

9th GRADE: SELF-HARM & SUICIDE

LESSON 3 OVERVIEW



The Permanent Decision - Suicide



Lesson Time:

30 Minutes

Materials Provided:

- Videos: [Kevin Hines 1](#) [Kevin Hines 2](#)(4:43)
- Handout: "Suicide Awareness" (printed one per student)
- Lesson Slides [Download](#)

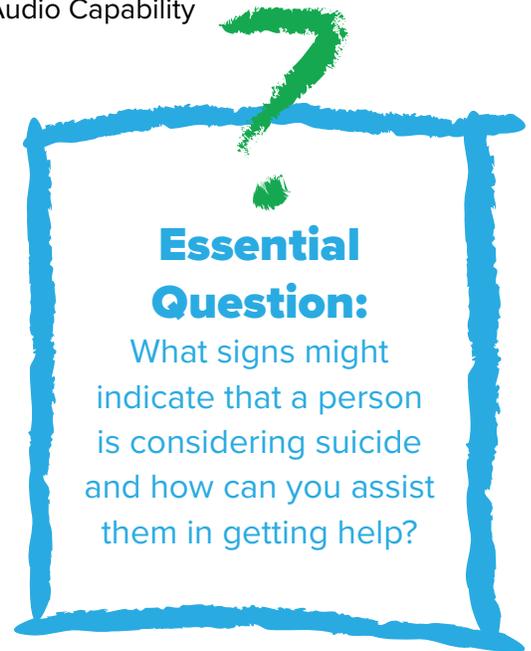
Materials Needed:

- Projector with Video/Audio Capability

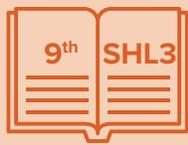
Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. List warning signs of suicide.
2. Disprove myths of suicide with facts.
3. Explain some referral techniques for those showing suicidal warning signs.



The Permanent Decision - Suicide



Lesson Introduction: (2 minutes)

As we progress in our understanding of mental health, it is important to know the dangerous, permanent decision that is suicide. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for young people. Many people express being heartbroken over the fact that two of the top causes of death for teens are suicide and accidents – many of which are preventable. In today’s lesson we will discuss some myths and facts, warning signs, and referral procedures concerning suicide and discuss ways to help those who struggle.

Core Lesson: (5 minutes)

Let’s start with some myths and facts. For each of these statements, I want you to give a thumb’s up if you think the statement is true. If you believe the statement is false, show a thumb’s down. It’s ok if you don’t know for sure, but just give it your best guess.

1. Suicide is genetic. = **FALSE**. There is no “suicide gene,” but there is a link for depression which can sometimes lead to suicidal thoughts.
2. Boys are more likely than girls to complete suicide. = **TRUE**. Although more girls attempt suicide, more boys complete suicide. Evidence points to reasons such as the method of the attempt. Also, boys are often taught to hide their feelings which make it harder to detect the warning signs.
3. People who commit suicide have a mental health condition. = **FALSE**. Many people who consider or act on suicide are responding to situational events, relationship struggles or other stressors and are not necessarily suffering from a mental health disorder.
4. Suicide happens without warning. = **FALSE**. Most people show either verbal or behavioral warning signs preceding an attempt, but some are more subtle. It is important for us to be knowledgeable about the warning signs to be a preventative factor.
5. Talking about suicide can plant the idea in someone’s head. = **FALSE**. People who are struggling with suicidal thoughts often feel alone in that desperation. Talking with someone will not give them an idea, but it more than likely will free them from that secret and allow them to increase their support system.

Slide/Handout

The handout is a worksheet titled 'SUICIDE AWARENESS' for 9th & 10th Grade. It includes a section for 'WARNING SIGNS' with three columns: Verbal, Behavioral, and Emotional. Below this is a 'CRISIS STRATEGIES' section with five numbered points and a 'CRISIS HOTLINE' section with icons for text, phone, and chat.

Lesson Script/Talking Points

Handout: Suicide Awareness (10 minutes)

Awareness is truly a key to prevention. Use the handout to take notes on the rest of our session. (Provide each student with a copy of the Suicide Awareness handout.)

Let’s begin with some Suicide WARNING SIGNS:

Verbal	Behavioral	Emotional
speaking of no reason to live	drastic behavioral changes	easily angry
speaking of others better off	increased substance use	anxious
speaking directly about dying	isolation from family and friends	hopelessness
expressing hopelessness	sleeping too little or too much	loneliness
not being able to continue	giving away possessions	helplessness
posts expressing wanting to die	making preparations	fear

What can we do to help others?

Each suicide intimately affects at least 6 other people, leaving a multitude of emotions from grief, guilt, anger, confusion, pain, and more. According to the

Core Lesson (cont)

Slide/Handout

Lesson Script/Talking Points

CDC, Americans were at a low around 2007, but the suicide rate has been steadily increasing since that time, making suicide the 2nd leading cause of death among people ages 10 to 24. (2017 CDC WISQARS)

First, we need to seriously consider how we treat those around us. When we are short, dismissive, or even hateful to someone we may not know the private despair they are experiencing. You never know when mistreating someone could be the last straw or when your kind words could be their saving grace. Choose kindness every day.



Videos: Kevin Hines (1.27) (10 minutes)

I would like to share a video about Kevin Hines. Kevin attempted to take his life by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge on September 25, 2000. He regretted his decision the minute he jumped. Let's take a look at what Kevin has to say about his experience. (Play video)

https://youtube.com/shorts/f13KQ_CB4QM?feature=share

Miraculously, Kevin was kept afloat by a sea lion. The sea lion stayed with him until he was rescued. I want to share another quick video of what Kevin has to say about what could have stopped him from jumping. Let's take a look. (Play video)

<https://youtube.com/shorts/15ejXqLUrBs?feature=share>

Now, let's talk about how we can help those who are struggling. How can we be their sea lions?

1. We can start with a smile and a hello.
2. We can say:
 - “You are not alone.”
 - “I am here for you.”
 - “I care about you.”
 - “I will go with you to get help .”
 - “I know this is a hard time for you right now, but your feelings will change.”
3. We can ask:
 - “Are you ok?”
 - “Is something wrong?”
 - “Can I help you?”
 - “How long have you been feeling this way?”
 - “Have you talked to someone to get help?”

Our words are powerful. Let's use our words to support others. We can be sea lions to those who are struggling.

Core Lesson (cont)

Coping Strategies:

Read along with these on your Suicide Awareness Handout.

Second, we need some strategies for helping others. Your job will be to recognize and report. You never want to try to help alone. You would not be equipped for this job by yourself. When you are helping someone who's struggling, remember some of these coping strategies:

1. Suicidal thoughts are a sign to CHANGE something in your life, not to end it.
2. Really examine your thoughts and feelings, and work to restructure them.
3. Do healthy self-soothing activities.
4. You can even have a friend help you with healthy distractions.
5. Talk to people, especially a parent, school counselor, or other professional.
6. Creating a Safety Plan can be very helpful. Most Safety Plans include the following:
 - I will cope or soothe myself by...
 - I will tell myself...
 - I will call...
 - I will go to...

Closing: Essential Question (3 minutes)

What signs might indicate that a person is considering suicide and how can you assist them in getting help?

(Allow for responses.)

Let's finish your handout by completing some resources that are available to everyone. You can be the person in need or concerned about someone in need.

- In the image of the computer, write the website for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention which is afsp.org
- In the image of the phone, write the Hotline Number – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- In the image of the cell phone, write the crisis text number: Text TALK to 741741 Complete the number and the word TALK in the message area.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention sums up our lesson perfectly in its statement, "There is no single cause to suicide. It most often occurs when stressors exceed current coping abilities." **Let's work on helping people increase their coping skills and their resiliency.** People who feel hopeless or have drastic behavior changes are silently alerting you that they need attention. If you ever think to yourself, "I wonder if I should tell someone?" The answer is YES! Let's review by sharing as many warning signs as come to mind. If time permits, we will have people stand and recite the hotline number to see how many people have it memorized.

Resources:

- The Jason Foundation. Youth Suicide Statistics. (2019). www.Jasonfoundation.com
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. <https://afsp.org>
- NAMI. <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2018/5-Common-Myths-About-Suicide-Debunked>
- DoSomething.org <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-suicide>
- SAVE. "Suicide Facts." Suicide Awareness Voices of Education. Accessed February 25, 2014, http://www.save.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.viewPage&page_id=705D5DF4-055B-F1EC-3F66462866FCB4E6.
- Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. August 4, 2017. Vol. 66 / No. 30. US Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Click Here to Provide Feedback on this Lesson

Name: _____ Date: _____

SUICIDE AWARENESS

WARNING SIGNS

 VERBAL	 BEHAVIORAL	 EMOTIONAL

COPING STRATEGIES

1. Suicidal thoughts are a sign to CHANGE something in your life, not to end it.
2. Really examine your thoughts and feelings, and work to restructure them.
3. Do healthy things that are self-soothing. You can even have a friend help you with healthy distractions.
4. Talk to people, especially a parent, school counselor, or other professional.
5. Safety Plans include the following:
 - I will cope or soothe myself by _____
 - I will tell myself _____
 - I will call _____
 - I will go to _____

CRISIS HOTLINES

	_____ Website
	_____ Phone
	_____ Text