

## Selecting a Suicide Prevention Curriculum for Youth

The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention recommends the use of a comprehensive suicide prevention curriculum for teaching basic skills and concepts to youth. Instructional videos are often one part of that larger curriculum, and few are intended to stand alone. SO, picking a good video also involves picking and using a good curriculum. A great resource for this is:

### THE BEST PRACTICES REGISTRY

The Best Practices Registry (BPR) for suicide prevention resources is a collaboration between the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (SPRC) and the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP). It is funded by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA).

The purpose of the BPR is to identify, review, and disseminate information about best practices that address specific objectives of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Practices listed on the BPR include evidence-based programs, expert and consensus statements, and programs that adhere to standards.

The BPR can be found on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center web site:

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

## Recommended Videos

For more information, to see a list of recommended videos and to view the video evaluation criteria, go to the American Association of Suicidology website:

[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

On the home page, select: "STATS And Tools", then "Videos".

For more information on the AAS Video Review Committee, contact Sue Eastgard at [suee@yspp.org](mailto:suee@yspp.org)

## Guidelines for Selecting a Video\* on Youth Suicide Prevention



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Teaching young people how to help a friend who may be at risk for suicide is an important part of a comprehensive school based suicide prevention program. Educational videos that highlight specific helping skills are often a key part of the classroom instruction.

*Videos are most effectively used with an accompanying curriculum and as part of a larger presentation on mental health, mental illness and helping friends in distress.*

However, sometimes videos are marketed and sold separately or become separated from the intended curriculum. *With that in mind, here are some tips for selecting videos carefully.*

\* The term "video" is used here in the broad sense, and refers to all media intended to educate youth on suicide prevention.

## Look For:

- Videos that **teach, model and emphasize developmentally appropriate help-giving and help-seeking behaviors**. The focus should be on "HOW TO RESPOND" or "HOW TO GET HELP". In-house resources, local crisis numbers, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline should be highlighted as part of the instruction.
- Videos that **emphasize prevention and teach students that suicide is preventable**. Videos need to reinforce the idea that students can take preventative actions to protect themselves and their friends.
- Videos in which the **heroes, or main characters, are the helpers**.
- Videos that **highlight effective treatments for underlying mental health problems**. We want students to know that effective treatments for illnesses like depression and addiction are available AND that getting treatment is an important way to prevent suicide.
- Videos that are **short enough** to allow time for discussion as part of that day's lesson.

## Avoid:

- **Avoid videos that depict someone engaging in suicidal behavior or that describe methods of suicide**. This can actually increase risk for suicidal behavior among vulnerable youth.\*\*
- **Avoid videos that *primarily* depict previously depressed or suicidal youth describing their depression and/or suicidal behavior**. This can inadvertently glorify or romanticize suicidal thinking and behavior.
- **Avoid videos in which the primary focus is on someone who has died by suicide**.
- **Avoid videos that present suicide/suicidal thinking as normal in teens** or as a common reaction to stress. Most young people who experience stress do not consider suicide.

\*\* Gould, M. S., Greenberg, T., Velting, D. M., & Shaffer, D. (2003). Youth suicide risk and preventive interventions: A review of the past 10 years. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 42(4).