2: Encourage community-based settings to implement effective programs and provide education that promote wellness and prevent suicide and related behaviors.

Objective 7.1: Provide training on suicide prevention to community groups that have a role in the prevention of suicide and related behaviors.

Links within this resource

[1] <https://www.mindwise.org/what-we-offer/suicide-prevention-programs/>

[2] <https://sprc.org/sites/default/files/SOS%20Signs%20of%20Suicide%20Middle%20School%20and%20High%20School%20Prevention%20Programs.pdf>

[3] <https://sprc.org/resources-programs/youth-suicide-prevention-intervention-and-postvention-guidelines-resource-school>

