

October 22, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The adolescent years are marked by a roller-coaster ride of emotions; difficult for youths, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil. Although depression is among the most common of adolescent mental illnesses, it needs to be taken seriously and addressed. Depression, a treatable illness, is a leading risk factor for suicide.

To proactively address these issues, Abington High School is providing depression awareness and suicide prevention training as part of the SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program, through your son/daughter's Health curriculum. This evidence based program has been shown to be successful at increasing the number of students who are willing to seek help when concerned about themselves or a friend. The SOS Program is the only school-based suicide prevention program that is proven to address suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts.

Our goals in participating in this program are straightforward:

- To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness
- To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
- To provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves or a friend
- To impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns
- To help students know whom in the school they can turn to, if they need it
- To provide a safe and open environment for students to discuss current media and events regarding mental health
- To provide community resources and hotline numbers to students and families

Thank you so much for your support on this important issue! If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Kate Casey, Wellness Director.

Sincerely,

Teresa Sullivan

Teresa Sullivan, Ph.D.
Principal