A Look at Gatekeepers

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Who are gatekeepers?

- Compassionate students who receive training on warning signs of suicide, how to approach someone who may be struggling, and prevention strategies in order to reduce the risk of suicide and promote mental health awareness in their school.

- Student-led organizations in 22 middle and high schools in Allen, Auglaize, and Hardin counties
Who is involved?

- Facilitator from Prevention Awareness Support Services
- Mental Health and Recovery Services Board
- School advisor
- Students who attend meetings
In 2016, a survey conducted by the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Allen, Auglaize, and Hardin Counties found that 60% of students would go to a peer over an adult if they were struggling with their mental health or felt suicidal.

Greater than half of teens report that they do not feel comfortable talking to a school counselor about their problems (King & Vidourek, 2012).

Similar group had already been founded in Wapakoneta, OH- focusing more on promoting positivity.

From 2012 to 2014, an average of 187 Ohio youths died by suicide each year (Youth Suicide in Ohio, 2016).
Currently, school-based prevention focuses on reducing individual-level risk factors (Wyman et al., 2010).

Individuals who are suicidal often do not seek professional help on their own (Kuhlman, Walch, Bauer, Glenn, 2017).

Research shows that most teens who are suicidal or depressed show warning signs and possess specific risk factors (King & Vidourek, 2012).

Many teens first show warning signs to peers (King & Vidourek, 2012).
Warning signs & protective factors

**Warning Signs**
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite/weight
- Changes in school performance
- Loss of interest in once-pleasurable activities
- Giving away cherished possessions
- Substance use
- Withdrawn/isolated
- Direct/indirect threats
- Stressful life events

**Protective Factors**
- Healthy coping skills
- Connectedness to family, community, and social institutions
- Sense of purpose
- Having a good social support system
- Regular school attendance and academic performance
- Availability of constructive recreation
- Feeling close to at least one adult
Feeling socially connected to others is directly associated with positive emotional health.

The National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health found that school connectedness was the leading school-based protective factor.

Teens who are highly connected to others are less than half as likely to suffer from depression than teens who are not as connected to others.

(King & Vidourek, 2012)
Theory of Planned Behavior

- One’s attitudes toward the behavior, one's perceptions of subjective norms regarding the behavior, and one's perceived behavioral control over the behavior combine to guide one’s intentions to complete the behavior.

- Gatekeeper behaviors are volitional and both cognitive and social elements have been identified as possible positive outcomes of gatekeeper training, this theory is a good model for predicting and explaining the effects of training and the enactment of gatekeeper behaviors that may translate to suicide prevention.

- Trained gatekeepers displayed greater perceived knowledge and self-efficacy for suicide prevention and reported higher rates of self-reported actual gatekeeper behaviors, including inquiring about suicidal ideation and referring for mental health treatment when they encountered someone in distress when compared to their untrained counterparts (Kuhlman, Walch, Bauer, Glenn, 2017).
Gatekeeper training

- Lifelines curriculum
- Kognito Friend 2 Friend
- Role plays
- Prevention strategies
Prevention Strategies

- Information Dissemination- one way communication from the source to the audience
- Prevention Education- two-way communication based on an interaction between the educator and the participants
- Alternative Activities- provision of constructive and healthy activities
- Community-Based Process- organizing, planning, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of service implementation
- Environmental Strategies- seeks to establish or change community standards, codes and attitudes
- Problem Identification & Referral
Group Activity

- Get in small groups and plan a gatekeeper activity using the prevention strategies as a guide
- Who will all be involved?
- How much planning will it take?
- What prevention strategy is used and why?
- Cost and where will funds come from?
- Present your activity to the class!
Gatekeeper activities

- Positive post-it notes
- Mental health posters
- Toilet Talk fliers
- Student-made suicide prevention videos
- School-wide presentations
- No cell phone challenge
- Awareness wall
- Gatekeepers introduce Teen Screen to students
- Therapy dogs
- Seasonal depression candy canes

- Mental health Mondays
- School wide Valentine’s day exchange
- Snack table at track meet
- Music playing on the announcements
- Flower fundraiser
- Mental health fair
- Let’s Talk contests
- Favorite coping skills
- Positive message board
- Movie night
Good evening!
I just thought I’d let you know but all the training from sos came in handy yesterday. One of my friends has been depressed for a while now and through the training from sos I lead her to get back in her meds and got her to see her therapist again. Unfortunately yesterday when I went back to my dorm I went to check on her and she had self harmed. My friend and I were the ones to check in her. I immediately went and got my resident director but my other friend froze. I believe that through SOS I was trained to react the way I did and I believe I saved my friends life. I hops SOS begins to grow and people begin to partake in it as they get older at LCC. I truly believe that yesterday would have ended a lot worse than it did if it wasn’t for SOS.
What to do when you see someone in a crisis

PVFF
AWARENESS * EDUCATION * PREVENTION

Brought to you by the Allen East Gatekeepers
References

