

SOS for Middle School Refresher 1 and 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 a new scene and discussing them 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 Middle 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.”

Video 1 Introduction

“In the first video, we will review a scene with two students, Kennedy and Bella. Pay attention to the signs Kennedy noticed and think about what you would do if you saw these signs in a friend.”

Show First Video & Guide Class Discussion

Optional Question:

Before moving into the PowerPoint, we recommend you start with the following prompt:
What is the difference between sadness and depression?

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.

Optional Question:

What are some of the warning signs present in the scene between Bella and Kennedy?

- Bella is skipping band practice, something she loves
- She's acting different, not like her usual self
- She's stopped posting on social media and answering texts from her friends
- Doesn't feel like doing anything, even things she used to be interested in
- Not taking care of her physical appearance, saying she doesn't even recognize herself
- Says she's "nervous all the time"
- Is having trouble sleeping
- Says she wishes she could "fall asleep and never wake up"

Q1: If you notice warning signs in a friend, what should you do?

You must ACT. Acknowledge signs of suicide in a friend, show your friend you Care, and Tell a trusted adult.

Encourage students to discuss how they would use the ACT steps.

Q2: Kennedy suggests Bella talk to her music teacher, the nurse, or the counselor. In our school, who would you suggest a friend talk to and why?

Encourage students to discuss your school's trusted adults. Any adult in school can help a student in need. Use this opportunity to offer yourself as a trusted adult for any of your students if they would like to talk.

Q3: What should you do if you're worried about your friend, but they say nothing is wrong?

Sometimes, a friend will say they are fine when they are feeling depressed or even thinking about suicide. It's important to look out for warning signs and trust your instincts. If you are worried, tell a trusted adult about what you've noticed.

Video 2 Introduction

"In the next video, you'll see a new scene where Ana is concerned about her friend, Lucas. Pay attention to the trusted adults Ana believes could help her friend."

Show Second Video & Guide Class Discussion

Q4: Which trusted adults did Ana suggest? What trusted adults at school, at home, or in the community would you suggest for a friend?

Ana suggested Lucas talk to his school counselor or their youth group leader. When he wasn't convinced, she suggested her grandmother.

Encourage students to name trusted adults at school, at home, and in the community to whom they could go for help.

Q5: What can you do if you start noticing changes in your own mental health?

The ACT message works for you too. If you start to notice signs, acknowledge them. This means accepting that something serious is going on and that you need to address it. Take care of yourself. Remember to use your positive coping strategies and stay connected to people who care about you. Most importantly, tell a trusted adult. Help is always available.

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 finish, and you will collect it from them. Do NOT have students pass papers forward or deposit in a pile!

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