



Corbin & Associates, Inc.

Lesson Plan of the Month
(January 2000)

Topic: Suicide
Target Group: High School
Prepared By: Annica Hagadorn
Agency: Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
Address: 711 G Street Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 874-4609

Objectives: The student will be able to.....

- Recognize the warning signs of potential suicide
- Know what to do if someone becomes suicidal
- List places to go for help
- Summarize warning signs and understand how they can help

Introduction:

My name is Annica Hagadorn. I have spent the last nine years as a Deputy Sheriff with the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department. I was also a Sacramento Police Officer for two years prior to joining the Sheriff's Department. During my time as a law enforcement officer, I have worked both in the jails and in patrol and am also a bike patrol officer. Currently I am a School Resource Officer here at the high school. Today, I am going to talk to you about Suicide. Particularly how it pertains to teenagers.

By the end of this lecture, you are going to be able to recognize warning signs of potential suicide. You will know what to do if someone you know becomes suicidal. What resources are available?

Body:

- I. What are the statistics?
 1. Third largest cause of death between the ages of 15 and 24
 2. The adolescent suicide rate has tripled since 1960.
 3. There are between 100,000 and 200,000 adolescent suicide attempts and gestures each year.

"SUICIDE IS NOT CHOSEN, IT HAPPENS WHEN PAIN EXCEEDS RESOURCES FOR COPING WITH PAIN."

- II. Recognizing the warning signs of potential suicide.
 1. Depression -
 - a. What is Depression? Depression is an illness, like cancer. It is not the "blues". The "blues" is something that passes with time. The feelings of depression will last longer than a couple of weeks, affects a person's entire life.
 - b. Depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Can be triggered by life stresses or when everything seems to be going O.K. Anyone can suffer from depression.
 - c. It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of depression:
 - A. Feeling of sadness or "emptiness"
 - B. Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism or guilt
 - C. Helplessness or worthlessness
 - D. Can't concentrate or remember
 - E. Loss of energy or drive
 - F. Want to be alone most of the time
 - G. Talked about death or suicide
 2. Final Arrangements
 - a. Friend saying goodbye and giving away their personal property. Talks vaguely of going away.

3. Sudden Elevated Mood
 - a. Depressed person may suddenly feel on top of the world after they have decided to end their life, as if they have lifted a weight off their shoulders.
4. Risk Taking or Self Destructive Behavior
 - a. Person is not ready to take their own life, but tempts fate by driving recklessly or disregarding obvious safety precautions.
5. Pre-suicidal Statements
 - a. Talks directly or indirectly about suicide, hopelessness, or death.
6. Changes In Eating Habits/Sleeping Habits
 - a. Person who used to eat breakfast every morning now skips it.
 - b. Staying awake all-night and sleeping all day.
7. Sudden Interest In Drugs or Alcohol

III. What to do if someone you know becomes suicidal

1. Take charge. Do not worry about invading someone's privacy. Secrecy is not a promise you keep in this case.
 - a. This is not a test of friendship, but a cry for help.
 - b. Don't challenge or dare them to commit suicide.
 - c. They are not being rational, don't let them decide on their own.
2. Be a good listener. Let them vent. Don't be judgmental.
3. Explain to them that you care and will do your best to help.
4. If you get a sense they are in immediate danger, DON'T LEAVE THEM ALONE. Call 9-1-1 or try to alert a responsible adult to help you.

IV. Places to go for help.A. Parents/Responsible Adult

1. School Counselor/Social Worker
2. Teacher
3. Doctor/Nurse
4. Personal Clergy
5. School Resource Officer

Review:

1. Today, we have talked about what depression is and who can be depressed.
2. We talked about the warning signs of a potentially suicidal person, such as:
 - a. Depression, making final arrangements, sudden elevated moods, risk taking, etc.
3. We discussed what you can do if someone you know becomes suicidal:
 - a. Be supportive, take them seriously, etc.
4. We discussed places to look for help:
 - a. Parents, school, clergy.

Practice:

Group Discussion

Documentation:

1. What to do if a friend had Depression - A guide for students
www.save.org/student.
2. What to do if someone becomes suicidal www.save.org/whattodo
3. suicide@rochford.org information: warnings
www.rochford.org/suicide/inform/warnings
4. Library: Suicide by Teens www.he.net/~bwtc/library/suicteen

Corbin & Associates, Inc.
National Training Corporation
3752 Half Moon Drive
Orlando, FL 32812
Phone # (407) 851-5058
Fax # (407) 855-8962
E-Mail: sroinfo@aol.com
Web Site: <http://www.srotraining.com>