



Signs of Suicide

Jefferson Township School Counseling Presentation
January 20, 2020

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Background...

In May of 2019, the NJDOE selected Jefferson Township Middle School as one of several middle schools throughout the state to participate in a suicide prevention program, Signs of Suicide (SOS). The NJDOE partnered with the Sandy Hook Foundation as part of the STOP School Violence Grant.

Timeline of events...

Spring - 2019: Ripple Effect Program at the middle school and high school.
Partnership with JTConnect and Project Speak Out .

May - 2019: JTMS was selected for the SOS grant. Middle School counselors and administration were trained in May of 2019 in order to implement the SOS program.

September 23-27: Start with Hello Week (District-Wide)

October 22: Start with Hello Assembly - grades 6-8

October 22: MS Counselors turn-key trained MS teachers and staff.

November 13, November 20, and December 10: Student Program/Training

What is S.O.S.

S.O.S. is a program that is designed to provide suicide prevention training to three key audiences: Students, Teachers/Staff, and Parents.

Based on the acronym **ACT**

Acknowledge

Care

Tell

Teacher/Staff Training...

- Importance of Suicide Prevention Training
- Recognizing Risk Factors
- ACT
- How to talk to students about suicide (role playing)
- How to train the students
- Suicide Prevention Resources
- Refresher training was provided to teachers prior to each student program



Myths and Facts

MYTH:

Talking to students about suicide or asking students if they are suicidal is risky because it might put the idea in their head.

FACT:

- You don't give a suicidal person morbid ideas by talking about suicide.
- The opposite is true. Bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do.



True or False?

The prevalence of teen depression and suicidal behavior has remained steady over the past decade.

FALSE

□ The prevalence of teens reporting a major depressive episode increased by 37% from 2005 to 2014.

(Mojtabai et al., 2016)

□ The number of students hospitalized for thinking about or attempting suicide doubled between 2008 and 2015.

(Plemmons et al., 2018)



True or False?

Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for middle and high school students.

FALSE

☐ Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 11-17 year-olds.

(CDC, 2016)



ACT to Help a Student in Need

Acknowledge: that you are seeing signs of depression or suicide in a student and that it is serious

Care: Let the student know you **care** about them and you can help

Tell: Follow your school protocol and **tell** your mental health staff

Student Training

Pre -Training:

- Parent information regarding the program was sent home along with consent letters for participation in a depression screening.
- Two teachers were in each student group (Flex Class)
- District counselors and CST were trained for follow-up counseling.
- Representatives from the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris were brought in for assistance.

Day of Training:

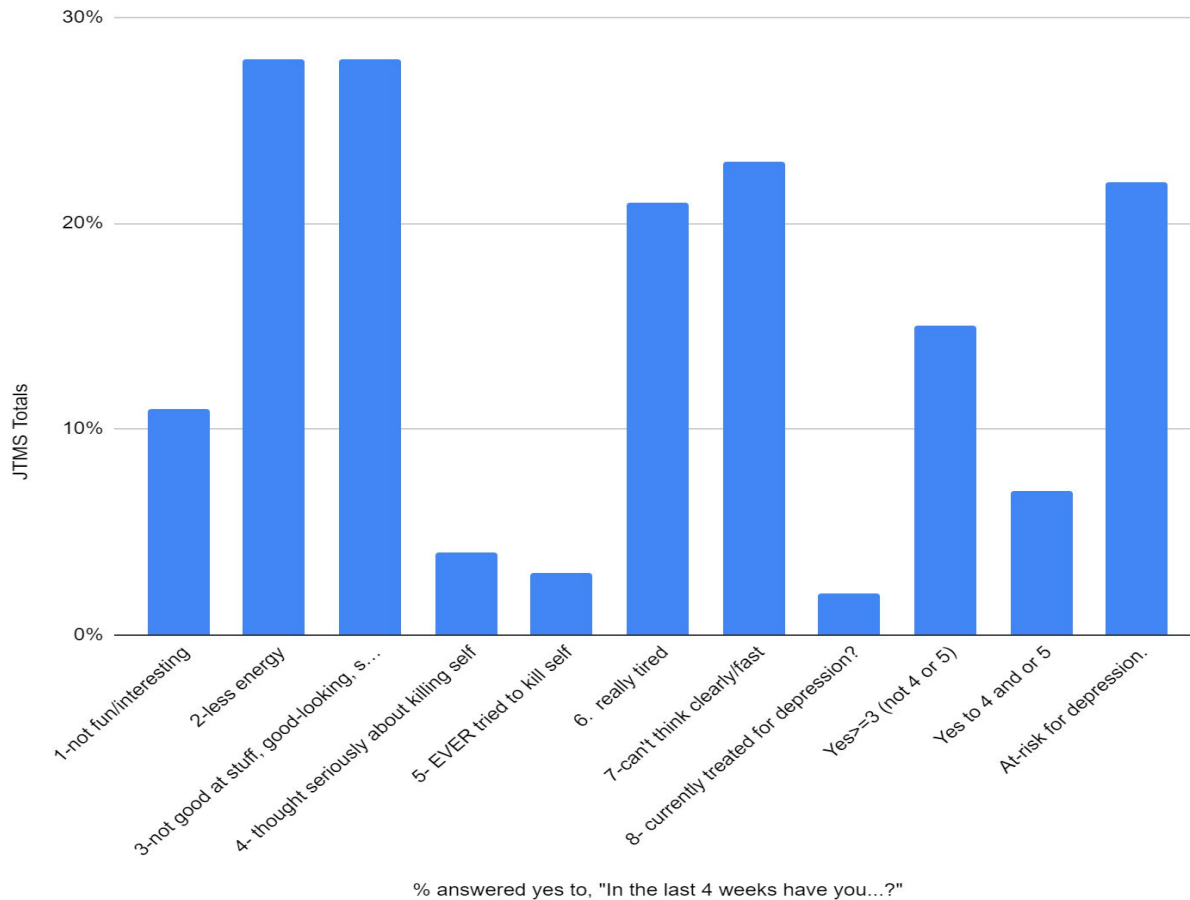
1. Program introduction
2. Video and discussion
3. Student Screening
4. Distribution of resources
5. Student Follow-up

Student Screening Follow Up

1. Student Surveys were collected and sorted.
2. Students that answered yes to 3 or more screening question or students that answered yes to questions 4 or 5 were seen screened by counselors.
3. Students who were deemed at risk of harming themselves were screened by the SAC or school psychologist. As per JTBOE Policy 5350.
4. All parents of identified students were contacted by the middle school counselor or CST member for follow up.
5. Mental Health resources were provided to parents.

As a result, many at risk students were identified and were connected with outside mental health professionals.

JTMS SOS Data Totals



Counselor Feedback

Counselor comments:

- Successful
- We were able to “snag” kids that were not on the radar
- Students shared information about friends that they may not have come forward with even in other districts or states.
- Majority of students named their school counselor as a trusting adult that they could go to.
- Parents were very receptive to the phone calls from the counselors.
- Teachers gave great feedback regarding the professional development. Teachers felt that it was very meaningful.

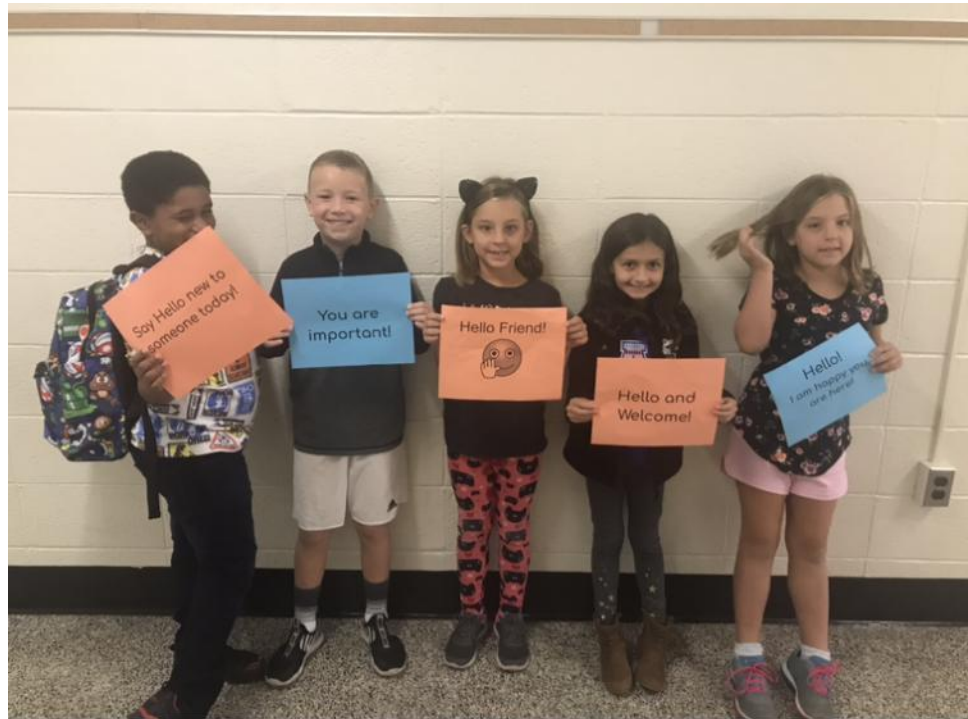
Results and Next Steps

- Great Kindness Challenge week of January 27
- Parent suicide prevention resources online
- Teachers are more prepared to respond to students who need help

Possibilities

- A.C.T. in Elementary School Curriculum
- High School participation in the HS SOS module
- Partnership with the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris, Inc.
- Stigma Free Schools

Start with Hello Week!







START
With
Hello

ONE

person can change a
life

ONE

word can end a fight

ONE

kindness can make a
difference

ONE

smile can start a
friendship

START WITH HELLO WEEK
Start 10/1-10/7



Monday - 10/1 - "Smile" day. Smile as much as you can. It's contagious and it makes people feel good. Try to smile at everyone you see.

Tuesday - 10/2 - "Say Hi" day. Say hello to everyone you see. It's a simple way to show you care.

Wednesday - 10/3 - "Hello" day. Say hello to everyone you see. It's a simple way to show you care.

Thursday - 10/4 - "Hello" day. Say hello to everyone you see. It's a simple way to show you care.

Friday - 10/5 - "Hello" day. Say hello to everyone you see. It's a simple way to show you care.

Saturday - 10/6 - "Hello" day. Say hello to everyone you see. It's a simple way to show you care.

Sunday - 10/7 - "Hello" day. Say hello to everyone you see. It's a simple way to show you care.



Resources Website

[School Guidance and Counseling Web-Page:](#)

[Suicide Prevention Resources](#)