



CALIFORNIA: Making an Impact: Drama Students Address Mental Health, Suicide Prevention through Poetry and Skits

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[The Fresno Bee](#) [1]

High school students participating in a youth theater program in Fresno County, California created and performed in a theatrical production focused on the theme of mental illness and suicide prevention. Designed to be interactive and informational, the production included original song, dance, and poetry, in addition to skits that allowed audience members to role-play scenarios related to mental illness and suicide. Students also created artwork as “messages of hope” to be donated to local charities. The theater program, called Stages, collaborated with Fresno County Behavioral Health Services, the Central Valley Suicide Prevention Hotline, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, training students how to identify and assist individuals who may be at risk for suicide. “We chose [a theme] that affects youth in our community,” said Stages Director and Program Administrator Aaron Bryan. “Teenagers are very intuitive, and we want to challenge them to look beyond themselves, to think about others and see how they might be able to help.”

Spark Extra! Learn more about [suicide prevention among adolescents](#) [2].

Links within this resource

[1] <http://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/community/clovis-news/article94822667.html>

[2] <http://www.sprc.org/populations/adolescents>

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