Changing the public perception about suicide prevention, intervention and postvention
### 2011 YOUTH SUICIDES RANKINGS

**15 - 24 YEARS RATE PER 100,000**

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Utah ranks 9th in the nation for youth suicides ages 10 to 17 yrs old
SUICIDES INCREASE

• In November (2012) an epidemiologist at West Virginia University showed that suicide had become the leading cause of “injury death” in America.

• The CDC noted in the Spring of 2013 “suicide outpaces the rate of death on the road.”
UTAH YOUTH & SUICIDE

Number 1 cause of death for Utah youth ages 10-17 in 2013

http://foundationforlps.org/scholarships/

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YOUTH SUICIDES IN UTAH

TWO youth were treated for suicide attempts EVERY DAY in Utah in 2012.

Utah Department of Health
TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Deaths

Attempts

Ideation
25.7% FELT SAD OR HOPELESS

41,578
15.5% SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ATTEMPTING SUICIDE
12.8% MADE A SUICIDE PLAN

20,708
7.3% ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
2.1% REQUIRED MEDICAL ATTENTION

3,397
IN AN AVERAGE UTAH CLASSROOM SIZE OF 30...

8 will report feeling sad and hopeless
5 will have seriously considered suicide
4 will have made a suicide plan
2 will have attempted suicide one or more times
1 will have had medical treatment for a suicide attempt

Utah Department of Health
Thoughts from:

Suicide & Psychological Pain

by Jack Klott
You can have a hundred suicidal folks in a room, and for each one of those people there will be a different pathway to their suicide.

Shneidman
• One person’s unbearable agony is another person’s irksome event

• Suicide is an event specific to each individual

• In therapy all behaviors are purposeful

Klott
COMMON SUICIDE RISK FACTORS

• These are conditions that create in a person a vulnerability to see suicide as an attractive problem-solver

• They are often called “early warning signs”

• This is the clinicians signal for early intervention

Klott
RISK FACTORS

- Psychiatric disorders
- Social stressors
- Psychological vulnerabilities

Klott
PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

• Dysthymia
• Major Depression - recurrent, severe with psychotic features
• Bipolar Disorders
• Generalized Anxiety Disorder
• Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
• Schizophrenia
• Substance - Related Disorders
Suicide never occurs outside of the context of major social stressors.

Klott
Like adults, adolescents with undetected, undiagnosed, untreated emerging mental disorders are highly likely to experiment with substances.

Many of our teens will find or discover in drugs a temporary relief from the symptoms of depression, anxiety, or psychosis.

In therapy it’s critical to ask the question, “What does the drug do for you?”

Klott
ALONENESS/ISOLATION

• Rejection and aloneness are intolerable for many adolescents

• Many youth will do anything to avoid isolation

• In counseling an essential question, “Tell me about your friends.”

Klott
VICTIM OF BULLYING

• Bullying triggers themes of abandonment, isolation, rejection and devaluation

• The more severe the bullying (period of time, in front of peers etc. - the more increased risk for suicide)

Klott
ACCULTURATION ISSUES

• Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender adolescents are vulnerable to suicide ideation and suicide attempts.

• They appear at risk for attempts and ideations when they experience “a message of rejection” from primary support systems because of their sexual orientation.

• LGBT students are the ones most often bullied and isolated in the school setting.

Klott
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

- Adolescents who believe that affirmation and love are won and earned are the most vulnerable. Love is not freely given.

- The adolescent who believes that love is earned through performance is at risk.

- They receive a message that they are only loved for what they do; they are not loved for who they are.

- Academic achievement is often a focus of this performance that teens use to gain affirmation and love from their primary support system.

- The challenge (problem) is that “what is won and earned can be lost.”

Klott
• The issue with these young people is they have no capacity to “psychologically” manage failure.

• Academic failure (and a B+ can be a failure) is intolerable, because it means a loss of love.

• This is one of the major contributions to suicide ideation, attempts, and completions in a high school setting. Klott
FAMILY DISCORD

• A chaotic home environment greatly enhances an adolescent’s vulnerability to suicide.

• Issues such as witnessing substance use or spouse assault in their homes, being victimized by sexual, physical, emotional assault, issues of rejection, abandonment and neglect all contribute to an adolescent’s despair, robbing them of a sense of safety, and self-worth.

Klott
IMPULSIVITY AND ACCESS TO FIREARMS

• Adolescents are impulsive

• The 13 year old boy who has just been tragically dumped by the “love of his life” is now experiencing an extreme degree of psychological turmoil, possibly the first time in his life

• He is not yet aware of any coping or problem-solving strategies to manage this pain and, therefore, at this time in his life there appears to be no way to effectively deal with this turmoil

Adolescents do not want to die; they want the pain to go away

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CHILDREN & SUICIDE

• Suicidal thoughts or acts have intense individual meaning and purposes that can be understood only in the context of the individual child’s life.

• Children are vulnerable to premature death under two primary stressors: loss of a loved object and hopelessness.

Klott
Suicide prevention is an umbrella term for the collective efforts of local citizen organizations, mental health practitioners and related professionals to reduce the incidence of suicide through prevention and proactive measures.
WARNING SIGNS - SITUATIONAL

• Recent loss of a loved one (death or divorce)
• Survivor of a previous suicide attempt
• Loss of prestige
• Serious illness (chronic pain with no end in sight)
• Exhaustion of resources - could be real or imaginary
• Family history of suicide
• A close friend dies by suicide
WARNING SIGNS - BEHAVIOR

• Talking or writing about death/suicide
• Giving away personal possessions
• Change in behaviors/mood
• Falling grades
• Ending close relationships
• Not participating in regular activities
• Sense of personal failure
• Overwhelming sadness
• General lack of interest
• Feelings of hopelessness
• Guilt
• Withdrawal/isolation
• Feelings of being a burden to others
WARNING SIGNS - VERBAL

• They won't have to deal with me.
• I'm at the end of my rope.
• They're better off without me.
• I just want the pain to stop.
• I can’t go on.
• There is nothing to live for.
One of the worst things for a person contemplating suicide is feeling that no one understands or cares about him or her.

These people are often extremely frustrated over talking with friends and family only to find that they are placated with statements like, "Oh, you'll feel better soon - this too shall pass."

Suicidal people feel like they've been trying to tell others how much pain they are in, but nobody hears them. The key to helping is to help this person stop feeling invisible.
KSL – HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS
How to Talk to a Youth about Suicide

Ask:

• Have you been unhappy lately?

• Have you thought of hurting yourself?

• When people are as upset as you seem to be, they sometimes wish they were dead. Are you feeling that way too?
Suicide intervention or suicide crisis intervention is direct effort to stop or prevent persons attempting or contemplating suicide from killing themselves.
Once a student has been identified:

1. Ensure student safety

1. For high risk (police interventions)

1. Always make sure parents are notified
TEENS TALK ABOUT SUICIDE
How often do people die from suicide that could have been easily saved?

Most teens who survive suicide attempts say that they tried to kill themselves because they were trying to escape a situation that seemed impossible to deal with, or they were trying to escape overwhelming feelings like rejection, guilt, anger, or sadness.

Who should I go to first if someone I know has confided in me that they are contemplating suicide?

The closet adult you can find that you trust

- Parent
- Teacher
- Counselor
- Church leader
Is suicide more common in girls or boys?

While girls attempt suicide three times more than boys, boys are nearly four times more likely to be successful.
How can I be the kind of person that someone can trust and turn to if they were having suicidal thoughts?

If you want to support someone who is feeling suicidal, a first important step should be to stay with that person, listen and try to understand what is going on for him or her.

Let them know that you want to help them get through this.

Be non-judgmental - always tell an adult
What kind of thoughts do suicidal people have?

- I don’t know how to stop the pain
- I am alone
- No one cares or listens
How can I help my friend who has attempted suicide?

- Recognize your own boundaries (you are not responsible for another persons health)

- Be direct (are you having thoughts about hurting yourself)
• If you feel it is immediate - get help right away
• Listen and be non-judgmental
• Express your concern and support
• Offer realistic hope
• Involve others

http://www.evolvetutoring.com/is-your-child-struggling-evolve-can-help/
I have had thoughts of killing myself over the past few weeks.

My parents expect too much and my friends don’t understand.

How do I get help?

Everyone struggles at one time or another in their life.

Getting help to understand why you struggle may be the best thing you can do.

If you can’t talk with your parents, find someone you can talk with.

A relative, a friend, someone that you trust. Get help now!
How do you step away from suicidal thoughts and actions?

By talking with a professional who can help you understand what you are feeling and going through.
- A trained therapist can help you replace negative thoughts with positive ones

- They can also help you understand the “triggers” to identify when you start to struggle
Can suicide be prevented?

We believe it can - if we work together…

Schools
Mental Health Agencies
Community Partners
It takes an entire village to raise a child....

It takes an entire community to save one....
CIRCLES4HOPE STRIVES TO ESTABLISH

Community wide:

Common Language: Warning signs, who is at risk...

Common Understanding: How to intervene...

Common Knowledge: Where to get help...
<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Attempts &amp; Threats</th>
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<th>Completions</th>
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Community Connections

Collaboration with city leaders

Partnership with city stakeholders
United Way, Boy Scouts, churches,
youth organizations, businesses

Citywide support for educating citizens

Create a common language

Public awareness campaign
Mental Health Partnerships

Alliance with the experts

Identification of service providers (therapy)

Immediate response for assessment

Open access for counseling

Partnership with hospital

Community crisis team
School Programs

Yearly training of new staff in suicide prevention

Identify mental health expert

Peer to peer program (HOPE Squad)

Community crisis team

Take every suicidal threat seriously
Provo School District’s Suicide Prevention Peer Program

The HOPE Squad
### Provo City School District Statistics

14,000 students

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Questions???