

Resource List for School Based Suicide Prevention Curricula and Staff Training

Introduction

This document was developed to meet the curriculum and staff training requirements of the [Nathan Bruno/Jason Flatt Act \(16-21.7\)](#) including:

- Adoption of Rules and Regulations supporting suicide awareness and prevention training each year for public school personnel and students.
- Preparation of a list of approved training materials.
- Development and adoption of a policy on student suicide prevention to address procedures related to prevention, intervention and postvention.

The RI Department of Education (RIDE) in collaboration with the RI Department of Health and the RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals developed this resource per the requirements of the Nathan Bruno/Jason Flatt Act. Although, fortunately, the number of completed suicides are low, suicide is still the second leading cause of death among youth aged 10-25 years old (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Suicide is a multifaceted problem which requires a multifaceted approach. There may be practices happening in your school and district that are protective and can be part of a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center includes information on a [Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention](#). This includes:

- [Identify and Assist Persons at Risk](#)
- [Increase Help-Seeking](#)
- [Ensure Access to Effective Mental Health and Suicide Care and Treatment](#)
- [Support Safe Care Transitions and Create Organizational Linkages](#)
- [Respond Effectively to Individuals in Crisis](#)
- [Provide for Immediate and Long-Term Postvention](#)
- [Reduce Access to Means of Suicide](#)
- [Enhance Life Skills and Resilience](#)
- [Promote Social Connectedness and Support](#)

School based mental health professionals, health educators and school nurse teachers will likely play a pivotal role in the implementation of training for students and staff. There may be other champions in your school and district. The [Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) is the best source of statewide data on youth who have considered suicide, planned their attempt, and attempted suicide. A comprehensive approach with a focus on prevention underscores the essential role of school based efforts to prevent suicide and support youth mental health.

Many districts and schools are in various stages of implementation of a [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework](#) to increase student achievement and social and emotional competencies through prevention and intervention in general education. This approach and many of the resources are aligned with the Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention. These public health frameworks are based in evidence that a supportive environment, inclusive of an evidence based/evidence informed curriculum, is necessary to support youth (Singer, Erbach and Rosen, 2018). Additionally, resources on [RIDE's School Mental Wellness Resources](#) page are also useful.

Contextualizing Evidence Based Approaches

Although schools are a logical place to implement suicide prevention programs, the research base for school-based approaches is limited due to challenges with implementation and evaluation (Singer, et.al., 2018). The following curricula and training recommendations should be considered within the context of your current efforts and alignment with a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention identified herein.

The term “evidence based” is not a static measure. For example, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) supported a National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices, a searchable database of evidence-based programs in behavioral health inclusive of mental health and substance abuse. The website was phased out in 2018. There are evidence-based programs that are considered “legacy” programs from the list. SAMHSA currently supports an [Evidence Based Practice Resource Center](#).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act amendment, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires or recommends interventions be supported on the basis of evidence and stipulates four tiers of such evidence-based support (Section 8101(21)(A)). RIDE’s [Practitioner’s Guide for School Improvement \(2021-22\)](#) includes the table below, adapted from [Chiefs For Change](#) outlines in greater detail the four tiers of evidence-based support per ESSA. A RIDE produced [video](#) providing further detail on selection of evidence based programs was developed to support school improvement efforts.

<p>“Demonstrates statistically significant effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.” <i>Required for funding under School Improvement (Sec. 1003). A comparison table on page 3 provides information on requirements across all Federal Programs in the CRP.</i></p>			<p>“Demonstrates a rationale based on high quality research findings or positive valuation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes</p>
Tier 1:	Tier 2:	Tier 3:	Tier 4:
Strong Evidence	Moderate Evidence	Promising Evidence	Strong Theory Under Evaluation
Supported by at least one well-designed, well-implemented experimental study (randomized-control trials).	Supported by at least one well-designed, well- implemented quasi- experimental study (matched groups, interrupted time series)	Supported by at least one well-designed, well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias	Includes ongoing efforts to establish the effectiveness of the intervention and bolster its evidence tier.

The Rhode Island Governor’s Council on Behavioral Health Prevention Advisory Committee has developed a process to ensure that any locally developed curricula and supports are based on evidence. Details about the process can be found [here](#).

RIDE Approved Resources

RIDE strongly encourages districts to utilize these evidence-based tools when selecting curricula from the RIDE approved list. The following tools meet the requirements of the Nathan Bruno/Jason Flatt Act and the Annual School Health reporting requirements.

Curriculum Material for Grades 6-12

Signs of Suicide	MindWise Innovations SOS is a youth suicide prevention program, for youth in grades 6-12, that has demonstrated an improvement in students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression.
Teen Mental Health First Aid	National Council on Mental Well Being Teen Mental Health First Aid is a training program for teens brought to the United States by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in partnership with Born This Way Foundation . Teens learn the skills they need to have supportive conversations with their friends and how to get help from a responsible and trusted adult. This program targets high school students in grades 10-12.
Lifelines	Hazeldon Publishing - Lifelines®: A Comprehensive Suicide Awareness and Responsiveness Program for Teens, includes three components: Lifelines: Prevention , Lifelines: Intervention , and Lifelines: Postvention . This curriculum has recently been updated and includes grades 5-12.
Erika's Lighthouse	Erika's Lighthouse is a suite of programs including an introduction to mental health, depression-literacy, help-seeking and what it takes to promote good mental health. Focused on grades 4-12, these no-cost, skills-based programs use diverse teen voices to spread awareness and reduce stigma.

Staff Training

Youth Mental Health First Aid	National Council on Mental Well Being - YMHFA is designed to teach anyone how to help a youth who is experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge or is in crisis. The course includes: mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and provides guidance through the ALGEE action plan for both crisis and non-crisis situations. Staff training and training of trainers are available.
Columbia Suicide Prevention Training	This training is based on the Columbia Lighthouse Project -The Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) , a series of questions that anyone can use to prevent suicide. The training provides support to use the tool within a school or community context. Bradley Hospital and Rhode Island Student Assistance Services provides training in the C-SSRS.
Signs Matter: Early Detection	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - <i>Signs Matter</i> was developed based on a combination of science and best practice. The program presents scientifically based information on a variety of topics related to youth suicide, alongside best practice recommendations in the mental health and education fields for grades K-12.
At Risk for Educators	Kognito At Risk is a series of video simulations for educators on suicide prevention and supporting mental health of youth in grades K-12.
ACT for School Staff	MindWise Innovation provides a one-hour, self-guided online course to recognize when a student is experiencing suicidal thoughts and how to ACT (Acknowledge, Care, Tell).
Navigate 360 Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Schools	The Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Schools curriculum can be taken by any employee in a K-12 setting for knowledge and resources on how to support youth mental health and how to help youth who are experiencing challenges.

Implementation Supports

[RISAS](#) also provides training for school staff in the Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI) referral process, which is the recommended process for referring a student at risk for suicide to appropriate services. The SPI represents a partnership of the RI Department of HEALTH, RISAS, Bradley Hospital/KidsLink RI, Brown University and a number of Rhode Island school districts. The process is referenced in the Model Policy Guidance, a complementary resource and requirement of the Nathan Bruno Act.

Additionally, the [Samaritans of Rhode Island](#) receives a small legislative grant to provide evidence informed resources to educators.

RIDE recommends that districts make provisions for onsite school mental health supports for staff who are taking training that are exclusively online. It would be beneficial to have staff with expertise in mental health to answer questions, contribute to the local context and provide support as necessary and appropriate.

In an effort to support all students, RIDE developed curated resources to support [Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education](#). Additional resources on providing Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education from SAMHSA and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center can be accessed [here](#).

Disclaimer *This document is intended to support district and school leadership teams in selecting suicide prevention curricula and gate keeper training for both students and staff. This document contains examples products and resources developed in consultation with subject matter experts from the RI Department of Health and RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals per the directive in the Nathan Bruno Act. The inclusion of such information does not constitute an endorsement by RIDE, nor a preference/support for these resources compared to others that might be available. If you have suggestions for inclusion of other curricula, please send that information to Rosemary Reilly-Chammat Ed.D. at rosemary.reilly-chammat@ride.ri.gov.

References

Singer, J.B, Erbacher, T.A., & Rosen, B. (2018). School-based suicide prevention: A framework for evidence-based practice, *School Mental Health*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-018-9245-8>.