

An Evaluation of the Efficacy of School-Based Suicide Prevention Programs

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Abstract : The following review has identified specific programs, as well as the elements of these programs, that have been shown to be most effective in preventing suicide in schools. Suicide is an issue that affects many students each year. Although this is a prominent issue, there are few prevention programs used within schools. The primary objective of most prevention programs is to reduce risk factors such as depression and hopelessness, and increase protective factors like support systems and help-seeking behaviors. Most programs include a gatekeeper training model, education component, peer support group, and/or counseling/treatment. Research shows that some of these programs, like the Signs of Suicide and Youth Aware of Mental Health Programme, are effective in reducing suicide behaviors and increasing protective factors. These programs have been implemented in many countries across the world and have shown promising results. Since schools can provide easy access to adolescents, implement education programs, and train staff members and students how to identify and to report suicide behaviors, school-based programs seem to be the best way to prevent suicide among adolescents. Early intervention may be an effective way to prevent suicide. Although, since early intervention is not always an option, school-based programs in high schools have also been shown to decrease suicide attempts by up to 50%. As a result of this presentation, participants will be able to 1.) list at least 2 evidence-based suicide prevention programs, 2.) identify at least 3 factors which protect against suicide, and 3.) describe at least 3 risk factors for suicide.

Keywords : school, suicide, prevention, programs

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