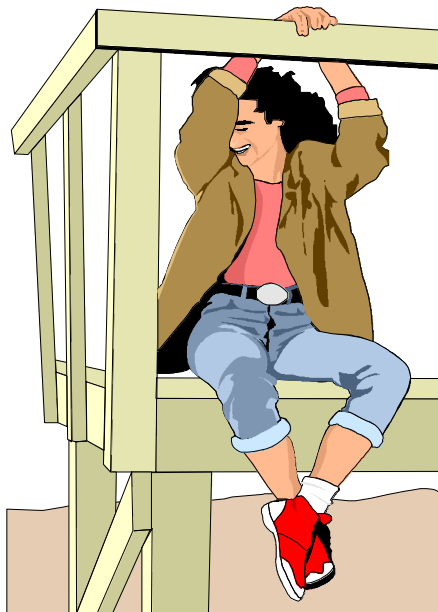


TEEN SUICIDE



CFE 3305V

OPEN CAPTIONED
CAMBRIDGE EDUCATIONAL
1994
Grade Levels: 10-13+
35 minutes
2 Instructional Graphics Enclosed

DESCRIPTION

After accidents and homicides, suicide is the third leading cause of teenage death in the United States. Experts describe symptoms exhibited by people contemplating suicide, and stress the importance of communication, how to help, and where to go for assistance. They assist at-risk teens in recognizing other options to help them at this time in their lives, while stressing that they are not alone.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To portray the stories of three teens who attempted suicide.
- To cite certain factors that contribute to teen suicide.
- To identify key behaviors of those contemplating suicide.
- To specify some ways to assist a person experiencing suicidal thoughts.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Preview the video to determine unfamiliar vocabulary and language concepts.
2. List reasons teens become upset, stressed, or depressed.
 - a. Using numbers between 1 and 10, rate the causes discussed. Let 10 represent the most serious and 1, the least serious.
 - b. Identify which stressors have been present in individual students' lives in the past year.
 - c. Calculate the total score for each individual.
 - d. Identify those students having the highest totals. Discuss sources of help available.
3. Research and report on the difference between feelings of depression and clinical depression. Include:
 - a. Symptoms

- b. Causes of symptoms
 - c. Duration of symptoms
 - d. Help available
4. Generate a list of causes of teenage death in the United States. Discuss. Retain the list to evaluate after viewing the video.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause at the statistic after Mary Brennen-Hofmann speaks the first time about suicide. Complete Section I of the SUICIDE OUTLINE (see INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
3. Complete Section II of the SUICIDE OUTLINE (see INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
 - a. Pause when Lauren says, “. . . what I tried to make happen.” Fill in some of the information about Lauren in Section II A.
 - b. Pause when Adam says, “. . . you know, just by myself.” Fill in some of the information about Adam in Section II B.
 - c. Pause when Stewart says, “. . . the people around me couldn’t help me.” Fill in some of the information about Stewart in Section II C.
 - d. Pause when Cliff says, “So I called the paramedics.” Fill in the rest of the information about Lauren in Section II A.
 - e. Pause when Adam says, “. . . for about three or four weeks.” Fill in the rest of the information about Adam in Section II B.
 - f. Pause when Stewart says, “. . . the life I was living.” Fill in the rest of the information about Stewart in Section II C.
4. Stop at the end of the video. Discuss any information not completed in the outline.

AFTER SHOWING

1. Complete the SUICIDE OUTLINE. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
 - a. Recall five important factors when talking about suicide. Fill in Section III A.
 - b. List the warning signs of depression as discussed by Dr. Peter Jensen and record in Section III B.
 - c. Discuss other symptoms listed by Dr. David Clayman and record in Section III C.
 - d. Review coping methods many teens use and list in Section III D.
2. Role-play a friend of one of the characters depicted in the video.
 - a. Consider the course of action the friend takes as the character prepares to attempt suicide.
 - b. Discuss alternative ways to solve the character's problems.
3. Take a TRUE-FALSE QUIZ based on information from the video. Compare answers and discuss. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.)
4. Research the addresses and telephone numbers seen at the end of the video.
 - a. Investigate local, state, and national addresses and numbers of agencies which serve at-risk teens.
 - b. Publish a booklet to be distributed to all teens in the local school district.
5. Invite a clinical psychologist or another knowledgeable health-care professional to address the local parents' organization on the subject of teenage suicide.
6. Invite a health-care professional who is familiar with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to discuss statistics and reasons these teens commit suicide.

7. Research and write an essay entitled “Substance Abuse: a Factor in Teen Suicide.” Publish the best essays in the school newspaper.

8. Reevaluate the causes of teenage death listed in BEFORE SHOWING. Discuss.

9. Write to the national MADD organization for statistics involving alcohol-related teen accidents.

- a. Surmise how many of these accidents were really suicides.
- b. Use gathered information to present a session at a SADD meeting.
- c. Invite local teens involved in alcohol-related accidents to discuss personal reasons for drinking.

10. Interview a funeral director regarding the difficulties of preparing the body of a suicide victim.

- a. Write an article to be published in the school newspaper.
- b. Use illustrations, if possible.

11. Generate ways to improve teens’ coping skills. Compare positive ways to cope with problems with those listed in the video.

12. After providing appropriate training, develop a corps of students to help other teens cope with everyday problems.

INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS

Two instructional graphics are included with this lesson guide. They may be enlarged and used to create transparencies or copies.

- SUICIDE OUTLINE
- TRUE-FALSE QUIZ

SUMMARY

Suicide is the third leading cause of teenage death in the United States, after accidents and homicides.

Lauren is the youngest child in her family. Her brothers always had the ability to lighten and defuse tense situations. When they leave the home, she feels as if she is an only child. Her father then gets a promotion and begins to work long hours. Her parents begin to fight incessantly. She feels they only remain together because of her and she feels guilty. Feeling that she is truly a “bad” person, she takes pills to relieve all of the pain she feels.

Adam’s father is in the military and is transferred from San Diego, California, to Lexington, Kentucky, during Adam’s senior year in high school. Adam describes himself as a loner who has problems fitting in and making close friends. He feels he is perceived as “nerdy” and weird. The only people who marginally accept him are those who take and sell drugs. He becomes fascinated with the idea of death as he becomes more isolated. After a confrontation with his parents, he beats a train at a crossing, only to crash into a concrete pillar.

Stewart is an all-American kid with a supportive family. He participates in baseball and is successful in pitching for his team. Despite all of the positive things in his life, he feels life is not worth living. When he tries to communicate this to his stepfather, he hears that it’s all a part of growing up. After he stays out all night drinking to celebrate a victory, he retreats to the shed to sleep. Upon awakening, he secures a gun, intending to put an end to his problems.

Some of the factors that contribute to teenage suicide are clinical depression, substance abuse, sexual identity, pregnancy, child abuse, and stress. Many teens are afraid to seek help and are afraid of the stigma of being known as a person with a mental illness. Those who are not clinically depressed may feel psychologically trapped, afraid of letting people down, or they may feel overwhelmed.

The warning signs of someone contemplating suicide include a loss of interest in usual activities, a change in sleep patterns, fatigue, weight loss or gain, a difficulty in concentrating, chronic aches and pains, and a prolonged feeling of sadness. Teens have limited perspective and many times have no experience to help them cope with these signs. Instead, teens cope by becoming angry or aggressive, running away, using drugs or alcohol, or acting delinquent or rebellious.

If encountering someone who expresses suicidal threats, take the person seriously. Communicate concern and get help immediately. Don't leave the person alone. A person requesting help needs to be sure that someone who can help is listening.



SUICIDE OUTLINE

I. Introduction

A. Leading causes of teenage deaths

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. Suicide is _____ times higher now than in 1950

II. Stories

A. Lauren

1. Her feelings
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. Her problem
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. Her attempt
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. The result
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

B. Adam

1. His feelings
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. His problem
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. His attempt
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. The result
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

C. Stewart

1. His feelings
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. His problem
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. His attempt
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. The result
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

III. Statistics

A. Factors in teen suicide

1. _____
2. _____
3. Sexual identity
4. _____
5. Child abuse

B. Warning signs

1. _____
2. Thoughts about death or suicide
3. _____
4. _____
5. Chronic aches and pains

C. Other symptoms

1. Psychologically trapped
2. _____
3. _____
4. Afraid of letting people down
5. _____

D. How teens cope

1. _____
2. _____
3. Use drugs or alcohol
4. _____



TRUE-FALSE QUIZ

Directions: Put T for true statements and F for false statements.
Change false statements to make them true.

- 1.____ Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people.
- 2.____ Lauren's problem seems to be stress in her family.
- 3.____ Adam doesn't "fit in" at his new high school in Kentucky.
- 4.____ The top factor that leads to teen suicide is substance abuse.
- 5.____ People worry that others will think less of them if they have mental health problems.
- 6.____ Normal people don't have feelings of depression.
- 7.____ Clinical depression is simply feeling sad or blue.
- 8.____ People don't have to be mentally ill to consider suicide.
- 9.____ Lauren thinks that when people love each other, they fight.
- 10.____ Adam's new friends are respected by everyone.
- 11.____ With drugs and alcohol, people become satisfied and happy.
- 12.____ Stewart's stepfather tells him that mood swings are a part of growing up.
- 13.____ Talking about suicide will not cause a person to attempt suicide.
- 14.____ Teenagers don't ask for help because they know all the answers.
- 15.____ Most teens who attempt suicide complete it.
- 16.____ Most people who attempt suicide do not want to die.
- 17.____ Do not ignore threats or warning signs of suicide.
- 18.____ It is important to wait until morning to see if a person who has threatened suicide feels better.
- 19.____ A suicidal person needs professional help immediately.
- 20.____ Make someone listen if a person threatens suicide.