

## PROJECT SPEAK UP! BASELINE RESPONSIBILITY



### **BASELINE RESPONSIBILITY: *Proceed with Caution and Be Prepared***

Any organization presenting SPEAK UP! must first and foremost be concerned about student safety. When students see themselves reflected in the stories of the characters it may trigger an emotional response or catharsis.

SPEAK UP! is a powerful catalyst for difficult conversations about “taboo” subjects. It is the responsibility of the producing entity to assess the organization’s readiness. For this reason, we strongly recommend that the play be presented first to parents, administrators, faculty, counselors and other adults before presenting it to students.

SPEAK UP! breaks the taboo of silence and asks adults to listen.

### **Pre-Performance Preparation:**

The Project SPEAK UP! Tool Kit contains a sample survey for schools and organizations to help assess its mental health and suicide prevention protocols. We recommend that this survey be utilized to determine both adult and peer training for follow up care for student audiences. The more equipped your community is, the more effective your plan will be.

According to the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults 10 – 24 years of age.

### **Does your school have a plan?**

Make SPEAK UP! a component of your school or organization’s suicide prevention training:

### ***Does your State mandate that every high school have a suicide prevention program in place?***

For example, in 2016 in the State of California enacted Assembly Bill 2639 requiring that each County Office of Education, School District, State special school, and charter school that serves pupils in grades 7 to 12 adopt a pupil suicide prevention policy before the beginning of 2017-18 school year. The law also requires that these policies address any training to be provided to teachers on suicide awareness and prevention.

### ***Where do students at your school or organization go for guidance with personal non-academic issues on campus?***

### ***Do faculty and staff feel they have the proper training to recognize warning signs and guide students appropriately?***

### ***Do faculty and staff know what to do when a student comes to them with a serious personal issue?***

***Does your school or organization have clear protocols for students in crisis?***

***How do you protect the confidentiality of what people share?***

***Do students know:***

- Where to go?
- Who to talk to?
- Do adults know?
- How to recognize warning signs?
- How to listen?
- How to intervene?
- How and where to refer for professional help?

**Post-Presentation Talk Back:**

We recommend that you gear post-presentation discussion questions to your target audience. We have found it effective with student and adult audiences to begin with the following question:

- *Raise your hand if someone you know has faced any of the themes addressed in this performance.*

**Other Talk Back Questions:**

- *How many of you are rethinking the power of words and the impact of actions on others?*
- *What will you do differently after seeing SPEAK UP! ?*

The characters suffer in different ways.

- *Was there a particular character or circumstance that had an impact on you?*

The character of Gordon felt isolated and persecuted by his peers and family. This isolation caused him to lose hope.

- *Was hope restored for other characters?*
- *What does this say about how we can be hope for others?*

*If anyone in the audience is struggling with these issues directly or is concerned about a friend, your counselor (or school psychologist) can help. You are not alone. We are here to help.*

**We strongly recommend that there be a counselor present for any presentation of SPEAK UP!**

**Follow Up Plan:**

We recommend that your school or organization have a follow up plan with counselors, teachers and faculty.