



Dear Parent or Guardian:

The adolescent years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions—difficult for students and their parents. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression—which is treatable—is a leading risk factor for suicide.

To proactively address this, **Willis Junior High School** is offering depression awareness and suicide prevention education as part of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program. The program encourages students to seek help if they are concerned about themselves or a friend. The SOS Program is the only youth suicide prevention program that has demonstrated an improvement in students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression, as well as a reduction in actual suicide attempts. Listed on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, the SOS Program has shown a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts by 40-64% in randomized control studies (Aseltine et al., 2007; Schilling et al., 2016).

Our goals in participating in this program include:

- To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness
- To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
- To provide students education on how to identify serious depression and potential suicide risk in themselves or a friend
- To impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a trusted adult about their concerns
- To teach students who they can turn to at school for help, if they need it

Your student will be receiving this curriculum in **their 1st period class**.

We are enclosing:

- **a parent newsletter with information about youth depression and its related risks**
- **a list of local resources**

If you do **NOT** wish your child to participate in the SOS Program in school, please **notify Willis Junior High School by September 16, 2019 via email or phone; chapin.michele@cusd80.com or 480-883-5726**. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in this program.

Sincerely,

Michele Chapin

7th Grade Counselor

Youth Depression & Suicide Local & National Resources

One Call Can Make a Difference

You can get help for your child using the following community and national resources. You may need to call several places to determine which one best meets your needs.

Community Mental Health Resources

- **Southwest Behavioral Health & Services:** 602-351-6960 www.sbhservices.org
 - **Oasis Behavioral Health:** 480-917-9301 www.OBHHospital.com
 - **Aurora Behavioral Health System:** 480-345-5420 www.auroraarizona.com
 - **Family Service Agency:** 480-507-8619 www.Fsaphoenix.org
 - **La Frontera EMPACT-SPC:** 480-784-1500 www.lafrontera-empact.org
 - **Maricopa Crisis Line** (602) 222-9444 <https://www.crisisnetwork.org/>
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National Mental Health Resources

- **1-800-237-TALK (8255) National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call for 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
- **Text “ACT” to 741741:** The National Crisis Text line will connect you with free, confidential assistance.
- **<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>** Find quality treatment options close to home using Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration’s (SAMHSA) confidential and anonymous online treatment locator.
- **1-800-662-HELP (4357) SAMHSA’s National Helpline:** Call for 24/7, free and confidential information for individuals and family members facing substance abuse and mental health issues.
- **602-248-TEEN (8336) Teen Lifeline:** Call for 24/7, free and confidential support for people having concerns with suicide, depression, bullying, and conflict or for concerns for one or your loved ones.
- **1-866-488-7836 Trevor Lifeline:** Trevor Project has trained counselors 24/7 to support a young person in crisis, feeling suicidal, or in need of a safe and judgment-free place to talk. Trevor Project serves all youth and is sensitive to the LGBTQ+ community.