

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Thomas Jefferson High School



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Educating our students about how to care for themselves and friends is an important task. Students are most likely to talk to their friends when having a problem, and some students entering adolescence experience a rollercoaster of difficult emotions. Depression (among the most common of mental illnesses) appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression is a leading risk factor for suicide, and is treatable. In addition, self-injury has become a growing problem among youth. While not every student will experience these feelings, any child may find itself in a position to help someone who does.

To proactively address these issues we are offering multiple prevention training programs that align with depression awareness and suicide prevention training. These programs include:

- Signs of Suicide Program for 6th and 9th grade students. The program was developed by the highly regarded non-profit organization and is used by thousands of schools nationwide since 2000. It has proven successful at increasing help seeking by students concerned about themselves or a friend (*American Journal of Public Health, March 2004*).
- Safe2Tell Colorado is a Colorado model prevention strategy operating under the Colorado Attorney General's Office, Department of Law. Safe2Tell Colorado is required to be part of school safety planning by the Colorado Department of Education. Programming focuses on educating students on the importance of reporting concerns and how to anonymously report to Safe2Tell Colorado.

Our goals include:

- Help students understand that depression is a treatable illness
- Explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often results from untreated depression
- Provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves or a friend
- Impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a trusted adult about concerns
- To help students know whom, in the school, they can turn to for help
- To support healthy emotional development of all students

If you do **NOT** wish your child to participate in programming, please sign below and return the form (or email directly) to Natalie_Koncz@dpsk12.org, by December 20th, 2020. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your child has permission to participate in this program.

The program will be presented in two sessions both to take place in Advisement class on Tuesday January 5th and Wednesday 6th, 2021.

Sincerely,

Natalie Koncz, Ed.S., School Psychologist and Samanda Davis, LCSW, MSW, Social Worker

I _____, do not give permission for
Name of Parent/Guardian

Student Name

Signature of Parent/Guardian