



Let's Taco 'Bout It
With the WUSD Elementary Counselors
September is Suicide Prevention Month

It's never too early to focus on mental health and suicide prevention. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10-24 year olds. When children are young, start talking to them about emotions and how to address undesirable feelings. As they grow older, continue that dialogue and talk more deeply about experiences. Seek professional help when feelings are overwhelming or out of control. Inspire students to speak up when someone they know is having trouble. Suicide is preventable! Read more about how we may Engage, Elevate and Empower our students!

Engage: Some people think that if we talk about suicide, we give students the idea to kill themselves. In fact, the opposite is true. Research shows that talking about suicide decreases young people's anxiety and does not put "ideas" in their head. Talk to your student at a developmentally appropriate level. This might be as simple as talking to students about how they are feeling. Young children often say phrases like "I'm going to kill you" or "I want to die" because they lack the vocabulary to express themselves with other words. If this happens, you can say "those kinds of words make me and other people feel uncomfortable, scared, or unsafe". Provide different words to use instead like "That really made me mad". Older students are mature enough to have a deeper conversation about their choice of words and their feelings.

Elevate: Several factors help promote mental health and support students when they are feeling suicidal or sad. Social support and feeling connected are both common protective factors. Because students might be feeling isolated due to COVID-19, it is important to check-in with your student and try to create safe opportunities for social interactions. Extracurricular activities and being physically well also help promote mental health and help prevent suicidality. Finally, being hopeful is also a protective factor. Even if a student does not have the life they want now or is not able to engage with others as much as they would like, having hope that things will get better or having goals helps protect against suicide. If someone is feeling suicidal or not like themselves, seeking professional help right away is very important.

Empower: Suicide is preventable. If you or someone you know has expressed thoughts or intention to harm themselves, please take it seriously and call a professional for assistance immediately. The best ways to minimize potential risk among our students is to be informed, increase family/peer support, and to work closely with school staff and appropriate medical and mental health providers. Setting realistic expectations for oneself also helps students (and adults) feel good about themselves. Additionally, it is important to encourage students to speak up when a friend or someone they know talks about death or suicide. Some students are afraid to speak up because they do not want to break their friend's trust. However, it is important that we change that narrative among students and help them feel like heroes when they advocate for a friend. Ask your student to identify a trusted adult to talk



about these kinds of things with (e.g., parent, sibling, counselor, relative). For further information and resources please see a member of the CARE Team and the links below:

Suicide Prevention/ Prevención del Suicidio

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1.800.273.8255	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio	1.888.628.9454	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Options For Deaf + Hard of Hearing	1.800.273.8255	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/for-deaf-hard-of-hearing/
Didi Hirsch Crisis Text For Deaf + Hard of Hearing	Text "HEARME" to 839863	https://didihirsch.org/services/suicide-prevention/crisis-services/
Teen Line	1.800.852.8336 6-10 PM Text "Teen" to 839863 6-9PM	https://teenline.org
CA Youth Crisis Line	1.800.843.5200	https://calyouth.org/cycl/