Midland Independent School District

District Wide Suicide Prevention

Overview

Midland Independent School District recognizes the necessity of addressing the area of mental health wellness for our students. It is important to identify those students that are dealing with mental health issues and assist them in accessing the necessary help they need from mental health experts. The district, to the highest degree possible, wants to identify those students at risk for suicide ideation and work with the parents of those students by providing resources that allow the parent and student to be helped by mental health experts.

The District Wide Suicide Prevention Plan includes four components. The components of this program will address the intervention-postvention steps that the district will take when a suicide occurs, the prevention programs that will be in place to help identify those students at risk and refer them to mental health experts, and building assets and coping skills in our students K-12 on a daily basis.

This prevention program will include a review of resources and establish administrative guidelines and procedures for responding to a student at risk; training for school faculty and staff to enhance suicide awareness and an understanding of the role they can play in identifying and responding to a student with suicidal behavior. Implement a curriculum in which students can self-identify at-risk behaviors as well as identifying at-risk behaviors in others and respond with support from school staff.

The district will participate in a community wide effort to prevent suicides and address mental health wellness. MISD will provide suicide prevention training for faith-based leaders and other community organizations. Training will also be provided for parent groups as requested.
Postvention

A school’s response after a youth suicide can have an impact on the risk of further suicides. Once a death has been verified, the immediate tasks are to assess the impact on the school, notify the district office and other affected sites (such as schools previously attended or schools that siblings attend), and contact the family of the victim to express sympathy and, if appropriate, provide referrals.

Working with the victim’s parents or guardian, administrators must determine what information is to be shared in the school and what the limits of confidentiality are. The next step is to determine how information will be provided to students. We will only provide the necessary amount of factual information.

Finally, it is important to conduct screenings (Campus Counselor) to identify high risk students and plan interventions. Look for students who may have:

- Facilitated or otherwise been involved in the suicide
- Seen but not recognized the warning signs
- Been close to the victim
- Identified closely with the victim, perhaps as a role model
- A previous history of suicide attempts of their own
- Suffered other significant losses

A staff meeting and debriefing should follow. There should be no plans for permanent memorials on campus.

Postvention Goals

1. Support the grieving process
2. Prevent imitative suicide
3. Reestablish healthy school climate
4. Provide long term surveillance, and provide education that serves both prevention and postvention
MISD will implement the following strategies for Postvention:

1. Verify the suicide death and/or attempt with MISD police.
2. The principal is notified who in turn notifies the campus counselor or the counselor is notified who then in turn notifies the principal.
3. The principal and campus counselor formulate a plan for addressing the incident with faculty and students.
4. Principal will inform appropriate staff of the incident.
   a. Initial staff meeting
      i. Introduce the Crisis Response Team members
      ii. Share accurate information about the death
      iii. Allow staff an opportunity to express their own reactions and grief.
      iv. Provide appropriate faculty with a scripted statement for students.
      v. Prepare for student reactions and questions (refer to page 53 in Appendix A)
      vi. Explain plans for the day, including locations of crisis counseling rooms.
      vii. Brief staff about identifying and referring at-risk students as well as the need to keep records of those efforts.
      viii. Inform staff that the campus principal will be designated as the media spokesperson and to refer all media inquiries to the principal.
5. Campus counselor or Direct of Guidance and Counseling will contact other counselors trained in Critical Incident Stress Management to form a responder team.
6. The responder team will report to the effected campus to provide an opportunity for small group/individual discussion and opportunities for grief support. The responder team will be available to the campus for as long as necessary.
7. Contact the family of the victim as soon as possible:
   a. Listen
   b. Provide condolences
   c. Ask if the family needs any assistance.
   d. Determine what and how information is to be shared.
   e. Provide the family with A Handbook for Survivors of Suicide (Appendix D)
   f. The most important aspect of the visit is just being available for the family.
8. Identify at-risk students/staff and appropriate outreach for them.
   a. Who have or have had a personal connection with the deceased
   b. Who have previously demonstrated suicidal behavior
   c. Who are known to have a mental illness
   d. Who are known to have a history of familial suicide
   e. Who have experienced a recent loss
f. Who were present at the funeral or memorial service and seem troubled
g. Staff who have or have had the student in a class

9. Encourage impacted students (with parental permission) to attend the funeral or memorial service and provide them with an excused absence to do so.

10. Follow up:
   a. Family: home visit or phone call.
   b. Staff
      i. Offer verbal appreciation of the staff.
      ii. Review challenges and successes.
      iii. Debrief, share experiences, express concerns, and ask questions.
      iv. Discuss plans for the next day.
      v. Remind staff of the importance of self-care.
      vi. Remind staff of the importance of ongoing identification of at-risk students and appropriate referrals for those students.
   c. Students, continue to work with most at-risk students as needed.
   d. As needed, refer students to outside mental health resources; refer to the counseling resource list.

For additional information regarding suicide postvention, refer to Appendix A, “Coming Together to Care, A Suicide Prevention and Postvention Toolkit for Texas Communities”.
MISD Procedures and Resources
For Depression and Suicidal Tendencies

1. Counselors at all campuses conduct a mandatory training for staff regarding the warning signs of Depression and Suicide.

2. Students that are identified as having suicidal ideation

   1. Contact the parent
   2. Have the parent sign the parent suicide/mental health emergency outcry form.
   3. Give the parent a list of resources with phone number.
   4. Release the student to the parent.
   5. Counselor will complete the district report form.
   6. Campus Counselor or Crisis Counselor follows up with student and parent as needed.
   7. Fax report form to Ron Moss at 689-5107 (this is a secure fax)

**PLEASE NOTE IF THE STUDENT HAS MADE AN ATTEMPT TO TAKE THEIR LIFE CONTACT THE MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER**

IF YOU HAVE AN OUTCRY AND CANNOT CONTACT THE PARENT OR EMERGENCY CONTACT CALL MIDLAND ISD POLICE AND KEEP THE STUDENT THERE UNTIL AN OFFICER ARRIVES TO ASSIST YOU.

CONTACT MHMR IN THE EVENT YOU NEED AN EVALUATION DONE ON THE STUDENT.

Local Resources
1. Centers for Children and Families
2. Samaritan Counseling Center
3. MHMR
4. Rays of Hope
5. Theresa Mitchell (MISD Contract Counselor)

All campus counselors have an extensive list of other local resources they can provide to students, staff and parents.

Elementary Counselors conduct groups to address a wide range of issues that students may have. These issues include: depression, grief and loss, social skills, self-esteem, and being successful in school.

Elementary Counselors and Secondary counselors meet with individual students to deal with the issues listed above as well as self-injury, eating disorders, behavior, and any other issue the student may want to discuss. Counselors follow up with students who are referred by teachers and staff.
Prevention

Postvention becomes prevention when after suicide people follow practical guidelines to prevent more deaths of vulnerable, at-risk youth.

Prevention Goals

1. Provide training and resources for all MISD staff
2. Provide a suicide prevention curriculum for all secondary students.
3. Provide support for all students through various activities and resources.

MISD will implement the following strategies for Prevention:

Staff Training:

1. Implement a gatekeeper training program, QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) and train staff. This training provides:
   a. Increased awareness about suicide
   b. Common myths about suicide
   c. Common causes for suicide
   d. Key warning signs of suicide
   e. QPR interventions
   f. Increased self-awareness
   g. Instills HOPE!
2. All secondary staff with complete the online training for Texas High School Educators offered by Mental Health America of Texas through the Texas Youth Suicide Prevention Project, supported by the Texas Department of State Health Services.
   a. Help educators understand their role in identifying common signs and symptoms of psychological distress and suicidal thoughts
   b. Learn how to take appropriate responses to at-risk students, such as referrals to school counselor.
3. School counselors will complete a TEA required suicide prevention session with all K-12 teaching staff.
   a. Information for this training has been provided to counselors from the office of Guidance and Counseling at the district level.
   b. These materials are available online at the MISD Guidance and Counseling website.
4. All MISD staff completed Rays of Hope training The Whole Child, A New Direction in Education.
   a. All counseling staff completed an additional Rays of Hope training.
b. All MISD 5th grade students attend a presentation and complete a Whole Child Survey. The survey aids in the identification of emotionally at-risk students. Once students are identified, they are referred to campus counselor for follow-up.

5. All campus counselors will provide training on a yearly basis for their campus staff in the following areas:
   a. Suicide prevention
   b. Bullying
   c. Dating Violence
   d. Reporting Abuse

6. Crisis counselor will be on staff to provide counseling support services to assigned students and will provide consultation services to all MISD staff to support the overall mental health goals of the district. Crisis counselor will be able to assist with trainings.

7. Implementation of the SOS (Signs of Suicide) curriculum for secondary campuses.
   a. This program highlights the relationship between depression and suicide, teaching that most often suicide is a fatal response to a treatable disorder – depression. Through the SOS program, school staff, students and their parents will learn about depressions, suicide and the associated risks of alcohol use. SOS teaches the action steps individuals should take if they experience the signs of depression or suicide within themselves or encounter these signs in a friend: ACT: Acknowledge your friend has a problem, tell the person you Care, and Tell a trusted adult.
   b. SOS curriculum goals:
   c. Decrease suicide and suicide attempts by increasing knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression among students
   d. ii. Encourage individual help-seeking, and help-seeking on behalf of a friend
   e. iii. Link suicide to mental illness that, like physical illnesses, requires treatment
   f. iv. Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention by education them to identify signs of depression and suicidality in youth and by providing information about available referral resources.
   g. v. Reduce stigma associated with mental health problems by integrating the topic into existing health and physical education curriculums during the 2012-2013 school year through 2014-2015 school year.

8. Implementation of the More Than Sad suicide prevention education for all 8th grade students.

9. Begin the process of training community members, i.e. pastors, youth pastors, in CISM.
Student Programs:

1. Melvin Adams – Hope for the Future program (new program - various campuses)
   a. Former Harlem Globe Trotter who comes to MISD one week a month throughout the school year
   b. Works with large and small groups of students and staff
   c. Using his own story of overcoming barriers, Melvin provides a message of hope, and the idea that everyone has value.

2. Challenge Day (New program - various campuses)
   a. Challenge day provides youth and their communities with experiential programs that demonstrate the possibility of love and connection through the celebration of diversity, truth, and full expression.
   b. The program is created to build connection and empathy and to fulfill the vision that every child lives in a world where they feel safe, loved and celebrated. One of the outcomes of Challenge day is that students discover a new found respect for their classmates, which consequently reduces bullying incidents.
   c. Challenge day provides 1-4 days at each campus and works with 100 students each day.

3. XY Zone (New program - Midland High School and Lee High School)
   a. This program is offered through Communities in Schools to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade males.
   b. This program provides support and encouragement for academic success as well as personal growth through mentoring and acquisition of life skills.

4. Men of Integrity (Lee High School)
   a. Mentoring and life skills program for males.

5. Communities In School (various campuses)
   a. Academic mentoring and social assistance program provided to academically at-risk students.
   b. Each CIS campus coordinator has a caseload of 125 students.

6. Rebel Rousers (Lee High School)

7. Mentoring Programs (various Elementary campuses)
   a. Peer Assisted Leadership – secondary students serve as mentors for elementary students at various campuses across the district.
   b. Kids Hope USA (Jane Long and Santa Rita) –
   c. Big Brothers Big Sisters (New program at Travis and Milam) – The Big Brother or Big Sister will meet with their little brother or sister at the student’s campus as opposed to on evenings or weekends. Travis, Milam,
   d. Enhanced school based

8. Other outside resources
   a. Community speakers
   b. Need Help Crisis Cards - provided to all campuses to be placed in high traffic areas. (Included in last section of manual)

Suicide Prevention: A Parent & Teen Guide to Recognizing Suicide Warning Signs (Appendix B)
http://www.texassuicideprevention.org/pdf/Suicide.pdf
Asset Building

Developmental assets are essential to young people’s success. They are opportunities, skills, relationships, values and self-perceptions. The assets are both external (things that other people provide for youth), and internal, (things that develop within young people themselves).

Assets have tremendous power to protect youth from many harmful or unhealthy choices. In addition to protecting youth from negative behaviors, having more assets increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors.

MISD recognizes the importance of asset building to address suicide prevention. The very nature of asset building allows for the process to begin early in a student’s education and continue Pre-K through graduation.

Asset Building Goals

1. Provide a positive and supportive school climate.
2. Provide opportunities to develop assets.
3. Increasing assets to reduce the likelihood of risk taking behaviors.
**40 Developmental Assets® for Early Childhood (ages 3 to 5)**

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets—that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

### External Assets

| Support | 1. Family support—Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) provide the child with high levels of consistent and predictable love, physical care, and positive attention in ways that are responsive to the child's individuality. |
| - | 2. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input. |
| - | 3. Other adult relationships—Child experiences consistent, caring relationships with adults outside the family. |
| - | 4. Caring neighbors—The child's network of relationships includes neighbors who provide emotional support and a sense of belonging. |
| - | 5. Caring adults in child care and educational settings—Caregivers and teachers create environments that are nurturing, accepting, encouraging, and secure. |
| - | 6. Parent involvement in child care and education—Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers together create a consistent and supportive approach to fostering the child's successful growth. |
| Empowerment | 7. Community connectedness and values among young children—Children feel included and are welcomed. |
| - | 8. Children seen as resources—The community demonstrates that children are valuable resources in a child-rearing system of family support and high-quality activities and resources to meet children's physical, social, and emotional needs. |
| - | 9. Service to others—Parent(s), caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and the community take action to ensure children's health and safety. |
| Boundaries & Expectations | 10. Safety—Parent(s), caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and the community provide a safe environment. |
| - | 11. Family boundaries—The family provides consistent discipline for the child and maintains reasonable boundaries for behavior that the child can understand and achieve. |
| - | 12. Boundaries in child care and educational settings—Caregivers and educational providers enforce positive approaches to discipline and natural consequences to encourage self-regulation and acceptable behavior. |
| - | 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors encourage the child to live in a positive, acceptable way and to intervene in negative behavior as a supportive, nonthreatening way. |
| - | 14. Adult role models—Parent(s), caregivers, and other adults model self-control, social skills, engagement in learning, and healthy lifestyles. |
| - | 15. Positive peer relationships—Parent(s) and caregivers seek to provide opportunities for the child to interact positively with other children. |
| - | 16. Positive expectations—Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers encourage and support the child in learning and performing tasks and activities above their current abilities. |
| Constructive Use of Time | 17. Play and creative activities—The child has daily opportunities to play in ways that allow self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others. |
| - | 18. Out-of-home and community programs—The child experiences well-designed programs led by competent, caring adults in well-maintained settings. |
| - | 19. Religious community—The child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development. |
| - | 20. Time at home—The child spends most of her or his time at home participating in family activities and playing constructively with parent(s) guiding TV and electronic game use. |

### Internal Assets

| Commitment to Learning | 21. Motivation to master—The child responds to new experiences with curiosity and energy resulting in the pleasure of mastering new learning and skills. |
| - | 22. Engagement in learning experiences—The child fully participates in a variety of activities that offer opportunities for learning. |
| - | 23. Home program connection—The child experiences security, consistency, and connections between the home and out-of-home care programs and learning activities. |
| - | 24. Reading to programs—The child forms meaningful connections with out-of-home care and educational programs. |
| - | 25. Early literacy—The child enjoys a variety of pre-reading activities, including adults reading to her or him daily, looking at and handling books, playing with a variety of media, and showing interest in pictures, letters, and numbers. |
| Positive Values | 26. Caring—The child shows empathy, understanding, and awareness of others' feelings. |
| - | 27. Equality and social justice—The child begins to show concern for people who are excluded from play and other activities or not treated fairly because they are different. |
| - | 28. Integrity—The child begins to express his or her views appropriately and to stand up for a growing sense of what is fair and right. |
| - | 29. Honesty—The child begins to understand the difference between truth and lies, and is truthful to the extent of her or his understanding. |
| - | 30. Responsibility—The child begins to follow through on simple tasks to take care of her or himself and to help others. |
| - | 31. Self-regulation—The child increasingly can identify, regulate, and control her or his behavior in healthy ways, using adult support constructively in particular stressful situations. |
| Social Competencies | 32. Planning and decision making—The child begins to plan for the immediate future, choosing from among several options and trying to solve problems. |
| - | 33. Interpersonal skills—The child cooperates, shares, plays harmoniously, and comfort others in distress. |
| - | 34. Cultural awareness and sensitivity—The child begins to learn about her or his own cultural identity and to show acceptance of people who are racially, physically, culturally, or ethically different from her or him. |
| - | 35. Resistance skills—The child begins to sense danger accurately, to seek help from trusted adults, and to resist pressure from peers to participate in unacceptable or risky behavior. |
| - | 36. Peaceful conflict resolution—The child begins to compromise and resolve conflicts without using physical aggression or hurtful language. |
| Positive Identity | 37. Personal power—The child can make choices that give a sense of having some influence over things that happen in her or his life. |
| - | 38. Self-esteem—The child likes her or himself and has a growing sense of being valued by others. |
| - | 39. Sense of purpose—The child anticipates new opportunities, experiences, and milestones in growing up. |
| - | 40. Positive view of personal future—The child finds the world interesting and enjoyable, and feels that she or he has a positive place in it. |

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MISD will provide students the following strategies for asset development:

1. Character Education (Pre-K – 6th)
   a. Elementary school counselors will make monthly classroom presentations with an emphasis on the nine core character traits: citizenship, compassion, courage, diligence, fairness, honesty, integrity, respect and responsibility.
   b. Various campuses provide positive reinforcement to students who demonstrate one of the nine character traits.
   c. Various campuses concentrate on one character trait each month.
      i. Morning announcements will focus on a historical or current figure who has demonstrated that particular trait in a meaningful way (i.e. George Washington – honesty).
      ii. Character trait thematic bulletin boards are displayed in high traffic areas.

2. Mentoring Projects (Various Campuses)
   a. PALS – Peer Assisted Leadership
      i. High school students go to elementary campuses to provide mentoring and support. High school students act as a role-model to elementary students.
      ii. Character trait thematic bulletin boards are displayed in high traffic areas.
   b. Kids Hope USA (Jane Long and Santa Rita)
      i. Adult mentors from faith-based organizations provide mentoring, support and encouragement to elementary students.
   c. Partners in Education (Various Campuses)
      i. Based on campus preferences – adult mentors will provide support and encouragement and/or academic assistance to elementary students.
   d. XY Zone (Midland High and Lee High)
      i. This program is offered through Communities in Schools to 10th, 11th and 12th grade males.
      ii. This program provides support and encouragement for academic success as well as personal growth through mentoring and acquisition of life skills.
   e. Rebel Rousers
      i. All faculty members are assigned a small group of academically at-risk students with the purpose of providing encouragement and support.
   f. Communities in Schools (Various Campuses)
      i. Academic mentoring and social assistance program provided to academically at-risk students.
      ii. Each CIS campus coordinator has a caseload of 125 students.
   g. Men of Integrity (Lee High School)
      i. Mentoring and life skills program for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade males.
   h. Collegiate Coach Program (Various Campuses)
      i. Collegiate Coaches provide mentoring, support and academic
guidance to students who are most at-risk academically, through counseling, home visits, and parent and student conferences.

ii. Each Collegiate Coach works with 200 students.

3. Service Projects – every campus participates in numerous services projects throughout each school year. Projects range from school wide to class specific. Examples would be as follows: Canned food drives, blood donation drives, Keep Midland Beautiful, Honoring our Troops, Adopt a Child Christmas Drive, March of Dimes, Safe Place of the Permian Basin donation drive. For a more extensive list of projects performed by MISD, see Appendix C.
   a. Legacy Scholarship – students complete 40 community service hours to qualify for the Legacy Scholarship.
   b. Texas Scholar – students complete 20 community service hours to qualify for the Texas Scholar Scholarship.

4. Community Resources
   a. Community organizations provide counseling staff with information regarding their agency which allows counselors to have a broad base knowledge to then make referrals.
   b. Community organizations provide educational opportunities to students through presentations, demonstrations and distribution of literature.
   c. 211 – Community services for Midland County Directory.
   d. Survivors of suicide support group provided by Hospice of Midland.

5. Challenge Day (Various Campuses)
   a. Challenge day provides youth and their communities with experiential programs that demonstrate the possibility of love and connection through the celebration of diversity, truth and full expression.
   b. The program is created to build connection and empathy and to fulfill the vision that every child lives in a world where they feel safe, loved and celebrated. One of the outcomes of Challenge Day is that students discover a new found respect for their classmates, which consequently reduces bullying incidents.
   c. Challenge day provides 1-4 days at each campus and works with 100 students each day.