



Preventing Youth Suicide: How Can Schools Help?

Research overview

Concerns about adolescent suicide and mental health are rising. In the United States, suicide ranks as the second leading cause of death for youth aged between 10 and 18 years. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the mental health crisis.

To address this, school-based mental health and suicide prevention strategies have been proposed. Previous studies have identified that such student-directed programs are beneficial in reducing suicidal thoughts and behaviors among students. Looking at the growing evidence regarding their benefits, the Suicide Training and Awareness Nationally Delivered for Universal Prevention Act (STANDUP Act) was enacted in the US to help educational agencies seek funding for the implementation of such programs. However, schools often find it difficult to evaluate and identify the appropriate evidence-based program.

In this review, researchers attempted to answer this question. They identified 12 such programs from 29 studies in the US that match the STANDUP criteria. Programs vary in their objectives and methods. Some target changing school norms and empowering peer leaders, while others focus on improving mental health literacy or depression awareness.

Why is it important?

The STANDUP Act supports the implementation of evidence-based suicide prevention training in schools. This study presents an expert, evidence-graded assessment of the mental health programs which are eligible for funding under the Act and have readily available material in English. School officials can use the details herein to choose the best-fit program, seek funding, and implement it.

Key takeaway

School-based programs, when properly implemented, can play a vital role in preventing suicide among youth. School authorities can use the data for the 12 programs identified in this review for valuable and usable evidence-based implementation guidance.



Link to the original article:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13811118.2023.2247033>

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