

Relationship Strengthening



Not One More:
A Mission to Eliminate
Youth Suicide

Overview

An incredibly important aspect of developing good mental health, and preventing teen suicide is ensuring that students have a support group. Oftentimes, this group is made up of the students' parents, a few trusted adults, and some close friends. However, some students may not have part of that support group due to restricting factors. (ex: abusive home life, social anxiety, etc.) Students may also not be aware of the support they do have.

Relationship Strengthening guides classes through activities that help to identify, build, and improve upon relationships within students' support groups.

Objectives

- Community attitudes throughout the school increase as students are introduced to, and become friends with others.
- Develop the habit of thankfulness in students towards those who are there for them.
- Reinforce and deepen relationships between students and other people in their life.
- Identify students that do not have a support group.

Venue:

- Classroom Activities
- School-Wide Activities

Estimated Costs:

- Meals for Supper with Supporters
- Cards

Activities:

- Supper with Supporters
- Mental Health Buddies
- Thank-You Cards

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-Joyce Meyer



Supper With Supporters

Parent Clubs! This is a great activity to get involved with!!

What Is It?

During “Supper with Supporters”, students and their trusted adults share a meal. During this meal, students show their appreciation for the adults in their support system. Trusted adults can be anyone from parents, coaches, pastors, teachers, or anyone else the student feels comfortable with confiding in. The only requirement for this activity is that students be allowed to choose their own guests.

Why It Is Effective!

Professionals agree that meaningful, supportive relationships are a key preventative factor of teen suicide. Developing healthy connections is necessary for reducing feelings of isolation and improving the ability to cope with difficult situations. With teens, it’s especially important to establish a number of trusted adults that can help guide students through some of life’s stressful transitions, such as college.

“Supper with Supporters” is an exercise in thankfulness that works to identify and strengthen students’ relationships with their trusted adults. At times, students may feel that they have a strained relationship with adults. They could believe that adults are not there to support them but rather to overwork them. This could push students and adults in their support system away from one another. However, a “Supper for Supporters” helps to either restart or better that relationship. Then, as the chaos in a student’s life increases, they have the good relationship with their trusted adult and can solicit advice from them.

This activity also aids with identification of students that may not have a fully developed support system. If a student cannot think of anyone to invite to the dinner, it’s probable that they do not have a relationship with a trusted adult. In this case, teachers may make themselves available to be a part of the student’s support system or work with them to develop a support group.

Take Action

Here’s a brief checklist of things that need to be done to carry out a successful “Supper with Supporters”:

- Decide upon a day and time to do the activity
- Decide upon a meal and how it will be provided
- Go shopping for food
- Spread the news to the participants
- Get volunteers to help with the meal
- Plan the specifics of the activity (discussion questions, amount of participants, etc.)
- Have fun at “Supper with Supporters”

Extra Steps/Alternate Activities

Change the Meal! There is no requirement specifying that this must be a dinner.

Ask Questions! Whoever is in charge of the meal can make questions for students and their guests to answer and get to know one another better through.

Students do not have to only invite trusted adults. If your school chooses, students could invite anyone in their support group.



Mental Health Buddies

What Is It?

In the activity “Mental Health Buddies”, students are paired together to act as one another’s Mental Health Buddy. The role of Mental Health Buddies is to check-in on one another throughout the year. In order to do this, Mental Health Buddies should get to know each other and acquire their buddy’s contact information.

Why it’s Effective!

Feelings of isolation and loneliness are incredibly prevalent amongst young people. Studies done using the UCLA Loneliness Scale report that 73% of youth often feel alone. Being able to cultivate meaningful relationships seems to be turning into a lost art. However, it is one of the most important preventative factors in suicide prevention. This means that it is now more important than ever to develop friendships and support systems.

Since students spend so much time at school, the classroom presents itself as a perfect venue to develop the aforementioned connections. This activity aims to foster friendships between students that may be unfamiliar with one another.

Take Action

When doing “Mental Health Buddies”, it’s advised that upwards of 15 minutes be free to do the activity. This allows enough time for students to get paired and learn about one another. Buddies can either be paired by the teachers or through chance (think drawing out of the hat). When they’re getting to know one another, the teacher can provide prompts or just let them talk for a bit.

Extra Steps/Alternate Activities

Take part in *Not One More* together! “Mental Health Buddies” provides a perfect system for pairing classmates up during activities such as “Campaigning for Classmates” and “Thank-You Cards”. This system also helps to cultivate one’s relationship with their Buddy.

Get involved, faculty! “Mental Health Buddies” do not only have to be pairings made up of students from the same classes. If administration wants to cultivate relationships between classes, they can pair up classes to be “buddy classes”. Then, within the “buddy classes”, students are paired together as Mental Health Buddies.



Acknowledgements

Many Thanks To...

- Emma H.—Illustrator

IMPORTANT

- THIS IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR THERAPY OR PROFESSIONAL HELP. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE LISTED TO PROVIDE EASY-TO-ACCESS RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED TO LESSON FEELINGS OF ANXIETY. TRAUMA SHOULD NOT BE PROCESSED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING. PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU ARE SUSPECTED OF HAVING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, PTSD, OR OTHER MENTAL ILLNESSES.
- To get a list of overall guidelines to follow when doing the activities in the pamphlets please reference the “Safety” page in the Implementation Packet.





Resources

The Importance of Supportive Relationships:

- [Promote Social Connectedness and Support | Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(sprc.org\)](https://www.sprc.org)

Information about Adult Involvement in Teen Suicide Prevention:

- [The impact of a positive adult influence on our youth - Dr. Jennifer Salerno \(drjennifersalerno.com\)](http://drjennifersalerno.com)

Loneliness Statistics Amongst Youth:

- [The Facts on Loneliness in Young People | Newport Academy](https://www.newportacademy.com)

Benefits of Showing Thanks:

- [28 Benefits of Gratitude & Most Significant Research Findings \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com)

Mental Health Buddies

- <http://www.buddy-project.org/about>

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