About Lifelines

This comprehensive suicide prevention program is a whole-school program. *Lifelines* educates students on the facts about suicide and students’ role in suicide prevention. It provides information on where to find suicide prevention resources in the school and community. Training materials are included for faculty and staff that provide accurate and practical information on identifying and referring students who might be at risk for suicide.

*Lifelines* also includes a presentation for parents that answers questions about youth suicide and prevention, and it involves them in the school’s suicide prevention activities.

Target Audience

*Lifelines* is designed for implementation in middle schools and high schools for students ages 12–17. It targets the whole school community by providing suicide awareness resources for administrators, faculty and staff, parents, and students. It fits easily into health class programming and lesson plans.

Although the research and outcomes are based on school-wide implementation, *Lifelines* can also be a successful component to any community-based program, such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Program Components

*Lifelines* is made up of four parts: administrative consultation, faculty and staff training, a parent workshop, and the student curriculum.

**Part I: Administrative Consultation**

This part must be completed before any other parts of the *Lifelines* program can be implemented. In this important component, school administrators review their school’s internal and external resources for responding to the needs of students who are potentially at risk for suicide. Administrators should also update policies and procedures for dealing with suicide attempts and completions. A sample policy is included with the program.

**Part II: Faculty and Staff Training**

This is an in-service training for all faculty and school staff. This training explains the *Lifelines* approach to youth suicide prevention, reviews current information about youth suicide, and explains the role of school staff in suicide prevention. (This is separate from the optional program implementation training.)

**Part III: Parent Workshop**

This workshop must be completed before the delivery of the student curriculum. The workshop explains why the school is systematically addressing the problem of youth suicide. Additional informational materials are included that can be mailed or placed on the school’s Web site.

**Part IV: Student Curriculum**

The curriculum has four 45-minute lessons that include detailed lesson plans and video resources that cover facts about suicide and students’ role in suicide prevention. The program also reviews in-school and community resources.

Two videos are included with the program. One shows students a scenario depicting appropriate (as well as inappropriate) responses to a suicidal peer, and one documents an actual response of three students to a suicidal peer after they had participated in *Lifelines*.

Students participate in role-playing exercises that teach what to do when faced with a suicidal peer. The exercises feature an emphasis on seeking adult help and frank discussions on the warning signs of suicide.

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Program Outcomes

Four outcomes were studied: knowledge about suicide, attitudes toward suicide, responses toward suicidal peers, and satisfaction with the Lifelines class. Lifelines students demonstrated significantly greater knowledge about suicide when compared with control group students. Lifelines students also demonstrated increased positive attitudes toward suicide prevention, especially attitudes related to help-seeking behavior.

To assess student response to suicidal peers, students were asked how they would respond to a possibly suicidal peer and to a clearly suicidal peer. In both cases, Lifelines students responded more appropriately than control group students. No pre-testing effects were found for any of these outcomes: the fact that the students completed a pre-test did not impact their scores on the post-test. Students also rated the Lifelines curriculum more favorably than their regular health class curriculum.

Additional Program Implementation Training

A one-day training session is available. This training has been designed to provide the necessary knowledge and skills for implementing the Lifelines curriculum with fidelity. Upon completion of the training, participants will:

- be able to give an overview of the comprehensive components of Lifelines.
- be able to cite the research behind Lifelines that has proven its effectiveness.
- know the rationale behind the other Lifelines elements including administrative procedures and links to the community, crisis team and gatekeepers training, faculty and staff member training, and parent education.
- be able to use the detailed instructor’s guide to teach four 45-minute lessons on suicide. These lessons prepare students to identify suicidal behavior, respond appropriately, and obtain help for their friends and themselves.
- be seen as a resource for students and adults who are concerned about suicide.
- know how to respond effectively if they become concerned about a student.
- become comfortable with the Lifelines skill-based approach, including role-playing.