

Note: Given the circumstances surrounding COVID, please refer to the Fall 2020 guidance documentation. The student training recommendations in this document should be considered for the recommended January 2021 booster session.

## Kentucky Division of Behavioral Health Recommended Suicide Prevention Staff/Student Training Components

Students who perceive school is not a safe place have an increased likelihood of also reporting suicidal behavior (Rothon et al., 2009). Among Kentucky middle and high schools, 14.6% of students said they felt unsafe/very unsafe at school. Students aged 15-19 had the highest rate of feeling unsafe at 17.3% (Kentucky Incentives for Prevention, 2019). Those who feel unsafe are four times more likely to attempt suicide (KIP, 2019). Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth ages 10-14 and the second leading cause among those ages 15-34.

Middle and high school students spend a significant amount of time in the classroom and involved in extracurricular activities. School staff, including bus drivers, coaches, teachers, and administrators, are in a prime position to recognize the signs of suicide risk and to make referrals to care and other resources for these students.

### What the Research Says

*Youth who don't feel safe at school report a 4X greater likelihood of suicidal behavior than their peers who feel safe (KIP 2019)*

### Risk Factors and Warning Signs

Students share warning signs of suicide with teachers, friends, school staff, and parents. Interventions should include: a screening to identify suicide risk; assessment and evaluation by a behavioral health clinician when a screening or threat assessment indicates it is needed; parental involvement; referral; and follow through.

Below is a list of the top five risk factors and warning signs for suicide. Every student that has a risk factor may not be at risk for suicide but having one or more does increase the chance of suicide.

- Depressive disorders
- Substance use
- Previous suicide attempts
- Bullying- being bullied or being the bully
- Access to lethal means

### Protective Factors

Protective factors can buffer the effects of risk factors. Actions by school staff to enhance protective factors is an essential element in suicide prevention efforts.

- Psychological or emotional well-being
- Positive mood
- Coping skills
- Self-esteem
- Family support
- Restricted access to means

As school personnel, you care about the well-being of your students. Maintaining a safe and secure school environment is essential to enhancing a child's ability to learn and to be academically successful. It is also critical to their mental health and is essential in suicide prevention efforts.



For more information or to request support related to suicide prevention for students or staff, please contact Beck Whipple at [beck.whipple@ky.gov](mailto:beck.whipple@ky.gov) or 502-782-4548.

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In order to ensure that school staff members feel equipped and ready to address suicidal risk among the students they encounter, the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities recommends the following trainings to meet requirements for KRS 156.095. The recently approved legislation requires all school staff receive a minimum of 1 hour of training, either face-to-face, streaming, or by video.

## Recommendations for Staff Training

*Note: The determination of ranking as Good, Better, or Best is based on components of the training (i.e., mode of delivery, inclusion of review of policies and procedures, evidence-base), not the specific training. Trainings listed are examples of what might be utilized.*

### GOOD

Video sessions without discussion as a group and/or without inclusion of a review of local policies and practices, such as:

- **LivingWorks Start** (approximately \$25/person, volume pricing available).  
<https://shopusa.livingworks.net/discount/T-35159?redirect=%2Fproducts%2Flivingworks-start>)
- **QPR Online Training** (approximately \$30/person, volume pricing available).  
<https://qprinstitute.com/individual-training>)
- **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide - Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention** (video, free, <http://sptsuniversity.org/>)
- **KDE/KET – Suicide Prevention Train the Trainer** (video, free, <https://pd.ket.org/>)
- **The Jason Foundation – Youth Suicide: “A Silent Epidemic”** (video, free, <https://learn.jasonfoundation.com/courses/module-5/>)

### BETTER

Face-to-face session with no review of local policies and procedures or online simulation modules, such as:

- **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)\***
- **Sources of Strength** (adult portion, *school does not need to be implementing Sources to utilize the adult training*)\*
- **suicideTALK\***
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid\***
- **Kognito At Risk Simulation** (Approximately \$34/person, volume pricing available)

### BEST

Face-to-face session with a certified trainer\*, including review of school’s referral policies and procedures for identified students, such as:

- **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)\*** (for staff identified for crisis team)
- **Lifelines Staff Training** (staff training included with youth prevention curriculum, \$240/school; limited number of online subscriptions available at no cost;  
<https://www.hazelden.org/store/item/503138>)
- **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)\***



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- **Sources of Strength** (adult portion)
- **suicideTALK\***

**\* PLEASE NOTE:** These sessions can be provided at no cost to the school district. Contact the Regional Prevention Center supporting your community to connect your school with trainers. (See contact list, attached)

## Recommended Educational School Policies for Suicide Prevention

Every school in Kentucky should have policies and procedures that protect the health and well-being of their students. These policies and procedures should address the prevention, assessment (including assessment of threat to the school), intervention, and response to suicidal behavior. These policies should be paired with other policies supporting the emotional and behavioral health of students more broadly.

Broad components of these policies and procedures should include:

- **Parental involvement** – parents and guardians are key players in youth suicide prevention. Parents should be informed and actively involved in all decisions regarding their child’s welfare.
- **District implementation** – a district level suicide prevention coordinator should be designated. This person should be responsible for planning and coordinating the implementation of the policy for the district.
- **Staff professional development** – all staff should receive professional development on risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, postvention, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.
- **Youth suicide prevention programming** – developmentally-appropriate, student-centered education materials should be integrated into the curriculum of all K-12 health classes. This curriculum should include: healthy choices and coping strategies; risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others; help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.
- **Publication and distribution** – the policy should be distributed annually and included in student and teacher handbooks and on the school website.
- **Assessment and referral** – any student who is identified by a staff person as potentially suicidal should be seen by a mental health professional within the same school day to assess risk and facilitate a referral. Staff should continuously supervise the student to ensure safety. Parents should be notified. If the parent is not available, emergency services should be sought. Relationships should be established with community behavioral health providers before they are needed to ensure a warm hand-off from the school to mental health care.
- **Re-entry procedure** – after a suicidal crisis, an administrator should meet with the student and their parents to discuss the student’s readiness to return to school. A designated follow-up process should be identified at intervals over a 6-month period after the crisis. Follow-up should occur with both the student and parent.
- **Postvention plan** – a crisis team should be designated prior to an incident and to develop an action plan in the unfortunate incidence of a suicide death in the school community. The crisis team should meet immediately following the news of a suicide death to implement an action plan.



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Additional information and resources on school policies can be found at [https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy\\_FINAL.pdf](https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy_FINAL.pdf) and <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma12-4669.pdf>

KRS 156.095 also includes revised recommendations for provision of suicide prevention information to all students in grades 6-12 in Kentucky. The legislation requires that all students receive information via face-to-face, streaming, or video methods no later than Sept. 15.

## Recommendations for Student Training

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### GOOD

Video sessions with accompanying discussion, such as:

- **A Cry For Help** (video, includes discussion guide, \$39; <https://paracletepress.com/products/a-cry-for-help-how-to-help-a-friend-who-is-depressed-or-suicidal>)
- **Depression: On the Edge** (video, \$70, bulk discounts available; [https://www.youtube.com/user/InTheMixPBS/about?disable\\_polymer=1](https://www.youtube.com/user/InTheMixPBS/about?disable_polymer=1))
- **Erika's Lighthouse Program – Depression Awareness for Middle School Students; Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students** (no cost, discussion guides included in resource portal after sign in. <https://www.erikalighthouse.org/teen-depression-awareness-classroom-programs/>)
- **Teaching Resources for Talking with Teens About Suicide** (PBS Newshour Extra, no cost, discussion guide included, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/daily-videos/teaching-resources-for-talking-with-teens-about-suicide/>)

### BETTER

Face-to-Face or synchronous live delivery of a single-session evidence-based or evidence-informed curriculum; peer-led programming without an accompanying evidence-based curriculum delivery, such as:

- **Lifelines Curriculum** (session 1; grades 5-12, recently revised, \$240/school; limited number of online subscriptions available at no cost; <https://www.hazelden.org/store/item/503138>)
- **Sources of Strength\*** youth-designed peer-led campaign that reaches the entire school and focuses on connecting to trusted adults and accessing resources
- **Kognito Friend2Friend Simulation** (Approximately \$25/person, volume pricing available; <https://store.kognito.com/products/friend2friend>)
- **KDE/KET Student Training** (available after completing staff training at: <https://pd.ket.org/>)\*



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## BEST

Face-to-face or synchronous live delivery of evidence-based or evidence-informed curriculum delivered with fidelity, complimented by a peer-led culture-change program such as Sources of Strength.\* Examples include:

- **Lifelines Curriculum** (grades 5-12, recently revised, \$240/school; limited number of online subscriptions available at no cost; <https://www.hazelden.org/store/item/503138>)
- **Linking Education and Awareness of Depression and Suicide (LEADS)** (High school only; \$125/school; <https://save.org/product-category/school-education-curriculum/>)
- **QPR\*** (should only be provided to youth in 10-12<sup>th</sup> grades in groups of 30 or less)
- **Signs of Suicide** (middle and high school versions, \$495/school; <https://www.mindwise.org/shop/>)
- **KDE/KET Student Training** (available after completing staff training at: <https://pd.ket.org/>)\*

\*\*We do not recommend assemblies with a single speaker for an entire student body. The topic may be triggering for students already at risk for suicide. Smaller group settings permit a trauma-informed approach for delivery of materials.



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## Kentucky's Regional Prevention Centers

The Regional Prevention Centers serve every county in Kentucky. They are your portal to a variety of resources related to suicide prevention in your school and community. Reach out to them if you have questions regarding the recommended trainings or to access free resources noted with asterisks.

### Four Rivers RPC 01

Ellen Walsh, Director  
[ewalsh@4rbh.org](mailto:ewalsh@4rbh.org)  
(270) 442-8039 ext. 1703; fax (270) 442-5729  
**Serves:** Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Graves, Hickman, Fulton, Livingston, Marshall, McCracken

### Pennyroyal RPC 02

Chris Sparks, Director  
[csparks@pennyroyalcenter.org](mailto:csparks@pennyroyalcenter.org)  
(270) 886-0486; fax (270) 890-1790  
**Serves:** Caldwell, Christian, Crittenden, Hopkins, Lyon, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg

### River Valley RPC 03

Dianne McFarling, Director  
[McFarling-Dianne@rvbh.com](mailto:McFarling-Dianne@rvbh.com)  
(270) 689-6565; fax (270) 689-6677  
**Serves:** Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, Webster

### LifeSkills RPC 04

Amy Hutchinson, Director  
[ahutchinso@lifeskills.com](mailto:ahutchinso@lifeskills.com)  
(270) 901-5000 x1277; fax (270) 842-6553  
**Serves:** Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan, Metcalfe, Monroe, Simpson, Warren

### Communicare RPC 05

Tara Smith, Director  
[tcsmith@communicare.org](mailto:tcsmith@communicare.org)  
1311 N. Dixie Avenue, Bldg. A  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701  
(270) 765-5992 x1401; fax (270) 737-2293  
**Serves:** Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Washington

### Seven Counties RPC 06

Patty Gregory, Director  
[Patty.Gregory@centerstone.org](mailto:Patty.Gregory@centerstone.org)  
(502) 589-8600; Fax (502) 589-8925  
**Serves:** Bullitt, Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, Trimble

### Northkey RPC 07

Autumn Smith, Director  
[autumn.smith@northkey.org](mailto:autumn.smith@northkey.org)  
(859) 283-0952 x3278; (fax) (859) 431-7959  
**Serves:** Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, Pendleton  
**Serves:** Bracken, Fleming, Lewis, Mason, Robertson

### Comprehend RPC 08

Sarah Arrasmith, Director  
[sarrasmith@comprehendinc.org](mailto:sarrasmith@comprehendinc.org)  
(606) 759-7799; fax (606) 759-7609  
**Serves:** Bracken, Fleming, Lewis, Mason, Robertson

### Pathways RPC 09-10

Amy Jeffers, Director  
[Amy.Jeffers@pathways-ky.org](mailto:Amy.Jeffers@pathways-ky.org)  
(606) 329-8588 x4099 (Amy); fax (606) 324-9501  
**Serves:** Bath, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Greenup, Lawrence, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Rowan

### Mountain RPC 11

MaShawna Jacobs, Director  
[Mashawna.Jacobs@mtcomp.org](mailto:Mashawna.Jacobs@mtcomp.org)  
(606) 889-0328; fax 606-889-6427  
**Serves:** Floyd, Johnson, Magoffin, Martin and Pike

### Kentucky River RPC 12

Ginger H. Shouse, Director  
[Ginger.Shouse@krccnet.com](mailto:Ginger.Shouse@krccnet.com)  
(606) 436-4124; fax (606) 666-4151  
**Serves:** Breathitt, Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Owsley, Perry, Wolfe

### Cumberland River RPC 13

Jill Owens, Director  
[jill.owens@crccc.org](mailto:jill.owens@crccc.org)  
(606) 337-2070; fax 606-337-2210  
**Serves:** Bell, Clay, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, Rockcastle, Whitley

### Adanta RPC 14

Sherri Estes, Director  
[sestes1@adanta.org](mailto:sestes1@adanta.org)  
130 Southern School Road, Somerset, KY 42501  
(606) 679-9425; fax (606) 677-1862  
**Serves:** Adair, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, McCreary, Pulaski, Russell, Taylor, Wayne

### New Vista RPC 15

Shawn Freeman, Director  
[drfreeman@bluegrass.org](mailto:drfreeman@bluegrass.org)  
1351 Newtown Pike, Building 3  
Lexington, KY 40511  
(859) 225-3296; fax (859) 254-2412  
**Serves:** Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Franklin, Garrard, Harrison, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Nicholas, Powell, Scott, Woodford



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