

Key Programs

Community Presentations

- ***Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention***
Educators are in a critical but limited role to listen to vulnerable youth, observe warning signs for suicide, and refer or connect students to resources. SPTS helps educators understand this important role with an acclaimed online training program that is self-paced, comprehensive and offered free of charge. The Best Practices training includes: students who identify as LGBTQ, students with a history of bullying, gifted students, and students who have had a previous suicide attempt. Through the use of role-plays, the training embraces school culture and presents real-life scenarios for youth suicide prevention methods. Survivors of suicide loss share their personal stories, while many mental health experts give detailed accounts regarding at-risk populations, warning signs, risk factors, and what the referral process means for educators, counselors and members of the school community. This program is offered online and in-person.
- ***Making Youth Agencies Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention***
Similar to *Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention*, this program achieves three essential goals which further the mission of SPTS: increase awareness of teen suicide; outline the agency role in prevention; and review strategies for dealing with at-risk youth.
- ***Raising Resilient Teens in Challenging Times***
This program educated parents on the warning signs of suicide, dispels myths, and encourages parents to speak to their children about suicide prevention. This presentation is from the Evidence-based *Lifelines: Suicide Prevention* program.
- ***The Role of the Trusted Adult***
This presentation educates those viewed by youth as role models (coaches, teachers, etc) on how to respond to at-risk youth. Participants learn how to engage with at-risk youth, confidentiality, warning signs and risk factors of youth suicide, protective factors and resources. This information empowers trusted adults to take action when a youth comes to them about either a friend talking about suicide or themselves.

Lifelines Training

National data tells us that at-risk students are present in every school, at every grade level, yet how can schools implement procedures for identifying these at-risk students and addressing their needs all while remaining focused on their primary functions of educating all students in a safe and healthy environment for learning? The *Lifelines Trilogy™* makes school-based suicide prevention possible and practical. *Lifelines: A Suicide Prevention Program* is an Evidence Based, Best Practices curriculum that promotes a caring, competent school community in which help seeking is encouraged and modeled and suicidal behavior is recognized as an issue that cannot be kept secret. *Lifelines* increases the likelihood that school staff and students will know how to identify at-risk youth when they encounter them, provide an appropriate initial response, and obtain help, as well as be inclined to take such action. The schools would be equipped with the knowledge and resources to integrate suicide prevention curriculum into student health lessons, positively impacting the health, wellness and ability to learn for thousands of students.

Youth Education

- ***Youth Council***

Research makes it clear that youth are an important part of the prevention process. In early 2015 SPTS developed a Youth Council directed at engaging selected youth as SPTS ambassadors in the prevention process. As of 2017, the Youth Council has grown to have two stand alone councils, a Monmouth County Youth Council and an Ocean County Youth Council. They are comprised of over 75 high school students representing 22 different high schools in Monmouth and Ocean Counties, who collaborate with SPTS staff and volunteers to work on suicide prevention projects, learn resiliency and helping skills, all while functioning in an advisory role to the agency programming that is aimed at youth.

- ***Youth Wellness Summit***

Feedback from the SPTS Youth Council confirmed that many students do not possess vital protective factors to help them through stressful life experiences, but have the desire to learn. Some, having experienced the loss of a friend to suicide, felt that they would have been able to do more to help if they had more knowledge. This information solidified the need for SPTS to develop the Youth Wellness Summit as it provides useful information to students and staff to bring back to their school communities. This program is invaluable as it could potentially save the life of a classmate or student.

The Youth Wellness Summit is a day-long event hosted by SPTS and offered at no cost to public and private high schools in the selected county. The summit was specifically designed to provide students, school administrators and school support staff with the necessary resources needed to encourage and support overall wellness, including the prevention of teen suicide and other upstream prevention measures. By engaging participants with a variety of activities, attending students will be able to develop positive coping strategies, increase their knowledge as it relates to wellness, and be introduced to practical techniques that can be easily implemented in their individual learning environments. A goal of the summit is to instill methods and practices for overall wellness and mental health to enrich students' lives by transforming and improving their ability to effectively problem solve, set goals, and increase their leadership skills. The summit will seek to motivate participants to return to their schools as positive role models and leaders and become partners in creating safe and fun places to learn.

- ***Taking Care of Ourselves and Our Friends***

This program is newly designed by SPTS Clinical Director, Phyllis Alongi, MS, NCC, LPC, ACS, and nationally renowned suicide prevention expert, Maureen Underwood, LCSW. It will help to introduce prevention at an earlier age and enable our youth to respond positively with healthy coping skills when faced with a crisis and begins broadly with a conversation about overall health and wellness. The ultimate goal of this program is to teach students to have a more proactive role in the prevention process and save the lives of our teens.

All activities will relate to the student's own life in order to better engage them to participate. The premise behind the activities is to teach coping and prevention skills in an organic method by involving the actual experiences of students into the training. This will be done by having them identify a caring trusting adult and by connecting them to something larger than themselves. Utilizing guided imagery and sensory positives, the students will be equipped with the necessary skills need to combat stress. This curriculum will connect acceptability and safety when talking about things students feel good about, as well as things they do not feel good about, in order to teach them that sometimes not all feelings feel good and more importantly that's okay.