Forefront program - youth suicide prevention
• through UW
• provides training and support to staff/parents
• valuable during this time of year, when see highest number of students in stressful situations

Presentation by Kathy Middleton, parent/Parent Edge board member and Cathy Gentino, MIYFS counselor

14 school teams in the greater Seattle area are trained on the best practices in suicide prevention:
• MIHS team includes: Cathy Gentino, Kathy Middleton, Kathleen Stearns, Henterson Carlisle, Sarah Shannon, Lori Emery, and Chris Harnish

Today's presentation is a little abbreviated. Regular 90 minute presentation being done in one hour.

Numbers:
• 1 in 5 youth ages 13-18 have mental health disorder. 2 out of 3 are not receiving treatment.
• in WA, 2 youth suicides each week.
• Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death among youth 15-19
• 14% of MIHS sophomores and 12% of MIHS seniors reported having seriously considered suicide in 2015 Healthy Youth Survey

Suicide not about wanting to die. It's about not being able to figure out how to deal with pain the person is feeling. The pain outweighs the normal coping ability and leads to hopelessness.

Most suicides are preventable.
Suicide can seem a logical solution to unbearable pain.
There is no “type” of suicidal person.
Forefront training can apply to help anyone, not just children/youth
What is my role as a parent in Suicide Prevention?

LEARN:

Looking for warning signs
Empathize and listen
Ask about suicide
Remove the danger
Next level of care

See handout for warning signs to look out for. Untreated or improperly treated depression or mental illness is the number one risk factor for a death by suicide.


Empathize and listen

• don’t judge; remain calm, listen (even if what they are saying is hard to hear); reflect back only what your child has told you (don’t extrapolate)
• don’t try to fix the problem
• don’t ask “why”
• don’t be in denial
• don’t say:
  o It’ll be ok
  o She/he wasn’t right for you anyway
  o Why do you feel this way
• helpful responses:
  o tell me more about that
  o you must really be hurting. I hear you are in a lot of pain
  o I love you no matter what. It’s ok to tell me about what you are going through
  o I’m worried about you. I want to help.

Asking about suicide

• Avoid leading questions (e.g., you’re not thinking about suicide, are you?)
• Use the word “suicide”. Avoid vague statements. Be prepared to hear yes if you ask directly.
• When do you ask?
  o if notice warning signs, if have gut feeling, if see concerning changes in behavior
  o there is never harm in asking about it.
• How to frame the question: “sometimes when people are feeling very anxious, losing interest in activities, withdrawing from friends, they are thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?”

• If you hear “yes”, take it seriously, acknowledge/validate their feelings, thank them for honesty and courage in telling you.
• Ask follow up questions: Have you thought about how you might end your life? Do you have access to the means?

Remove the danger
• don’t wait
• time between decision to attempt suicide and actual attempt is short. 24% of attempts happen within 5 mins of decision, 48% within 20 mins and 71% within an hour
• make house suicide safer
  o remove/lock up firearms, alcohol/drugs, prescription medications (all parents should consider doing this all the time)
  o other dangers: over-the-counter meds, belts, ropes, knives, chemicals, cars/car keys, pesticides/poisons

Next steps: Immediate risk
• act urgently, call 911

Next steps: not immediate risk
  1. Call Suicide Prevention lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (everyone should add this number to their contact lists)
  2. Follow up with recommendations from crisis line
  3. Get teen connected to treatment
  4. Talk to academic counselor and/or MIYFS counselor

Parent Edge sponsoring Laura Kastner on March 20 to discuss toxic stress.

Will be doing another parent training at IMS in spring (March 29)

Looking to provide 2 parent trainings per year.

**Hot topics for future PAC meetings:**

Vicki would like to discuss counseling review.
Want to hear about curriculum review?
• Could bring in different department chairs to talk about work being done.
• Could do two per meeting.
• For next meeting, will plan English and Social Studies curriculum review.
• Bridges review for future meeting?
• One issue is consistency (or lack thereof) between classes

Current issues:

Bullying incidents
• especially difficult when incidents happen outside of the school
• incidents involving social media are rampant
• consider presentation by tech group on how to keep students safe?
• more incidents about cyber bullying than drinking/drugs issues
• snapchat is the app most often used

Tension among staff resulting from election. Staff on both sides having challenges learning how to work together.