Suicide Prevention Activities Tip Sheet

Want to host a great suicide prevention event, but don't know where to start? We highly encourage you to speak to your students about what they would like to do and see if they can take on some of the responsibility of planning and implementing the events. This tip sheet can also be a good starting point: we have several recommended activities, plus case studies of California schools who have hosted their own versions on their campuses. The activities are listed from the easiest to the most involved, and the complexity of your event will depend on your school's strengths, interests, and needs. Regardless of the type of event you plan, make sure to talk about suicide prevention as an action that anyone can take, and to leave time for debriefing afterwards. Have at least one counselor available for students and/or community members to connect with, in case any of the activities unearth strong emotions. Be sure to share this tip sheet with clubs on campus!

Create a Lime Green Ribbon Campaign

Distribute green ribbons to all participating classes and encourage students to wear the ribbon throughout the week and beyond. When students are asked about the ribbon, make sure they know that the lime green ribbon is a symbol of hope, shows that they are willing to be open about mental health/suicide prevention, and that they can talk about the difficult things others may be going through, especially in terms of those who are thinking about suicide.

Print out templates of green ribbons that students can decorate, label with their name, and write out one thing they can do to support suicide prevention at your school. Post the green ribbons in a central location to show how many students have made the pledge.

Order green ribbons here: https://www.eachmindmatters.org/product/lime-green-ribbons-pack-50/


Case Study: Claremont High School
County: Los Angeles

Green ribbons were distributed to students as they walked into the gym. Free pizza and drinks were provided as students' suicide prevention films were played on the large screen. Two mental health providers acted as guest speakers and presented to students after the film screening. The event was advertised on Wolfcast (broadcast journalism) class and films were shown to the whole school each morning. A green ribbon wall was created using the ribbons passed out to students at the event and will remain on campus.

Program & Film Contest
Directing Change
www.DirectingChangeCA.org
Organize a Screening of Youth-Produced Directing Change Films or Suicide Prevention-Focused Feature Films at Your School or Organization.

The Directing Change website www.directingchangeca.org/films/ has hundreds of free, 60-second films about suicide prevention that can be screened for free. Choose the films based on location (you can pick your county if you want local films), topic (try Suicide Prevention, Animated Short, or Through the Lens of Culture: Suicide Prevention for this event), or the top films each year. Our top picks for recent Suicide Prevention films are on this hand-out: http://www.directingchangeca.org/wp-content/uploads/Best-of-Directing-Change-films-hand-out_Suicide-Prevention.pdf

If you have time to show a full feature film, we recommend screening a film that includes outstanding messaging around these topics. Some of our team’s recommendations include According to Greta, It’s Kind of A Funny Story, and the S-Word:

- **According to Greta**: A young, suicidal and rebellious teen gets sent to her grandparents by the coast for the summer where life takes an unexpected turn. (PG-13)
- **It’s Kind of a Funny Story**: Stressed by adolescence, 16-year-old Craig checks himself into a mental-health clinic after contemplating suicide. (PG-13)
- **The S-Word (Documentary)**: A survivor of a suicide attempt embarks on a mission to document the stories of fellow survivors.

**Location and timing**: If you have the time and flexibility, host it in your school’s auditorium during the week so that the most students can view the films. Alternatively, hosting the event after school can encourage parents and other members of the community (kids at neighboring schools, local organizations) to attend.

**Case Study: Murrieta Valley High School**
**County**: Riverside

Every day for a week Directing Change videos were screened on the school news, followed by students talking about where they can go for help. At lunch students passed out Each Mind Matters stickers and ribbons, encouraging students to pass it on to someone that might need it.

**Case Study: Whitney High School**
**County**: Placer

The school aired feature stories, resources, and information from Each Mind Matters about mental health in the student newspaper and films played during the daily morning announcement show. They also hosted a screening of Directing Change films in the theatre during lunch to raise awareness for suicide prevention.
The Directing Change Program & Film Contest offers young people the exciting opportunity to participate in the mental health movement by creating 60-second films about suicide prevention and mental health that are used to support awareness, education, and advocacy efforts on these topics. Learning objectives surrounding mental health and suicide prevention are integrated into the submission categories of the film contest, giving young people the opportunity to critically explore these topics. Program participants are exposed to appropriate messaging about these topics, warning signs, how to appropriately respond to someone in distress, where to seek help, as well as how to stand up for others who are experiencing a mental health challenge. To learn more visit: www.directingchangeCA.org

We encourage you to incorporate a suicide prevention lesson plan into at least one class. Check out the Directing Change Program’s Suicide Prevention Lesson: www.DirectingChangeCA.org/schools/

Exemplary Event!
Boys & Girls Club of the San Gorgonio Pass
County: Riverside

The Boys and Girls Club of the San Gorgonio Pass hosted a concert to bring awareness to suicide prevention. They worked with some of the most popular hip-hop acts in the Inland Empire to draw in a crowd. They asked for a donation of two books per person and, by the amount of books they received, estimated that about 120 people attended. At the concert they set up a merchandise table/booth and laid out sunglasses, bracelets, pens, and ribbons from Each Mind Matters. The resource table also doubled as a photo booth and everyone that visited and listened to their mission was able to get a ribbon and have their picture taken. All of these photos were posted on their Teen Center Instagram with the caption "I believe Each Mind Matters #EachMindMatters". Later in the evening they screened a select number of short films from the Directing Change competition including their winning film "Speak Out!"
Plan and Implement a What I Wish My Parents Knew Event on Campus.

It is important to explore efforts to engage parents and the larger school community as partners in suicide prevention. One such effort that has shown strong potential is the What I Wish My Parents Knew events which originated from the community serviced by the Poway Unified School District in San Diego County. The What I Wish My Parents Knew events have proven to be a successful way to engage parents and the entire community around mental health topics. The goal of these events is to reduce risk, including risk of suicide, among youth by providing parents with knowledge and skills around a variety of mental health-related topics.

What I Wish My Parents Knew Agenda:

- Resource fair for parents featuring local community resources (30 min, optional)
- Brief welcome/keynote remarks (10-30 min)
- Two break-out sessions featuring workshops on a variety of topics (60 min each)

The most important piece that has led to the success of the program is the utilization of the youth voice. As the title suggests, a primary piece of the event is to allow youth to share “what they wish their parents knew”. To start, youth provide input on the topics they would like to see covered at the events. Responses from youth typically cover a variety of topics related to mental health including suicide prevention, academic pressure, and bullying. Second, youth and young adults are invited to co-present with subject matter experts during the breakout sessions. Check out our full toolkit about implementing a What I Wish My Parents Knew event on your campus! To request a free Step by Step Guide to implement this event visit "Contact Us" at www.DirectingChangeCA.org