

SOS for High School Refresher 3 & 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: What warning signs did Keala and her friend, Wilbryna, describe?

- Had trouble getting out of bed
- Stopped taking care of herself/doing laundry
- Becoming withdrawn from family and friends
- Substance use
- Stopped going to classes/ failed classes
- Crying all the time
- Anger; severe mood changes

Optional Question:

When someone exhibits multiple symptoms that interfere with their daily life, they may have the illness of depression. How is this different from sadness?

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.

Q2: Even though Wilbryna noticed warning signs, why do you think she was shocked when Keala said she was planning to kill herself?

Many people don't know the symptoms of depression or the warning signs for suicide. Even if she had known, sometimes it's hard to acknowledge when someone you love is in so much pain. We would rather not believe our friend is hurting so much so we convince ourselves they are okay. This is why acknowledge is an important first step in the ACT message. When you see warning signs, sometimes you must force yourself to pay attention because they could be very serious.

Q3: Wilbryna convinced Keala to get help from the college counseling office. If a friend confided in you, who could you convince them to tell?

Examples may include:

- Their parents
- School counselor/school-based mental health staff
- Any adult they trust

- After high school, there are still many pathways to help. Colleges have resources and there are resources in the community for adults. Helplines are available for everyone. Call/text 988 for support 24/7.

Q4: Why do you think it's often so hard for people to reach out for help when they are struggling with depression?

Answers many include:

- Depression can make it difficult to complete basic responsibilities like schoolwork or even getting out of bed. Taking a big step like asking for help can feel overwhelming when your thoughts are clouded by depression. Depression can affect the way we think, impairing judgment and problem-solving skills.
- Many people don't realize that there is effective treatment for depression, and they can feel much better if they get the help they need.
- Many people don't know where to start. They may not know how to connect to a mental health provider or there may be limited resources in their area. They also may be uncomfortable with the idea of taking medicine or talking to a professional about their symptoms.
- Sometimes people think that their symptoms will just go away eventually or that they should be able to fix them on their own. They don't realize that depression is just like any other illness that needs professional help.

Q5: Think back to a time when you struggled in the past. What have you learned that you would tell your former self?

Encourage students to share challenging experiences they've faced and how they were able to overcome these struggles. Students might talk about academic problems, fights with friends/family, or failing to reach a goal. If any student raises concerns about suicide, follow up with them directly and notify school mental health staff.

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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