

# Jason Flatt Act and Suicide Prevention

Johnson County Mental Health  
Center



# The Jason Flatt Act (KSA 72-8260)

- Passed by the Kansas Legislature and signed by the governor-Spring 2016
- Each school district/school will provide suicide awareness and prevention training for all school personnel
- Requires 1 hour min. of suicide awareness/prevention training annually (approved by the State BOE)



# The Jason Flatt Act (KSA 72-8260)

- Parents/guardians will be notified and training materials made available for review
- Each building will develop a crisis plan that includes: recognition of suicide ideation, appropriate intervention, and a crisis recovery plan



# History & Background: Jason Flatt Act

- Jason Flatt
  - 16 year old from Tennessee
  - Enjoyed going places and trying new things
  - Good student
  - Loved sports-especially football
  - Had a lot of friends
  - Seemed to be full of life
- Jason died by suicide on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1997. Family has been raising awareness of teen suicide ever since





# History & Background: Jason Flatt Act

- 2001: The Jason Foundation began advocating for legislation to include suicide awareness and prevention training in teacher in-service
- 2007: Tennessee was the first state to pass the Jason Flatt Act
  - Nation's most inclusive and mandatory youth suicide awareness and prevention legislation
- Kansas was the 19<sup>th</sup> state to pass the Jason Flatt Act

*The Jason Foundation believes that awareness and education are the first steps to prevention. We want to establish a Triangle of Prevention by providing **students (youth), parents and teachers (and community)** the tools and resources to help identify and help at-risk youth.*

[HOME](#)

[YOUTH SUICIDE ▼](#)

[HOW TO GET INVOLVED ▼](#)

[TRAINING](#)

[ABOUT US ▼](#)

[MEDIA ▼](#)

[HAPPENING NOW](#)



If you are experiencing a crisis, call 911 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

# Suicide Prevention: Who Is Responsible?

- District Administrators
- Building Administrators
- School Psychologists
- Counselors
- Social Workers
- Nurses
- School Resource Officers
- General Education Teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Crisis Team Members
- Librarians
- Coaches
- Club/Activity Sponsors
- Office Staff
- Transportation Staff
- Cafeteria Staff
- Custodial Staff
- Building and Grounds Staff

**EVERYONE!**

# Why Do I Need to Know Signs and Symptoms?

- You interact on a daily basis with people
- You could be key in recognizing suicide risk
- You could be critical in providing support and appropriate referrals

# Suicide Impacts Everyone

*“Individuals of all race, creeds, incomes,  
and educational levels die by suicide.  
There is no typical suicide victim.”*

~American Foundation for Suicide  
Prevention



# Suicide Impacts Everyone

- Most have been impacted by suicide in one way or another
- 20% of people will have a suicide in their immediate family
- 60% of people will personally know someone who dies by suicide

# Youth Suicide: Facts and Information

- A serious public health problem, that impacts young people
- Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10-24
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease...COMBINED

# Youth Suicide: Facts and Information

- Each day there are an average of 4,800 suicide attempts by young people
- Four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs
- Suicide results in the death of approximately 4,600 young people each year

# Youth Suicide: Facts and Information

- The top three methods used in youth suicide include:
  - Firearms: 45%
  - Suffocation: 40%
  - Poisoning: 8%

# What We Know About Suicide: Kansas Data



## In the state of Kansas...

- Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for young people aged 10-24
- Every 5.98 days, a young person is lost to the “Silent Epidemic” of suicide

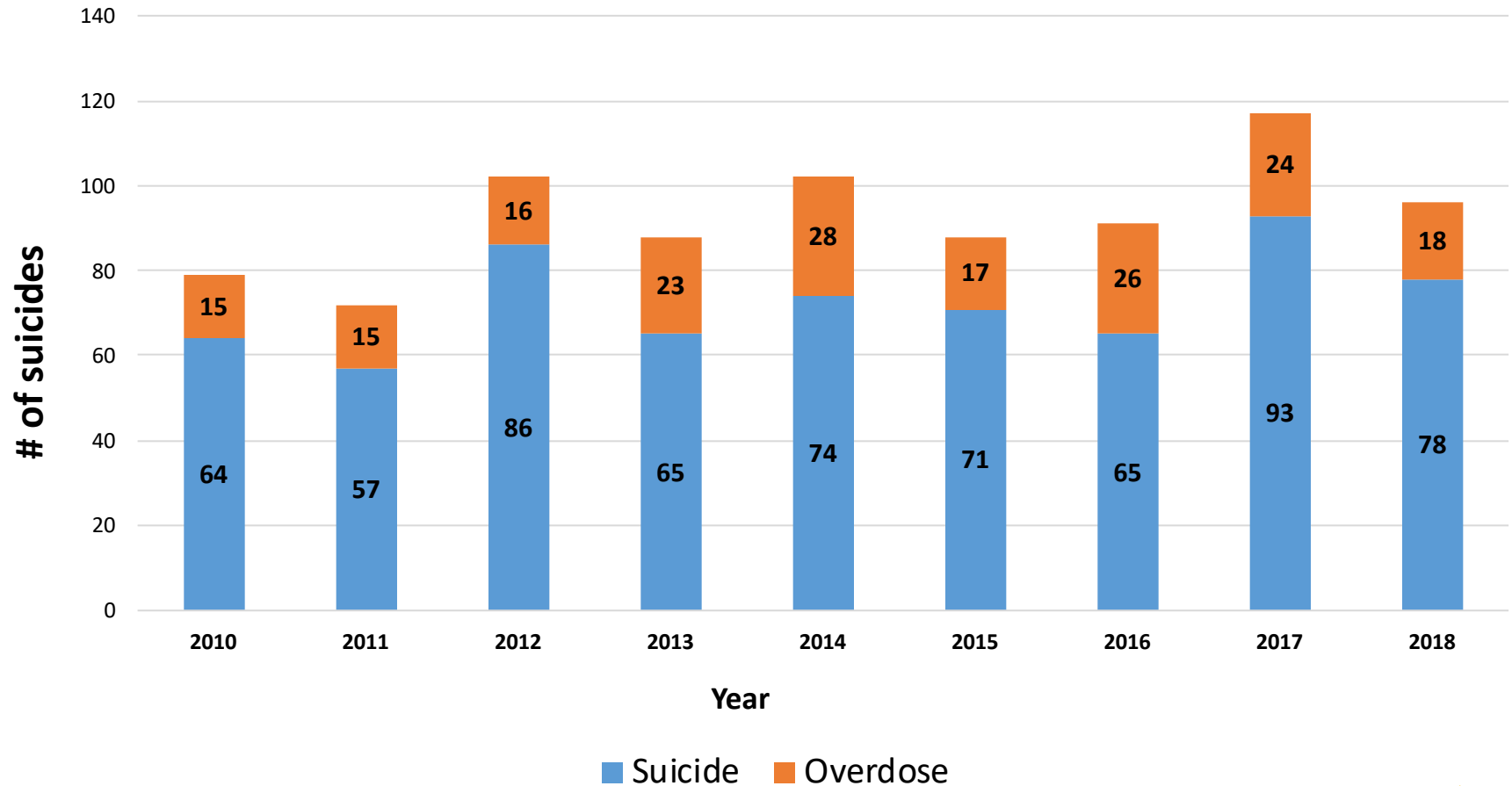
# What We Know About Suicide: Kansas Data

## According to the Kansas Youth Risk Behavior Survey...

- 19% of high school students surveyed reported they had considered suicide.
- 12.5% of high school students reported having made a plan about how they would attempt suicide.
- Nearly 11% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students reported having made a suicide attempt.



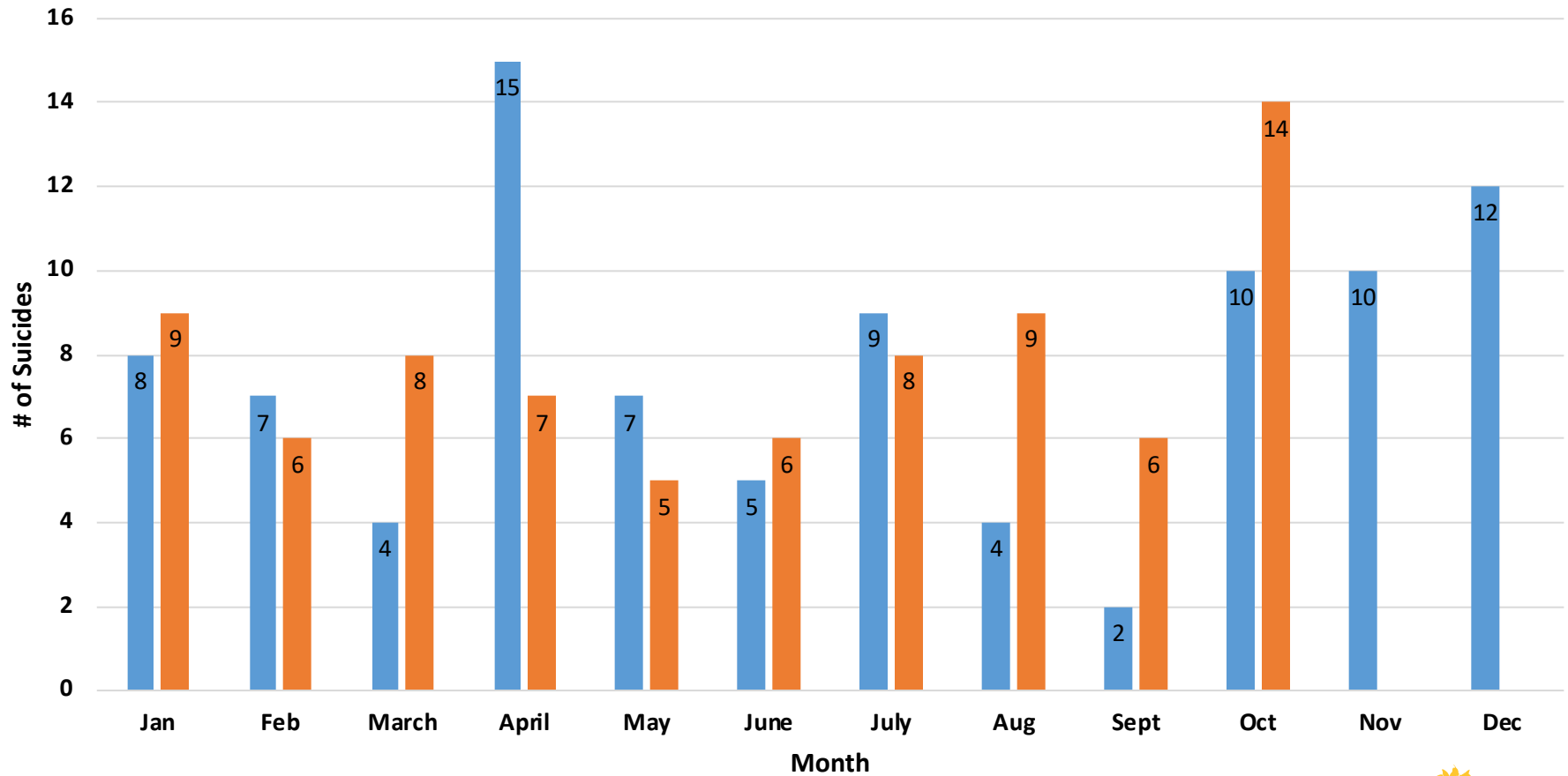
# Suicide/Overdose Deaths by Year: Johnson County, Kansas



\*Data from Johnson County Sheriff's Coroner Call Out Log

\*\*2018 Data - January-October

# Johnson County Suicide Deaths by Month - 2017/2018



\*Data from Johnson County Sheriff's Coroner Call Out Log

\*\*2018 Data – January-October

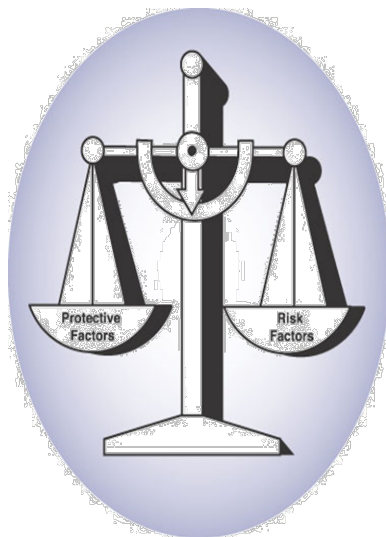
■ 2017 ■ 2018



# Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide

## Risk Factors

Characteristics that make it **more likely** that an individual may consider, attempt, or die by suicide.



## Protective Factors

Characteristics that make it **less likely** that an individual may consider, attempt, or die by suicide.

# Risk Factors: Mental Health Conditions

- Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Borderline Personality Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Anxiety Disorders
- Substance abuse disorders
- Serious or chronic health condition and/or pain



# Risk Factors: Historical Factors

- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide



# Risk Factors: Environmental Factors

- Stressful life events-death, divorce, or job loss
- Prolonged stress factors-harassment, bullying, relationship problems, unemployment
- Access to lethal means-firearms and drugs
- Exposure to another person's suicide or sensationalized accounts of suicide





# Protective Factors



- Effective/accessible care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- Family and community support (connectedness)
- School/community engagement
- Ability to make friends and positive peer support
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Cultural and religious systems that discourage suicide

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Talking about suicide

*Any talk about suicide, dying, or self-harm, such as “I wish I hadn’t been born”, “If I see you again...” and “I’d be better off dead”.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

**Seeking out lethal means**

*Seeking access to guns, pills, knives, or other objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Preoccupation with death

*Unusual focus on death, dying, or violence.*

*Writing poems or stories about death.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

**No hope for the future**

*Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and being trapped (“there’s no way out”).  
Belief that things will never get better or change.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Self-loathing, self-hatred

*Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, shame, and self-hatred. Feeling like a burden. “Everyone would be better off without me”.*



# Warning Signs of Suicide

**Getting affairs in order**

*Making out a will.*

*Giving away prized possessions.*

*Making arrangements for family members.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Saying goodbye

*Unusual or unexpected visits or calls to family and friends. Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Withdrawing from others

*Withdrawing from friends and family.  
Increasing social isolation. Desire to be  
left alone.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Self-destructive behavior

*Increased alcohol or drug use, reckless driving, unsafe sex. Taking unnecessary risks as if they have a ‘death wish’.*

# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Sudden sense of calm

*Sudden sense of calm and happiness after being extremely Depressed can mean that the person has made a decision to attempt suicide.*

Important: Asking about suicide does not put the thought of killing oneself in someone's head. It gives them a sense of relief that someone is finally hearing them and will LISTEN.



# Ways to Start a Conversation About Suicide

*“I have been feeling concerned about you lately.”*

*“I wanted to check in with you because you haven’t seemed yourself lately.”*

*“Recently, I have noticed some differences in you and wondered how you are doing.”*

# Questions You Can Ask



*“When did you begin feeling like this?”*

*“How can I best support you right now?”*

*“Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?”*

*“Have you thought about getting help?”*



# What You Can Say That Helps

*"You are not alone in this. I'm here for you."*

*"I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."*

*"When you want to give up, tell yourself you will hold off for just one more day, hour, minute- whatever you can manage."*

*"You may not believe it now, but the way you're feeling will change."*

# Be Direct!



*“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”*

*“Have you had thoughts of suicide?”*

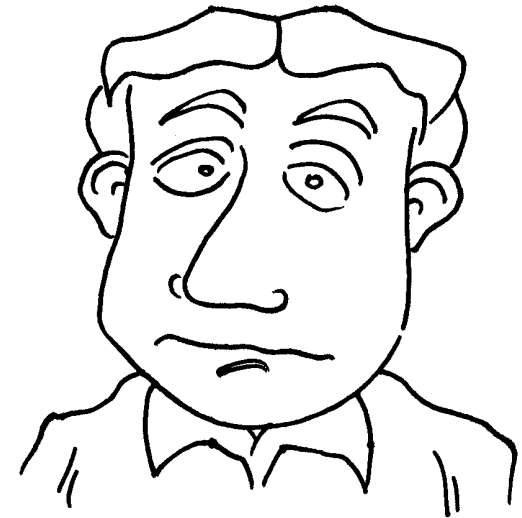
If I spot warning signs, what are some things I need to keep in mind?



Great question! Here are a few thoughts...

Things To Do:

- Ask: Are you okay? Are you having thoughts of suicide?
- Express concerns of observed behaviors.
- Listen attentively, non-judgmentally.
- Tell them they are not alone.
- Guide to professional help.

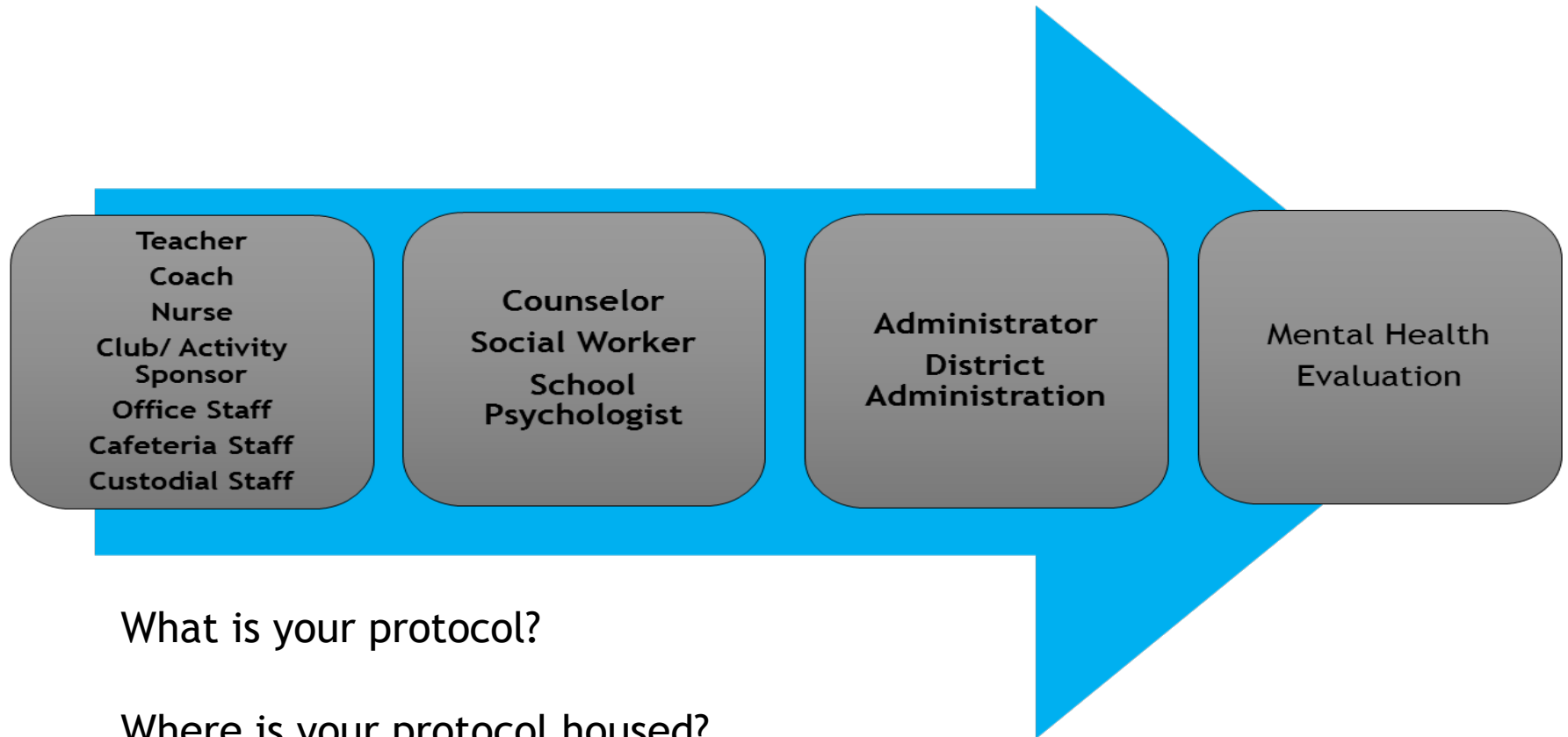


Things To Avoid:

- Don't argue, lecture, or guilt the individual.
- **DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY!**



# Referral Protocol



# Additional Considerations

- 13 Reasons Why - Season 3
  - Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>
- KSDE Suicide Response and Postvention Toolkit
- Kansas Communities That Care (KCTC) Student Survey
- Kansans Can Integrated Learning Process
- New Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention Coordinator - Gina Meier-Hummel
- School Suicide Prevention Resource Handout

# Resources



## Crisis Resources:

- In an emergency, call **911**
- Johnson County Mental Health Center
  - 24 Hour Emergency Services **913-268-0156**
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline- **1-800-273-TALK**
  - Text: **741741**



1. Keep the conversation going about mental health, mental illness and suicide.
2. Collaboratively talk as a group about your suicide prevention policies/procedures and social emotional learning strategies.
3. Trust in yourself that you *can* and *will* respond effectively to someone you believe may be at risk.
4. Block out time for self-care tonight...whether that be 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 30 minutes or longer!





# Questions?

Crisis Line: 913-268-0156



@JoCoMNH

@MNHDirector

@MNHDepDirector



[jocogov.org/mentalhealth](http://jocogov.org/mentalhealth) | 913-826-4200

