IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE WARNING SIGNS, TAKE ACTION!

Signs that a student may be at risk include the following F-A-C-T-S:

- **FEELINGS** like expressing hopelessness about the future, seeming sad and unhappy, being anxious and worried, or getting angry and aggressive.
- **ACTIONS** like withdrawing from activities or friendships, doing risky, dangerous things like drinking & driving, or researching ways to die online.
- **CHANGES** in the normal mood and behavior of your student. In some ways, this may be what is easiest for you to notice. If you observe changes that concern you, reach out to others in the student's life (i.e., parents, caregivers, teachers, friends, religious leaders, etc.) to see if they've also noticed changes.
- **THREATS** are sometimes direct like "I'd rather be dead". They can also be vague like "I just don't care about anything anymore."
- **SITUATIONS** are events that can serve as triggers for the suicidal behavior. These can include things like getting into trouble at home or school or with the law, experiencing some type of loss or facing a life change that may be too overwhelming for the student to deal with on their own.

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE.

By taking time to notice and reach out to someone you feel is at risk, **you** can be the beginning of a positive solution.

Call or Text:

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

WHAT EVERY TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW:

Recognizing Suicide Risk in Students

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text "GOT5" to 741-741

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health | SPC NY Suicide Prevention Center of New York State

www.PreventSuicideNY.org

Youth Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business!

YOUR ROLE AS A TEACHER IS CRITICAL

Does teaching seem to get harder every year?

Are there more requirements, more testing, and less time for you to think– let alone plan?

Are you expected to take more responsibilities for your students, even when they are more challenging and when some of them may be at-risk for suicide?

Did you know that according to national data:

Almost 30% of 9th through 12th grade students have felt so sad or helpless during the course of an academic year that they couldn't do the things they normally do?

Or that there has been a dramatic rise in the suicide attempt rate for 10 to 14 year olds?

Or that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth in New York State?

Who are these kids?

They're sitting in your classrooms every day.

Although your job is to teach them, not diagnose them, there are ways that can help you better identify these struggling students and get them to someone who is trained to make a more complete assessment of their needs. Students who are thinking about suicide are not concentrating on school work; they are often preoccupied with problems that seem overwhelming and unsolvable.

Your role in this process is critical but very limited and is often the first step in getting students the help they need.

So how do you accomplish this?

By doing what you do best- simply paying attention to your students and knowing where to send them in your school if you notice anything that concerns you.

The majority of those students who are thinking about suicide show direct or indirect warning signs. These are things that reflect a change in the student's behavior, attitude or feelings from as little as two weeks ago.

Some common warning signs are listed on the back panel of this brochure. If you see any of these, your responsibility is to get that student to the appropriate resources in your building.

Remember, your job isn't to figure out what the problem is– it's simply to get this student help.

Be sure to follow up with that resource person to ensure action is being taken and check in with the student to see how things are going. If you continue to be concerned, let that resource person know.

Suicide risk doesn't immediately disappear once an intervention is made, so keep your eyes open!

Noticing and referring potentially at-risk students are only the beginning of the suicide prevention equation. Equally important is your role in encouraging students to seek help if they have a problem and to turn to a trusted adult for support.

Help-seeking is called a protective factor, the kind of thing that can buffer us from life stressors.

The single most important protective factor for youth is a relationship with one trusted adult. As you know too well, many of your students may not have very supportive situations outside of school, so their trusted adult is often someone in their school community.

What does it take to be a trusted adult to a student?

Here's how students describe it:

- Making time to talk, even if your schedule is tight
- Taking my concerns seriously, no matter how trivial they seem
- Not telling me " it will be better tomorrow"
- LISTENING! Recognizing you probably can't fix what I'm worried about but just listening to me talk about it can help
- Being honest if you think you have to tell someone else about my problem
- Taking action when it's necessary
- Remembering what we talked about and asking me about it later

When you review this list, you'll probably find that these are the same things you look for in someone to whom you turn for help– it's no different! While simply listening to a student talk about suicide can be very difficult, remember, it's the first step in the process.

That critical next step is getting that student to the resources in your school that can offer more help!