



SOS for High School Refresher 1 & Screening Instructions

Lesson Introduction

“Today we are going to be learning about suicide prevention. Many of you participated in SOS in the past. Today we will be watching a refresher video and discussing it as a group.

This can be a difficult topic to talk about but it’s important to learn how we can help each other. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the lesson [\[insert school plan for students who need a break\]](#).

(Continue reading except for end-of-day classes**)

At the end of the class, we will be asking you to complete a brief survey where you will be answering some questions about how you have been feeling over the past month. You will also have an opportunity to indicate if you would like to speak to an adult privately about any questions or concerns that you may have about yourself and/or a friend/peer.”

****NOTE: For classes being facilitated the last 1-2 periods of the school day (pre-determined by your school’s SOS Team), students should be directed to complete the survey *before* the SOS lesson.**

Directions for End-of-Day Classes:

****Read the directions to students before passing out the forms! Let students know that they should turn their paper over when they finish, and you will collect it from them. Do NOT have students pass papers forward or deposit in a pile!**

“Today we will be viewing and discussing the SOS High School Program videos. Before we start, I am going to pass out a brief survey. Please write your first and last name legibly at the top, and then answer the seven yes-or-no questions to the best of your ability. All but one question asks you to think about how you have been feeling over the **past 4 weeks**, *not* just how you are feeling today, or even how you were feeling two summers ago or last school year, just how you’ve been feeling over the past month. Next, think of trusted adults both at home and at school, and complete this portion of the survey. If your trusted adult at home is a relative (mom, grandma, uncle, etc.) you can write their title as opposed to their name. For school, please specify a particular person (don’t just write “teacher” or “counselor”).

In our discussion today we will be talking about the importance of the ACT help-seeking message. I want to give you an opportunity right now to request to speak to an adult at the school about concerns that you may have about yourself or a friend. Please fill in the appropriate bubble on the bottom of the form indicating whether or not you would like to talk to someone. Your choices are 1) I would like to talk to someone today, because it is an emergency, 2) I would like to talk to an adult one day this week—it is not an emergency, or 3) I do not need to talk to an adult at this time. Just fill in one of the three bubbles. I know we have not gone through the lesson yet, so just make a choice based on how you feel right now. If your answer changes by the end of the lesson, please notify me at the end of the class period.”

Show Recap Video & Guide Class Discussion

Q1: What warning signs did you hear in Elli's story?

Elli, her parents, and Mikhaila all describe warning signs including:

- Feelings of worthlessness
- Increased anger
- Body aches, feeling sick to her stomach
- Self-injury
- Putting herself in danger
- Substance use
- Becoming withdrawn
- No hope for the future
- Saying things like she didn't want to live

Note to Facilitator:

Keep information about self-injury very general and within the context of seeking help from a trusted adult.

- Self-injury is when a person hurts their body on purpose without the intention to die. It is often an attempt to cope with overwhelming emotional pain.
- Self-injury is a mental health concern that can be treated; there are people in the school who can help students who self-injure.

Q2: How does Connor describe depression? What makes it different from sadness?

Connor describes:

- Self-hatred
- Feeling sad "all the time"
- Feeling drained of all positive emotion
- Stopped doing schoolwork
- Withdrawing from friends and family and feeling alone even when surrounded by friends
- Feeling like a burden, "wasn't enough for the people around me"

Sadness is a common reaction to bad news or something negative in your life. Feelings of sadness are temporary and often go away on their own. We can also help minimize sad feelings by doing something to help take our minds off whatever is bringing us down (e.g., talking to a friend, listening to music, playing sports, etc.). When people are sad, they can still go on with their daily lives.

Depression, however, is a serious health condition that affects more than just your mood. It can impact *all areas* of your life (e.g., eating and sleeping habits, energy level, interest in activities, academic performance, concentration, decision-making, etc.) and prevent you from doing the things that were once important to you. Depression is an *illness* and therefore requires treatment from a qualified doctor or mental health professional. Without treatment, it can even lead to thoughts of suicide. It is essential to get treatment to feel better.

Q3: How was Mikhaila a good friend to Elli?

- Elli says that although Mikhaila didn't know what she was going through, she never left Elli's side.
- When Elli said she wanted to kill herself, she recognized that this was an emergency so she told her mom. Mikhaila's mom did the right thing too by getting in touch with Elli's parents immediately. Even though Elli told her not to tell, she knew she had to get adults involved to save her life.

Q4: How does Angelina use the ACT technique to help her friend Carmen?

Acknowledge: She learned that Carmen was skipping rehearsals even though she had the lead role in the school production and that she seemed zoned-out. She also noticed that Carmen had stopped hanging out with friends, posting on social media, and responding to texts. When Carmen finally texted, "you won't have to worry about me much longer," Angelina became more concerned.

Care: She told the school counselor. Sometimes the best way to show you care is to share your concerns with an adult who can help. She explained to her friend that she told Mr. Matthews because she cares about her and was worried. She also offered to be available to talk, or not, after Carmen talked to the counselor.

Tell: Angelina told the school counselor even though their friend James thought it was a bad idea. She said not telling was a risk she wasn't willing to take.

Q5: Connor believes that speaking openly about our struggles helps everyone feel less alone. How can you contribute to a campus where all students know they aren't alone?

Encourage students to share their thoughts. Students may share individual things they can do to connect with peers who are struggling. They may also raise ideas for group projects, clubs, and initiatives that can contribute to a positive school culture for all students.

Video Review

Allow time for students to ask any additional questions. Remind students of resources available on and off campus. Reinforce the ACT help-seeking message and ensure that students can name the three steps (Acknowledge, Care and Tell).

Depression Screening Introduction

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