Suicide Prevention: It’s Not That Simple

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Office of School Safety and Climate

• School Safety
• School Climate
• Student Safety and Well-being
“School climate is the plate”
What is School Climate?

“School Climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School Climate is based on patterns of students’, parents’, and school personnel’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal interactions, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.” -National School Climate Center
Feeling

- Where we go
- What we do
- Who we do it with
Relationships and Connections
Positive School Climate = Prevention

Schools with positive school climates engage students in developing strong relationships with staff and peers, increasing the likelihood that *students will quickly report potential threats* to trusted adults within the school.
Positive School Climate = Prevention

A positive school climate helps prevent emergencies because it *reduces the incidence of behaviors that contribute to crisis*

- Violence
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Substance abuse
- Suicide
Safe and Supportive Schools: What do we do?

- School Climate Star Ratings
- School Climate Surveys
- School Safety
- Emergency Preparedness
- Crisis Response
- Student Discipline
- Student Attendance
- Suicide Prevention
- Substance Abuse
- Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs
- Bullying Prevention
- Child Abuse Prevention
- Human Trafficking
- Wellness
GSHS Survey Data Elements (91 questions)

- **Connectedness**, peer social support, adult social support, cultural acceptance, and social/civic learning
- **Physical environment**, physical activity, school safety, physical fights, and peer victimization (bullying)
- **Drug and alcohol data**, including usage of tobacco/vape products, illicit drugs, prescription drugs, and alcohol
- **Self-harming, suicidality, and mental health** (anxiety, behavioral changes, depression, eating disorders, fear, mood swings, and out-of-control behavior)
Risk and Protective Factors Are Correlated and Cumulative

Risk factors tend to be positively correlated with one another and negatively correlated to protective factors. In other words, people with some risk factors have a greater chance of experiencing even more risk factors, and they are less likely to have protective factors.
Prevention Efforts Can Be Associated With Multiple Outcomes

Though preventive interventions are often designed to produce a single outcome, both risk and protective factors can be associated with multiple outcomes. For example, negative life events are associated with substance use as well as anxiety, depression, and other behavioral health issues. Prevention efforts targeting a set of risk or protective factors have the potential to produce positive effects in multiple areas.
Safe and Supportive Schools: What do we do?

- School Climate Star Ratings
- School Climate Surveys
- School Safety
- Emergency Preparedness
- Crisis Response
- Student Discipline
- Student Attendance

- Suicide Prevention
- Substance Abuse
- Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs
- Bullying Prevention
- Child Abuse Prevention
- Human Trafficking
- Wellness
Suicide Prevention
Interrelated and Overlapping Mosaic of Suicide Risk Factors

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Chronic Health Conditions
- Mental Health Conditions
- Stressful Life Events
- Substance Misuse
- Relationship Challenges

Suicide

Interrelated and Overlapping Mosaic of Suicide Risk Factors
2018-2019 Student Survey Results

*Statewide results - 689,986 students (grades 6-12)

• **17%** (116,247 students) have been bullied or threatened by other students in the past 30 days.

• **33%** (228,627 students) have been picked on or teased at school in the past 30 days.

• **9%** (58,668 students) have received threatening or harassing text messages from other students in the past 30 days.

• **10%** (67,936 students) have been mocked, tormented, or harassed on a social networking site by other students in past 30 days.

• **23%** (157,517 students) have been repeatedly made fun of or had rumors spread about them.
Interrelated and Overlapping Mosaic of Suicide Risk Factors

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- Chronic Health Conditions
- Stressful Life Events
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2018-2019 Student Survey Results
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• 26% (178,951 students) have been concerned about their physical safety at school.

• 14% (97,024 students) never feel safe in their school.

• 3% (18,855 students) have brought a weapon to school in the past 30 days.

• 7% (48,369 students) have been offered, sold or given illegal drugs on school property in the past 12 months.
Interrelated and Overlapping Mosaic of Suicide Risk Factors

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Suicide
2018-2019 Student Survey Results
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• **9%** (58,549 students) had at least one drink of alcohol in past 30 days.

• **7%** (44,616 students) used marijuana in the past 30 days.

• **9%** (63,994 students) smoked an electronic vapor product in the past 30 days.

• **2%** (12,001 students) used methamphetamines in the past 30 days.

• **2%** (13,491) used heroin in the past 30 days.
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45% (312,120 students) have felt sad or withdrawn in the past 30 days.

32% (217,339 students) have felt suddenly overwhelmed with fear for no reason, sometimes including a racing heart or fast breathing.

13% (86,019 students) have experienced severely out-of-control behavior that could hurt themselves or others.

13% (90,250 students) have avoided food, thrown up, or used laxatives to make themselves lose weight.
Interrelated and Overlapping Mosaic of Suicide Risk Factors

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- Chronic Health Conditions
- Stressful Life Events
- Relationship Challenges
- Mental Health Conditions
- Substance Misuse
New responses for 2018-2019
Self Harm / Suicidal Ideation Questions

- I have not....
- Demands of school work
- Problems with peers or friends
- Family reasons
- Being bullied
- Social Media
- School grades or performance
- School discipline or punishment
- Argument or breakup with a partner/girlfriend/boyfriend
- Dating violence
- Drugs or alcohol
- Other

Students may now choose all responses that apply to them.
2018-2019 Student Survey Results
*Statewide results - 689,986 students (grades 6-12)

16% (108,494) students have seriously considered harming themselves on purpose in the past 12 months.

Most likely reasons:
1. Other (most common answer)
2. Family reasons
3. Problems with peers or friends
4. School grades or performance
5. Demands of school work
6. Argument or breakup with partner/girlfriend/boyfriend
7. Being bullied
8. Social media
9. School discipline or punishment
10. Dating Violence
11. Drugs or alcohol
2018-2019 Student Survey Results
*Statewide results - 689,986 students (grades 6-12)

9% (61,978) students have harmed themselves on purpose in the past 12 months.

Most likely reasons:
1. Other (most common answer)
2. Family reasons
3. Problems with peers or friends
4. School grades or performance
5. Demands of school work
6. Argument or breakup with partner/girlfriend/boyfriend
7. Being bullied
8. Social media
9. School discipline or punishment
10. Dating Violence
11. Drugs or alcohol
2018-2019 Student Survey Results

*Statewide results - 689,986 students (grades 6-12)

11% (77,881) students have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months.

Most likely reasons:

1. Other (most common answer)
2. Family reasons
3. Problems with peers or friends
4. School grades or performance
5. Demands of school work
6. Being bullied
7. Argument or breakup with partner/girlfriend/boyfriend
8. Social media
9. School discipline or punishment
10. Dating Violence
11. Drugs or alcohol
2018-2019 Student Survey Results

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6% (37,508 students) have attempted suicide in the past 12 months.

Most likely reasons:
1. Other (most common answer)
2. Family Reasons
3. Problems with peers or friends
4. School grades or performance
5. Demands of school work
6. Being bullied
7. Argument or breakup with a partner/girlfriend/boyfriend
8. Social media
9. School discipline or punishment
10. Dating Violence
11. Drugs or alcohol
2018-2019 Student Survey Results

*IStatewide results - 689,986 students (grades 6-12)*

I know an adult at school I can talk with if I need help

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>326,345</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>202,830</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>70,302</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>90,509</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76% Agree – 529,175

Only 47% **STRONGLY** Agree – 326,345
2018-2019 Student Survey Results
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53%
363,345
Do not strongly agree that
There is an adult at school that I can talk with if I need help
I know an adult that I can talk with at school if I need help

- Strongly Agree: 47 in 2017-18, 47 in 2018-19
- Somewhat Agree: 31 in 2017-18, 29 in 2018-19
- Somewhat Disagree: 10 in 2017-18, 10 in 2018-19
- Strongly Disagree: 12 in 2017-18, 13 in 2018-19
Suicide Protective Factors: Connectedness

High School Students are Less Likely to Attempt Suicide if They Trust Adults, Study Says

By Kate Elizabeth Queram, Staff Correspondent

SEPTEMBER 17, 2019 05:09 PM ET

New research about rural high school students found that suicide prevention should involve fostering strong connections to adult staff members.
Interrelated and Overlapping Mosaic of Suicide Risk Factors

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Suicide
Presenting Problem

Interested

Task-Driven

Problem

Purpose-Driven

Basic Problem

Committed

Remedy

Solution
Problem → Task-Driven → Interested → Presenting Problem → Solution

Purpose-Driven → Basic Problem → Committed → Remedy
Some things are hard to talk about.
Our children are not doomed.
Suicide Protective Factors

- Connectedness
  - Life Skills (Problem Solving, Coping, Adaptability to Change)
  - Effective Health Care (Behavioral and Physical)
  - Beliefs Discouraging Suicide (Cultural, Religious, Personal)
  - Self-Esteem Sense of Purpose
Give me strength!

• People
• Places
• Activities
  • Mental
  • Physical
  • Spiritual
  • Emotional
Offering a holistic education to each and every child in our state.
Professional Development

• Types of training
  • Genres?
  • Topics?
  • Audiences?

• Types of trainers
  • Experts?
  • Peers?
  • National?

• Logistics
  • Length?
  • Format?
  • Dates?
When people meet you, they aren't meeting you at the beginning of your story...you are a book-in-progress.

-ACEs Connection
SafeSchoolsGeorgia
@GaDOESafeSchool

Promoting positive school climate through safe and supportive practices in Georgia schools.

@gadoesafeschool
I want someone to look at me and say, 
“Because of you I didn’t give up.”
-Mahatma Gandhi
QUESTIONS??

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