

Fall Call to Action for Schools:

Equip staff, students, and caregivers in suicide prevention

In response to research that shows the [fall is a time of increased risk for youth suicide](#), this is an **urgent request to all elementary, middle, and high school leaders. This call to action urges the implementation of school district plans for suicide prevention by**

- 1) preparing your school community to identify students who may be at risk for suicide and to refer those students to help and**
- 2) ensuring your suicide prevention policies and procedures center the needs and strengths of historically underserved and disproportionately impacted students.**

In Oregon, suicide prevention efforts, particularly the prevention work of schools, has created increased safety for more young people. Yet Oregon youth suicide rates continue to be above the national average and while youth suicide death rates since 2018 have decreased for non-Hispanic white youth, they have remained similar or increased for youth of color. ([More about Oregon youth suicide data and programming are here.](#))

As outlined in [Adi's Act](#), school suicide prevention must be culturally and linguistically responsive and address the needs of youth at higher risk for suicide, which includes students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+, students of color, and students from communities that are currently and have been historically underserved. Training and referral procedures, as well as efforts that build belonging, should center the experiences, strengths, and needs of students.

Connected to this work, the implementation of [Transformative Social Emotional Learning](#) (TSEL) as universal prevention helps to foster belonging experiences for students as it affirms all forms of identities, needs, and abilities by honoring individual and community backgrounds such as race, culture, language, and lived experience. TSEL focuses on individual and systemic protective factors that enhance and promote student health and well-being through human dignity, compassionate communication, authentic relationships, and supportive community.

The specific ask is to review and share the following checklists and resources below [for administrators](#), [for school counselors and mental health staff](#), and [for students and families](#) then to act on identified areas of need for your school.

Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility. Thank you for finding ways to make it yours.

Together,

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For Administrators

Suicide prevention checklist

This fall review your school district [Adi's Act](#) suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention plan for your building. Creating a sense of belonging for all students, and especially historically and currently underserved student groups, is a universal suicide prevention strategy; [student success plans](#) provide strategies for districts, families, and community partners in working towards this goal. If your district needs training or support writing or updating its plan, particularly for marginalized students, contact your regional [School Safety and Prevention Specialist](#) or the [Safe and Inclusive Schools team](#) at ODE.

- ☐ **Staff Training (OHA recommended [training options for school staff by role](#) | [Oregon School Suicide Prevention Training Guidance](#))**
 - What suicide prevention training do faculty and staff receive? When is staff suicide prevention training scheduled? Does that training recognize and amplify cultural risk and protective factors?
 - What suicide prevention training do school counselors and other mental health staff receive? Do any of your staff need renewed training? Does the training equip staff to provide culturally responsive supports to students?
- ☐ **Building-level process for referring students demonstrating risk or warning signs**
 - What is your school process for connecting a student to help? How are your staff being reminded of that process? Do your teachers and support staff know where and how to refer a student?
 - In the event of risk for suicide, is there a backup plan in case trained staff are unavailable?
 - Who in your building experiences increased risk, and what is being done to intentionally increase belonging and connection, particularly for [LGBTQ2SIA+](#) students and students of color?
- ☐ **Curriculum: Suicide prevention lessons** (Find curriculum options on [pages 26-31](#) of YouthLine's Step by Step Guide)
 - When are your students receiving classroom lessons on mental health and suicide prevention?
 - No-Cost Elementary Options:
 - [Erika's Lighthouse](#) – Level 1 lessons for older elementary (Free curriculum with free account to access)
 - Sources of Strength [Elementary](#) (Costs supported by OHA)
 - No-Cost Middle/High Options:
 - [Erika's Lighthouse](#) – Level 2 lessons for middle school, Level 2/3 for older middle school and high school (Free curriculum with free account to access)
 - [Work 2 Be Well](#) – Resources for counselors and educators around topics related to mental health. (Free curriculum accessed by entering an email address.)
- ☐ **Staff wellness support**
 - How are you building in [wellness](#) supports for your [staff](#)? How are you taking care of yourself?
Option: [Educator Self-care Card](#)
- ☐ **Does your school have visible and accessible resources for mental health support, such as YouthLine posters, brochures, stickers, and wristbands?** Consider ordering no-cost materials from [YouthLine](#) (shipping costs not included).

For Mental Health Staff & Other Licensed School Health Staff

- ☐ Do teachers and support staff at your school know how and when to refer a student to you? Do staff at your school know how to identify when a student needs an immediate check-in with you because of heightened risk or warning signs?
- ☐ Do you know what forms to fill out if you receive a referral from staff about a student who may be at risk for suicide? Do you know where to submit or store the forms?
- ☐ Do you have enough training in brief suicide screening and basic safety planning? If not, consider taking [ASIST](#), [Youth SAVE](#), and Joyce Chu's [Advancing Suicide Prevention & Management for Diverse Populations](#).
- ☐ Do you know where to refer a student who demonstrates risk of suicide after you've screened them?
- ☐ Do you know how to access crisis services or supports for a student that you identify as having imminent risk for suicide?
- ☐ Do you have another school counselor or mental health staff that you can consult with if you have a complex situation?
- ☐ Does your school have visible and accessible resources for mental health support, such as YouthLine posters, brochures, stickers, and wristbands? Consider ordering no-cost materials from [YouthLine](#) (shipping costs not included).

Resources:

- [Be Sensitive, Be Brave](#) – This culturally infused mental health and suicide prevention workshop prepares community members to help friends and loved ones during times of distress. Learn how to recognize mental health conditions, what to do when students need support, and tools for maintaining good mental health.
- [Practicing Strength at home](#) – An Oregon Sources of Strength packet with a wellness plan that is a great tool for working with students (and for staff). It has the wheel with definitions and a tool to identify strengths on the wheel. It has strengths-based conversation starters that would work for counselors or for classrooms and centers students' unique strengths, including their culture.
- If your school lacks staff to provide suicide safety assessments and safety planning, please call 988 or your [local crisis hotline](#).
- 25 [ideas](#) for check-in questions. Connection and belonging are suicide prevention.
- [Work 2 Be Well](#) – Resources for counselors and educators around topics related to mental health. (Free curriculum accessed by entering an email address.)

For Students and Families



988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

For 24/7 support in English, Spanish, and ASL

The suicide and crisis lifeline never closes, it is always open for calls, texts, and chats. [Learn more](#)



Youthline

For older elementary, middle, or high school students

Youthline, a teen-to-teen help, support, and crisis line is open daily from 4-10 p.m. Pacific Time via call, text, and chat. Adults answer phone calls at all other times for support 24/7. [Learn more](#)



Sources of Strength

For all ages

No-cost resources to stay strong, create a wellness plan, care for yourself, and practice gratitude. [Learn more](#)



Safe and Strong

For students and families

When life feels heavy, Safe + Strong has resources to help. Connect to care, learn how to make sense of what you're going through, and get tips for supporting a loved one who is struggling. [Learn more](#). Up to three sessions available for Oregon residents without active mental health support services.



SafeOregon Tip Line

For students, families, staff, and community members

Oregon's Statewide Reporting System, SafeOregon, was created for Oregon students, families, school staff, community members to report and respond to student safety threats – including suicide risk. NOTE: This tip line is not for immediate emergency response. For Crisis situations call 911 or 988. [Learn more](#)