



OUR EIGHT PROTECTIVE FACTORS



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Department of Mental Health and
Addiction Services



Sources of Strength is a radically upstream, evidence-based suicide prevention and mental health program that has transformed thousands of schools across the United States over the past several decades. Thanks to funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 and the support of Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, this incredible program is now available for free to Ohio schools and students.

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How does Sources of Strength work?

Sources of Strength (Sources) is named for the eight protective factors shown to reduce suicidal behavior and promote positive behavioral health outcomes. Research shows that youth and young adults who can rely on one to two of the protective factors in the Sources Wheel have lower rates of suicide and suicidal behavior. The elementary and secondary programs have been developed and refined over several decades to promote these protective factors at the individual, interpersonal, and community level.

The Sources elementary program can be implemented in grades 3-6 as a series of 12 units. This evidence-informed universal curriculum incorporates a protective factor framework for preventing bullying, substance abuse, violence, and suicide. Because the curriculum is designed to optimize flexibility, schools designate “coaches” in the school or community to coordinate lessons based on school and classroom goals. Some schools, for example, spread the 12 units across various grades; other schools teach all 12 units in the same semester or develop an entirely different schedule.

The secondary model is implemented in grades 7-12 as a youth-led prevention program. Secondary program coordinators work with teams of adult advisors and youth peer leaders to develop and implement campaigns that promote the eight protective factors during the school year and change social norms around mental health and suicide.

What is Sources of Strength Ohio?

Sources of Strength Ohio (SourcesOH) refers to the statewide effort to expand Sources in Ohio. SourcesOH is led by the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF) and PreventionFIRST! with the goal of expanding Sources to as many schools and communities as possible. At the state-level, these organizations coordinate trainings for Elementary Coaches and Secondary Program Trainers, connect schools to funding and resources for training and implementation, and help schools reach compliance for House Bill 123.

How Does Sources Fulfill House Bill 123?

House Bill 123 (HB123) requires schools to implement an evidence-based suicide prevention program with students in grades 6-12. This law further instructs the Ohio Department of Education to maintain a list of programs that fulfill HB123's mandate. Sources is the only program on this list available at no cost to Ohio schools, and with a slate of rigorous evaluations backing up its claims as an effective suicide prevention program, schools can rest assured that Sources is an incredible choice to help them meet compliance.

HOW CAN I BRING SOURCES TO MY SCHOOL?

Schools can use one of the following two strategies to implement Sources of Strength:

1

Have school staff trained so they can implement Sources. Prospective Coaches and Secondary Program Trainers can receive a daily stipend to participate in free, virtual trainings with the National Trainers, then bring the curriculum or secondary program back to their schools for next steps.

2

Connect with a Coach or Secondary Program Trainer in your area. Hundreds of school staff and mental health professionals have already been trained in Sources of Strength, and there may be opportunities to connect them to your school.

The newly launched Sources of Strength Ohio Network includes experienced mental health and school-based trainers who are already embedded in their local schools and communities and ready to bring Sources to nearby classrooms.

To sign up for a training, inquire about coaches and trainers in your area, or simply to learn more about Sources of Strength, please visit SourcesofStrengthOhio.org or reach out to info@sourcesofstrengthohio.org, Julie@prevention-first.org or Evi.Roberts@ohiospf.org.