

High School Newsletter

The challenges of high school are no small thing. You likely have plenty to manage from responsibilities in and out of school to relationships – new and old – and the ups and downs of family life. It's normal to feel anxious or down sometimes. However, when worry prevents you from doing things you enjoy or when you experience feelings of sadness for more than a couple weeks, you may need support. Whether you notice a change in yourself or a friend, it might be time to ACT.



Acknowledge signs of suicide
in yourself or a friend

Show your friend that you **C**are

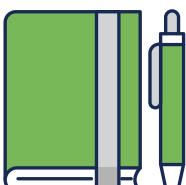
Tell a trusted adult

What is depression?

- Lasting feelings of sadness – experiencing a strong mood that involves sadness, discouragement, despair, or hopelessness and persists for two weeks or more
- Difficulty concentrating – difficulty focusing on school work or other things
- Negative thinking – seeing everything as bad and unlikely to get better
- Low energy – lacking the energy to get up and do what you usually enjoy
- Easily irritated – a lasting mood of irritability, being easily annoyed or quick to anger

Healthy Coping Strategies

Sometimes it feels like you are juggling so much, it can be easy to forget to take time to care for yourself. Healthy coping strategies are important to help you deal with stress.



Journaling – writing down your feelings can be helpful to manage stressful situations. You can learn more about yourself if you spend a few minutes reflecting about your day in a journal. If you have trouble getting started, try jotting down a few lines of your feelings or three things you're grateful for that day.



Exercise – physical activity boosts your mood and is healthy for your body and mind. Exercise can come in many forms such as running, biking, playing a sport, or even just walking your dog each day.



Hobbies – people who spend time connecting with each other have lower levels of anxiety and depression. Try new hobbies where you can be around people and make new friends. This might include volunteering at your local animal shelter or joining a club at your school.

Bust the Myths

Myth: People who talk about suicide won't really do it.

Fact: Almost everyone who dies by suicide has given some clue or warning. Statements like, "You'll be sorry when I'm dead" or "I can't see any way out" may indicate serious suicidal thoughts. If you are concerned about a friend, it is time to ACT.

Myth: Talking about suicide may give someone the idea.

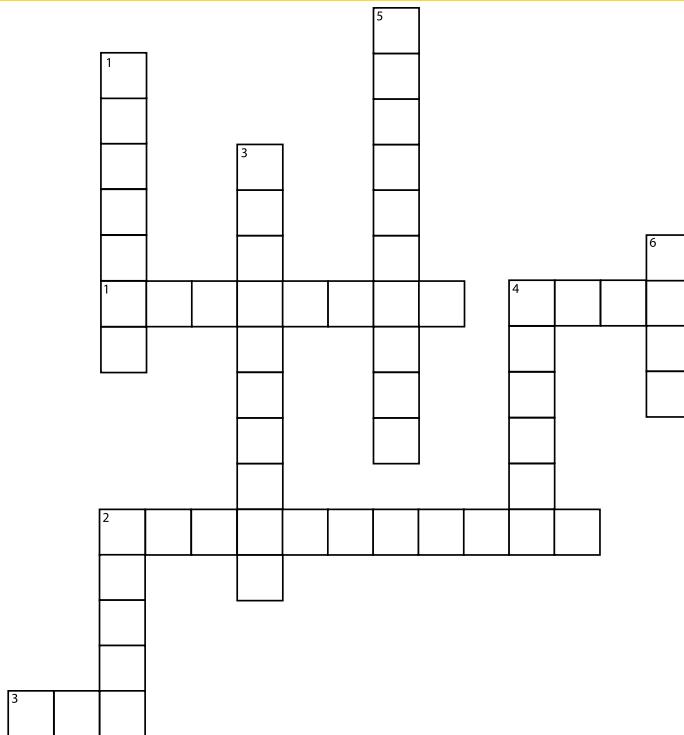
Fact: You do not give a suicidal person morbid ideas by talking about suicide. The opposite is true. Bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do.

Dear SOS – I think my friend is self-injuring. I asked him about it and he assured me that he doesn't want to kill himself and he's doing fine. What should I do?

Self-injury is not the same as a suicide attempt, but it is a sign of serious emotional concerns. Some people use self-injury as a way to try to deal with very strong negative emotions. Counseling could help your friend learn positive coping strategies and work through mental health concerns. It's also important to know that self-injury does increase a person's risk for suicide. Even if your friend assures you that he is not thinking of suicide right now – that could change. That's why it's so important to **ACT** (Acknowledge, Care, Tell) right away.

Dear SOS – My friend started drinking all of a sudden. She says it's no big deal but something seems off. I want to help her but I don't want to get her in trouble. What can I do?

It's understandable that you're concerned since sudden changes in behavior can be a warning signs for mental health concerns and even thoughts of suicide. When people start using substances (alcohol or drugs) to try to manage their emotions, it is time to intervene. First, try convincing your friend to talk to an adult she trusts. She may not be ready to talk to her parents but your school counselor or a trusted coach or mentor may be a good place to start. If she can't be convinced, you may need to ACT on your own. Try talking to your own parent or someone you trust at school to get help for your friend.



SOS Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. Going for walks or playing sports are examples of this way to stay healthy
2. When you recognize signs of trouble and realize that it's serious
3. Three steps to help a friend in need
4. When you show your friend that their feelings are important to you

DOWN

1. Activities you do for fun
2. A person who can help you or a friend with big problems is called a trusted __
3. Writing down your thoughts and emotions
4. Healthy strategies you use to help you get through hard times
5. A bond between two people
6. When you share your worries with an adult so they can help