MICHIGAN: Inside West Bloomfield School’s Attempt to Combat Suicide, Help Students Cope

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After several student suicide deaths, West Bloomfield High School decided to take a different approach to helping students. Part of that approach was implementing a new curriculum designed for their school, called Prepare U. Described as an “experiential mental health” program, it teaches students about mental health issues and provides them with resources and coping skills. Freshmen complete the program in 15 classes over five weeks and cover topics such as anger, anxiety, relationships, family systems, and social media, mainly in a discussion format. Whether students choose to speak or just listen, they learn from what others share. “We’re being taught to let the kids have time to figure out what they want to say, instead of us constantly directing,” said health teacher Keith Garrison. Three schools in two other states are now using the curriculum, and a few more are planning to use it next year.

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