



# SOS: Signs of Suicide<sup>®</sup> Prevention Program

To learn more about the  
Center for Suicide Prevention and Research,  
visit [NationwideChildrens.org/Suicide-Prevention](http://NationwideChildrens.org/Suicide-Prevention).



# SOS: Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program

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Your student will be participating in the Signs of Suicide® (SOS) Prevention Program, offered by the school in collaboration with the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research (CSPR) at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

## Why is suicide prevention in schools important?

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth ages 10-19 in the United States.
- One in 6 teens has seriously contemplated suicide in the past year.
- Suicide affects people of all backgrounds. No one is immune.
- Most students who attempt suicide show earlier signs of depression and suicide, which we can teach people to recognize.

## What is the SOS Program?

SOS is a nationally recognized suicide prevention program that:

- Decreases suicide attempts by students
- Increases the ability of participants to identify signs and symptoms of depression and suicide and to respond in a way that keeps students safe
- Encourages students to seek help for themselves or a friend and increases a sense of hope

The SOS program teaches students, school staff and parents that suicide is preventable by promoting the ACT® message. When anyone notices warning signs of depression or suicide, they should take the following actions:

- Acknowledge there is a serious concern
- Care: Show the person they Care
- Tell a trusted adult

## What is the goal of SOS?

The goal is to reduce youth suicides by teaching students and staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicide and depression in themselves and others and to follow the ACT® message. The SOS program encourages conversation around mental health issues, including depression and suicide, among schools, families and students. Research has shown a 40-64 percent decrease in suicide attempts among students in the schools that implement the SOS program.

## How is SOS implemented into schools?

The CSPR will train all school staff to identify and respond to students who show warning signs of suicide. A separate training is provided to parents and the community. School staff learn how to effectively deliver the SOS program to students in the classroom over 2-3 class periods on consecutive school days.

A variety of methods are used to teach students how to respond to friends who may be at risk for suicide using the ACT® message. These include classroom instruction, videos illustrating the do's and don'ts of how to respond to a friend displaying warning signs of suicide and classroom discussion.

Most schools use the screening tool recommended by the SOS program to identify students at risk for suicidal behavior. When the screening indicates concerns around student safety, a risk assessment by trained staff is completed and options for follow-up care are provided to the family.

## What is the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research?

The Center for Suicide Prevention at Nationwide Children's was created to address the growing problem of suicide among youth through the use of effective suicide prevention strategies, community awareness efforts, and ongoing research.

**If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting "START" to 741-741.**

*"SOS helped us uncover issues with kids that we never suspected were considering suicide. Students came forward concerned about friends; others felt free to share their feelings and ask for help. Some parents had no idea their kids were entertaining dangerous thoughts and thanked us for having SOS. The support we got from Nationwide Children's was amazing. All in all, it was the most important activity we did all year."*

- School Counselor