



SOS for High School Refresher 2 & 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.”

*(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 Refresher Video & Guide Class Discussion

Q1: Ilyas talks about learning positive ways to cope with difficult emotions. What are some positive things you do to cope?

Encourage students to share their ideas. Possible answers include:

- Talking to friends or a trusted adult
- Exercising
- Listening to music
- Doing creative things that make you feel good about yourself (art, playing music, writing, etc.)
- Volunteering/helping others

Optional Question:

The students talk about using drugs and alcohol to cope with or hide the pain, but they quickly realized that it wouldn't work. Why do you think drugs or alcohol made things worse for them?

- Alcohol and many drugs are depressants, so they can make you feel even worse when you are already struggling with depression.
- Alcohol/drugs can interact with medication people are taking to treat depression or anxiety and worsen their symptoms.
- Alcohol/drugs lower inhibitions, which can cause people to make choices they regret and can increase risk for suicide.
- Substance use can create more problems (with school, parents, the law, even friendships).
- Alcohol and drugs make it hard to think clearly, cope with hard times, and work to solve problems.

Q2: Zi and Joey talk about struggling with their identity. Why might aspects of a person's identity impact their mental health?

Everyone has a self-identity, which is the way that they view themselves in the world. Our family backgrounds, physical traits, and beliefs all contribute to our identity.

- Students might experience discrimination based on their identity. Youth of color and LGBTQ youth report higher than average levels of discrimination.
- Students might feel like they don't fit into their family or the "majority" culture in their school or community.
- Being treated differently or being left out can make it hard to feel good about ourselves or our culture.
- Students may feel that they cannot express their true selves, which is often very stressful.

Q3: How can you support peers who are struggling with their identity?

Answers may include:

- Advocate for and support school clubs that validate all student identities.
- Take an interest in learning how peers see themselves.
- Avoid making assumptions about any aspect of other people's identity.
- Publicly take a stand in support of your peers. Stand up for peers who are experiencing bullying or feel rejected.

Q4: Joey and Connor talk about needing that “push” to get help. What could you do to support a friend who needs a push?

Answers may include:

- Encourage them to seek help and offer to go with them or make a call together.
- Make getting help one step easier: dial the phone number, walk them down to the school counselor, sit with them while they tell a parent, etc.
- Share a time when you got help and why it made a difference.
- If you are worried that they won't seek help, get a trusted adult involved.

Q5: The students talk about how keeping their suicidal thoughts a secret felt like a huge weight. Why did revealing the truth help them get better?

- It is freeing to let go of a secret you've been keeping about yourself and accept support from others.
- Sharing your true thoughts and feelings with someone who doesn't judge you or blame you for feeling that way can be a huge relief.
- Going through very hard times and recovering makes people feel proud and stronger than ever.
- They learned that depression is a treatable illness that and other people struggle similarly which made them feel less alone.
- You can't get help if you keep your feelings a secret. Telling the truth led them to get treatment for their depression and feel much better.

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

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

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